

July 14, 1989

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ORAL QUESTIONS

Security Branch of Saskatchewan Management Corporation

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, and I was wondering if the minister could tell the House today how many staff you have in the security branch of the property management corporation; and in addition, how many of these people in your security branch would have expertise in electronic or other surveillance methods?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, that seems more like an estimates question, but we do have a security branch in property management. I believe there are four or five individuals in that branch. Their degree of expertise in security or surveillance, I would have to research that. I don't know what expertise each one has, but I know they're hired for various components which they bring to the service. But I wouldn't want to mislead the House and say there's four or five that are experts in that, but I would bring that back.

Mr. Anguish: — Well we know, Mr. Minister — new question, same minister — we know there is at least one that is a qualified expert in electronic surveillance, and I'd appreciate you bringing the information back to the House so that we know, through this Assembly.

I have here a copy of a memo, Mr. Minister, dated March 15, 1989, signed by the Chief of Police, Mr. Savage, and it gives a list of government agencies that have access to the Canadian Police Identification Centre Computer System, or CPIC as it's more commonly known. And in this list, Mr. Minister . . . (inaudible) . . . corporation . . . and it gives the types of information that various branches of government are available to. And it states in this memo, Mr. Minister: for information purposes; to investigate; law enforcement; administration of justice; screen of applicants for licences or employment. They have access to persons' records, criminal records, and the list goes on.

And I'm wondering if you can tell us today whether or not you've authorized your security branch to have access to this type of information, and what in fact the security branch of the property management corporation would do with persons' records and criminal records and other information on people that's of such a very sensitive nature, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I don't know exactly what the member is leading to or what his question is, but certainly those kinds of knowledge, that type of knowledge may be needed for protection of people right within this building here, within the Chamber, people working for the government, people working in various aspects of

government. So therefore those would be the powers required to have that kind of protection for people in government and elected to government.

Mr. Anguish: — Well it's my understanding, Mr. Minister — new question, Mr. Speaker — it's my understanding that the building is the responsibility of the Sergeant at Arms; the grounds, we have the Wascana Centre police. And if there was criminal activity, we certainly have the RCMP who are very well equipped to conduct criminal investigations, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — So I can see that the need for this type of information to be held by someone, but certainly I don't see the need for the information to be accessed by the security branch of your department, sir. Now I would ask you whether or not there's other activities that go on within the security branch, because it was our understanding earlier that the security branch was to make sure that Vital Points were secure. I was told this by all Otto Cutts in the Public Accounts Committee, and also that doors are locked, that buildings are . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member has been given quite a long time to set the stage and would you put . . . The member for Regina North West, if he has a comment to make relating to the Chair's intervention, I would appreciate that he do it in the satisfactory way of the House, as I've mentioned before. The member for The Battlefords, I'm sure, will now put his question.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'll proceed directly to my question. I'm asking the minister if, since Otto Cutts told us that the job of the security branch was to secure vital points, whether or not you or Mr. Cutts have in fact expanded the role of the security branch within the property management corporation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think it was about three years ago, three or four years ago it was suggested to the government by the RCMP Police that we undergo or take part in a program called Vital Points. Vital Points is not unique to Saskatchewan. I think it's used right across the country, and perhaps by the federal government also. I have no knowledge of any expansion, and I've never directed any expansion beyond the Vital Points program, but certainly we have taken part and implemented the Vital Points program here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I think what the concern is here . . . New question, Mr. Speaker. I think the concern here is more than vital points. We appreciate vital points being secured. The concern here, Mr. Minister, I think is the potential exists for a police state. Now your security branch, Mr. Minister . . .

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

Mr. Anguish: — Your security branch . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'd like to call the Minister

of Finance to order as well, and let's give the member from The Battlefords the opportunity to put his question. Order, order.

Mr. Anguish: — Your security branch, Mr. Minister, seems to be entering into areas that the RCMP are well equipped to perform and are trusted and respected. Now when CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) was set up in Ottawa, there was an all-party committee set up to oversee the activities of CSIS. Currently there are two Conservative members, two Liberal members, and one New Democrat from parliament that sit on a committee to oversee CSIS.

Now if you want to assure the Saskatchewan people that you're doing things in a democratic way, will you give us your assurance that you will set up an all-party committee of the legislature to oversee the activities of the security branch within the property management corporation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly, Mr. Speaker, our security group work very closely with the RCM Police, the city police in Regina, and have a very good working relationship. And if he has some allegations that he wants to take to the committee on Vital Points, go ahead and do that, but I take exception to the member standing here and trying to cast an innuendo of something like a police state. That's complete nonsense, and you know it.

Mr. Anguish: — One final question, Mr. Speaker. All I'm asking you is if we can come open and honest with what's happening in the province of Saskatchewan. Will you, sir, consider setting up an all-party committee of this legislature to oversee the activities of the security branch within the property management corporation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — As I said previously, if you have some information that you think should be taken to that committee, I challenge you to take it to that committee. Otherwise, don't stand in the House and criticize the securities group that are here in Saskatchewan to protect the welfare of you people, ourselves, and people that work for the public service. We have a harmonious working relationship, and when you stand and say that this province of Saskatchewan is something like a police state, I say that's nonsense and you should apologize.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — New question. If there was a committee of this legislature, people could take their concerns about the security branch to that committee, but they would not be trusting to take it to you, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — I ask you for the final time, and we can move on from there: will you at least take into consideration the setting up of an all-party committee of this legislature to oversee the activities of the security branch within the property management corporation, sir? Will you give us your undertaking to do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I again say to the member opposite, if he has concerns, take them to the national committee. That's where that should go. And secondly, I would ask him to apologize to this legislature, to the people of this province, to put that type of allegation about a police state in Saskatchewan, because that, sir, is utter nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Justice. This memorandum that was referred to says the following. It says, the Saskatchewan deputy minister of Justice has revised the list of agencies authorized to receive CPIC information, and then goes on and details what information various departments and agencies are entitled to have access to.

My question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's dated March 15, 1989. My question, sir, is: did you authorize your deputy minister to proceed with the granting of these very wide powers or — did you do that as minister, or was it a decision of cabinet? And could you tell us what criteria were used in judging whether or not the various government departments or agencies had a legitimate need for access to all the types of information that have been granted to them. Or are we in a Richard Nixon-attorney general situation here where they just sat back and let people — just sat back and let people do what they wanted to do, and ignore all concepts of justice and fairness?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I think what the hon. member is referring to is the national Vital Points program which was, and has been, introduced across Canada in all jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. It had its . . . It's emanated from some of the problems associated with Quebec where people were coming into the legislature with guns. It emanated in Alberta where there was an individual came into the legislature with a firearm.

And arising out of that there was a . . . certainly a push at the national level by the RCMP for a national Vital Points program. Anything that we have done has been in conjunction with, and in compliance with, in co-operation with this national Vital Points program.

Mr. Mitchell: — A new question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, this document I'm referring to has nothing at all to do with Vital Points. I mean, we're talking here about the Saskatchewan Horse Racing Commission, and the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board, and SaskTel, and the Securities Commission. These have nothing to do with Vital Points whatever.

I want to just pursue this. This smacks of a big brother mentality, and you're the minister responsible. It's your deputy that's according access to all of this information. As minister, when are you prepared to put your foot down and say that the rights of Saskatchewan people to privacy has to be protected, in preference to a lot of information

that these agencies may want for their own particular purposes.

Among the objections to access to this kind of information is that it will be used for political purposes. Of course you know that; I know that. That's the danger. That's the danger that everybody tries to protect against. Now, what kind of assurances can you offer to the House that someone in this system, in all of these departments and agencies, isn't using some of this wealth of information for political purposes? And will you bring before this House legislation which puts limits on the access by government departments and agencies to police files which will have a legitimate use, rather than those who want to serve the government's political purposes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member, as I understood from his question, is making allegations to the effect that all the police information is used for political purposes — and that's the allegation he's made — I think I expected that type of an allegation perhaps from some of the other members opposite; I did not expect that type of an allegation from the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. We're trying to hear the Minister of Justice. And I don't like to intervene when a member is in mid-sentence; however, we were having very much difficulty hearing him and I'd like to give him the opportunity to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in response to the question, I did not expect those type of allegations coming from the hon. member. I could have expected that type of an allegation, fabricated allegation, Mr. Speaker, coming from some other individuals.

Now the hon. member would suggest somehow that the Securities Commission, while it investigates, let's say, a given proposal, that they should not have, in some form, access if there is questionable type of characters involved in a proposal — have access to check out that type of thing. If they did not, the hon. member would be the first one to make the allegation, well why was this not checked out; why would approval for perhaps a company to go onto the public market . . . and the principals of that were of shady nature and shady characters. He would be the first to yell about that, Mr. Speaker.

The system has to be allowed to protect, and done in a proper way, protect society from people with questionable motives in doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Special Investigations Unit of Social Services

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, last month I asked you a series of questions about the activities of the special investigations unit of your department. You

acknowledged that some surveillance was being done by that unit, but you indicated that it was little more than asking neighbours questions about social assistance recipients and occasionally monitoring the coming and going of recipients at a residence. And afterwards you wrote me, Mr. Minister, and refused to answer any of my specific questions with respect to the activities of the surveillance unit.

My question to you then is: why is it that today we find that among the departments for which there is an agreement that those departments can access information with respect to CPIC that we find that one of those departments, sir, is your own — the Department of Social Services — and that you have the right to access from CPIC vehicle registration information, drivers' licence information, information about vehicle and person records, and for such purposes, Mr. Minister, as screening applicants for licences or employment.

Why, Mr. Minister, have you given yourself the right to access such information? Why are you, Mr. Minister, refusing to protect the privacy of social assistance recipients instead, Mr. Minister? Why do you refuse to protect their privacy and in effect enter into a big brother approach to surveillance of all social assistance recipients in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you why. To use old fashioned terminology, when you look at a barrel of apples, you have a lot of good apples and you have a few bad apples, and if the member opposite will look at the *Leader-Post* today he will find a headline or a story that says: "Welfare fraud nets jail." A Montreal man defrauded Saskatchewan Social Services of \$7,500 and got 18 months in jail. There are a few bad apples in this world, Mr. Speaker, and we can't leave them in the barrel so that they ruin the life for the good apples.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we recall that last month . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary question to the minister. Mr. Minister, we recall last month that you told this House that welfare fraud in Saskatchewan was in the range of \$20 million. Afterwards, your assistant deputy minister, Ray Barnard, said it was only \$1.3 million. Mr. Minister, it's an example of your tendency to greatly exaggerate the facts; in this case, to attempt to justify something that cannot be justified in this Assembly, and that's the surveillance of social assistance recipients.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Minister, we saw that one of your . . . my question to you is this . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I'm going to have to ask the hon. member to be careful on his preambles. I know you like to

set a long stage, but he's getting a little bit long, and I would like to ask him to get to his question.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, my question is this. You refused to tell me who the specific staff in your surveillance unit are, but we know that one of them is a person who's been twice disbarred in this province.

My question to you is this: by what right do these people in your surveillance unit have the right to access personal and private information about the people of Saskatchewan such as I've outlined in this CPIC document? What gives you, Mr. Minister, the right to provide people such as Mr. Litvenenko access to this kind of highly confidential information? And will you today give us your commitment that you will take the Department of Social Services off the list of agencies that can have access to CPIC information?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, that question reflects the member opposite's limited analytical ability. The Provincial Auditor has stated in the past that the error rate, which is a nice word for some mistakes by my staff and a lot of mistakes by the clientele which is . . . that kind of a description is 10 per cent.

I said that the fraud is \$20 million, and I stick with that statistic. My department said that they only captured or found \$1.3 million worth of fraud last year. That doesn't mean that there isn't fraud that we haven't discovered yet. It is just the difference between the solved crimes and the reported crimes. That's the difference.

I do not withdraw that statement. There is approximately \$20 million worth of fraud in this province each year. Last year we were able to detect \$1.3 million worth with the minimal surveillance that we do do.

And in addition, Mr. Speaker, in addition, the member opposite again goes to the gutter of politics and suggests that an individual with a law degree is not fit to work in the Department of Social Services, when that individual has never been convicted of any offence, and even if an individual is convicted of an offence, pays the price, which this person has not been convicted but has paid the price of disbarment by the law society, then that person is not fit to work there.

If the members opposite have no compassion for individuals, I challenge them to write me a letter asking for the dismissal of that person and I will dismiss that person in accordance with their lack of compassion and understanding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you've greatly exaggerated the existence of fraud in your department. You know you've got nothing to back it up at all. But, Mr. Minister, I have a new question for you, and this I think I will direct to the minister responsible for the property management corporation.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you can explain why your government's department of consumer and corporate affairs, which is supposed to investigate shoddy business practices and fly-by-night operators, has considerably less access to police information than does the department of the Minister of Social Services, who is ostensibly charged with caring for the neediest of the needy in our society. What are the priorities here, Mr. Minister? Who are the people of Saskatchewan being protected from?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand why that question was directed to me. If there's something with Consumer and Commercial Affairs, you should perhaps ask the minister in charge. I have no idea what the man's talking about.

Mr. Hagel: — I note with interest, Mr. Speaker, the reaction of government members opposite gives reason for one to believe they've got "gigaspies." And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if there had been more investigation there, you would have saved yourselves and the people of Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I must ask the Minister of Finance who has levelled a term against the hon. member which is not acceptable in the House, to withdraw it.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I apologize to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker. My remark was generally meant that the stupid questions today, and not . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'd just like to ask the hon. member to rise and apologize unequivocally.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I did say I apologized unequivocally to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Thank you.

Mr. Hagel: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for calling the Minister of Finance to order. He's . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The Minister of Finance has been called to order. He has done the parliamentary practice that is expected, and I believe you should drop that matter and continue with your question.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Mr. Minister, what causes your government to think that injured workers must be treated with suspicion to ensure that they're not criminals. I note with interest that on the document that's been cited this morning, that the Workers' Compensation Board has full access to CPIC information.

And I ask you, sir: what is your mandate to treat injured workers with suspicion rather than with compassion. I ask you, Mr. Minister, what threat are injured workers to the province of Saskatchewan? Will you explain that to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan, and in particular to injured workers in the province of

Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, Workers' Compensation Board has been for about 60 years an independent board operated as an independent agency, and I'm merely the minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I must once more intervene and ask for the co-operation of the hon. members to allow, in this instance, the Minister of Social Services to give his answer to the House. I know that you will co-operate in this matter and allow the minister to proceed without being interrupted.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I'm merely the minister with the responsibility of answering for that organization, and we have only the power to change the board. But I do have information that on occasion the staff there has been threatened, and I believe that for the protection of the staff on occasion they have to call in some security.

We have a double duty here. We have a duty to the people of Saskatchewan, but we also have a duty to our employees to make, at workers' compensation, their work place a safe place to work. So if they receive a threat, they would have to call upon security.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Would the hon. members come to order so we may proceed with the House business. Order.

BEFORE ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, a question to the . . . if I may be permitted, with leave, a question to the government House Leader. Yesterday we spent all day passing through agricultural Bills. Are we going to call for Royal Assent today? Are we going to get these Bills in effect, as we had hoped?

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for his question. It is a question more properly addressed in negotiations and discussions between House leaders. I will give the hon. member the following assurance, that we will move very quickly to have Royal Assent. I want the hon. member to know that this government very much appreciated the long awaited co-operation that took place yesterday, and we will move, Mr. Speaker, very quickly to have Royal Assent.

I would hope that that same level of co-operation . . . I would hope, Mr. Speaker, the same level of co-operation would exist today whereby we can bring some more Bills to pass and bring the Lieutenant Governor here at her very earliest convenience.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I wish to raise a point or order that I'd ask you to consider and perhaps deal with on another day. Mr. Speaker, today there was a great deal of noise and interference with . . . from people in the gallery. We sometimes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, up there. That's right.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to children and guests who are in your gallery, you rightly extend a good deal of latitude because they do not understand. The government gallery, however, is usually filled with people who work in ministers' offices, and I think they should know better than to interfere in question period — laugh and heckle.

And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, it's time that something was said to the people in the government gallery.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I've listened to the hon. member's point of order . . . Order. Would the member from Meadow Lake and other members come to order. Other members come to order.

The member has raised a point of order, and I would like to respond to his point of order. The point of order . . . certainly if in fact members in the gallery, whichever gallery, were participating, were participating in the business of the House, of course that is definitely not acceptable in the House.

So the point of order is well taken. And perhaps by way of my response to your point of order, they might take note that they're not to participate in the proceedings of the House.

RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN

Mr. Hagel: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would indicate to the House that I wish to drop resolution no. 42, which is presently standing on the order paper in my name.

The Speaker: — Dropped.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Swan that **Bill No. 16 — An Act to amend The Clean Air Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that **Bill No. 30** —

An Act to amend The Fuel Tax Act, 1987 be now read a second time.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're into the debate . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I realize it's Friday morning . . . I think that members . . . I'd like to first of all draw to the attention of the hon. members that what they are doing here is certainly, certainly unparliamentary, and there are many, many members involved. For them to continue speaking and heckling while the Speaker is on his feet is certainly unacceptable. It is lacking dignity and decorum, and especially when they carry on and off, and I'd like to bring that to your attention. I think hon. members should take note of that, and we often hear people complaining about the lack of dignity and decorum in the House. Well I think they have a responsibility, and one of the elementary rules of this House is that when the Speaker is on his feet all speaking and heckling stops.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for bringing the members opposite to order . . .

The Speaker: — I'm now bringing the member from Prince Albert to order. Let's continue with the debate, and let's not cast any aspersions on each other. The matter has been dealt with; let's leave it at that. The hon. member from Prince Albert, I'm sure, has many things he'd like to say on the Bill, and I now recognize him.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do have many things that I want to say on this Bill, on the Bill 30, which is an Act to amend the fuel tax. And in the words of the minister, the effect of this Act is to raise the tax on gasoline and diesel fuel from 7 to 10 cents per litre, effective March 31, 1989.

This Bill has to be opposed most vigorously, Mr. Speaker, on the grounds, first of all, that it's not a progressive tax, it's a very hurtful tax; on the grounds that this tax represents a broken promise by the government opposite; on the grounds that people in Saskatchewan are increasingly coming to members on this side of the House, and I'm sure coming to members on that side of the House, and just insisting that they are fed up with being taxed — taxed at every turn by this government.

This tax represents one of several taxes which the government has introduced since it's been in office. When we have taxes introduced, Mr. Speaker, we usually expect, as a result of that tax, to have increased services. If we have a tax introduced and if there is a deficit, we expect that perhaps the deficit could be reduced somewhat.

What we've seen is an increase in this tax and an increase in other taxes brought forth by this government, that neither has been the case. In fact, we've suffered from reduction of services in Saskatchewan, and there's certainly no evidence that the deficit is being curtailed. In fact, the evidence is the exact opposite, that the deficit continues to rise.

So it's small wonder, Mr. Speaker, that around the province, when people get knowledge of another tax

being imposed on them, such as this tax, this 10 cents per litre tax, that they react in a rather unfavourable manner, very much like they're reacting presently to the tax on lotteries around the province.

And at least there, where people have a choice, they're avoiding paying the tax by staying away from the bingo halls and from the kiosks in droves — unprecedented droves. This should be a signal to the government, Mr. Speaker, it should be a signal that their financial mismanagement really needs to be looked at in a different way altogether. They ought to take the direction of the province, the economic direction of the province in a completely different direction.

There is some feeling that I was getting from people as I walked and I asked about their feeling about the taxation, there is some feeling that in Saskatchewan people are willing to pay tax providing they see it going to services which they value, and particularly providing they see it going to health and education and those in need in the social services.

They object rather strenuously when they lack the evidence to show that this is the case, when they see that instead you have a government which is using tax money to build up the coffers of the likes of Cargill grain, by going into a partnership with them on a fertilizer plant, or the likes, in the past, of people like Pocklington, who people don't really believe need to be on the social welfare roll, or on the welfare roll of this province.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, when I look back at the record, or at the promises of this government, and compare that to what is really happening in the gas tax. And I brought with me two advertisements, one from *The Eston Press* of 1983. It was an ad that was placed by the member from Kindersley. And the small print in this says that . . . there was a promise here to eliminate the gasoline tax. And it says:

A new PC government, as a major anti-inflationary measure, will remove the 20 per cent provincial sales tax on gasoline, and the savings of 40 cents per gallon or \$8 per 20-gallon fill-up will mean that the gas savings to the people of Saskatchewan who have faced high increases in the past few years.

Even more specifically, Mr. Speaker, an advertisement placed in *The Nipawin Journal* by the sitting member from Shellbrook-Torch had an indication at that time about the gas tax. And he said that a PC government will reduce the price of gasoline by 40 cents per gallon or 9 cents per litre by eliminating the provincial sales tax. And he said if your gas tanks hold 15 gallons, you will save \$6 every time you fill 'er up.

You know, as I read this, I wonder if his next ad will be . . . he could probably use the same ad. All he'd have to do is change a couple of numbers. He could probably say the PC government will increase the price of gasoline by 45 cents per gallon or — and put in here 10 cents per litre — by adding the provincial sales tax. That would be the true version of this ad, this false ad. And if your gas tank now holds \$15 you will end up saving — and he's got \$6 here

— well you will end up losing more than \$6 every time you fill 'er up. That would be the true version of the ad, or how it should be stated now. That is the effect.

(1045)

It shows, when you look at the promises made and compare them to the effect of the government, what they've actually done. It's small wonder that people who are having to pay this tax around the province, this tax and a tax like the lottery tax or the flat tax which this government introduced, are very sceptical about this government's ability to manage their tax dollars properly. And that's the real essence of the argument here, Mr. Speaker, is that's the ability of this government to manage the extra tax dollars that is collected.

I'll come back and deal with that in a moment, but I want to indicate what has really happened to the price of gasoline over the last several years. In this advertisement that the member from Shellbrook-Torch had here, he indicated that the costs at the pumps at that time, and this would be in '82, was 43.7 cents per litre. Now that, as we know, that the price at pumps varies by 2 or 3 cents per litre no matter where you go, depending on where you go in Saskatchewan.

Another price quote I have from that time, and this was produced by the revenue division from the Saskatchewan mineral resources branch — this was in March 25 of '82 — showed us that in Saskatchewan, a survey that was done in April of '82, the pump price at that time was 41.2 cents per litre — also indicated that the provincial tax at the time was 6.4 cents per litre.

Quite a difference, Mr. Speaker, from the 10 cents that we're being asked to pay now. It was interesting that at that time, even though the price of gas had increased considerably in that short period of time, that pump price was still considerably lower than pump price in Quebec and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. It was slightly lower than the pump price in B.C., and a little higher than the Alberta and Manitoba prices, Alberta price being considerably lower than the Saskatchewan price at that time.

Mr. Speaker, since '82 we had the price of gas drop for a brief period of time by this government, which then reneged on its promise, and the price of gasoline has now gone up from 41.4, which it was in '82, to I think the most recent fill would be around 53.9 cents per litre, in some cases 54 or 55 cents per litre.

Mr. Speaker, every time you fill up, you know full well that you're paying a lot of tax that's going to the government and you expect that it would . . . you expect really that the government would measure the rate at which it's increasing these taxes. But I guess what we have here is a group of people that are very hungry for cash. And we see that again by the introduction not only of this tax, but the other tax.

I want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, how hungry this government really is for tax, tax money, which is rather unfortunate. But if you take a look at what's happened to the deficit figures of this province, it points it out rather

dramatically.

When I look at the annual budgetary deficits starting in '82 — because there weren't any budgetary deficits prior to '82 — starting in '82, which went to that first year of government, 227 million; that's \$227 of deficit for every woman and man and child in this province, which was unprecedented.

It was a bit of a shock to us at the time because we had always had a government in this province which . . . we had been used to having a government in this province which was able to balance its books, which wasn't reaching beyond its grasp, which was taking a very, very solid conservative approach — small "c" conservative, I would add — approach to government, which was paying for the services being added as money was available.

Starting in '82-83 we had suddenly a deficit of 227 million. The government had not increased taxes at that stage. '83-84, this deficit went up to 331 million — an additional 331 million — that's \$331 per child, per woman, per man additional. Then in '84-85, it went up again, \$380 million more. And then '85-86 it's still going up, \$579 million more. In '86-87, an additional deficit — 1.2 billion this time.

It starts to add up and it starts to hurt because at this stage what's happening to the taxpayers' dollars is an increasing amount of the taxpayers' dollars are being used just to pay the interest on the money that you borrowed from the years previous.

So when you add the '87-88 and '88-89 deficits, \$577 per person more for '87-88, and \$328 per person more of deficit in '88-89, and the projected deficit increase in deficit for this year, 226, you have a cumulative deficit of \$3.9 billion. That's \$3,900 for every man, woman, and child, of deficit. You start paying interest on that at 10 per cent, and you know that you're paying in the vicinity of \$400 per year in interest.

The people of Saskatchewan in their tax dollars, when they're paying their tax dollars, want to see that deficit going down. They want to see that deficit being cut. They don't want to see it continued to be increased every year. They want to see that going down. They're not prepared to take a tax increase on gasoline, or a tax increase on the flat tax, or a tax increase in the lotteries, or a property tax increase at this stage without coming up with a protest, because they see the government moving in the wrong direction.

That's why at this time, every time you drive up to the pumps and you hear somebody behind you or in front of you coming up to pay for the gas, they're very vocal. The people are vocal and complaining about the fact that they have to pay additional tax on their gasoline. Now at the same time that they do that, they a lot . . . oh, perhaps two-thirds of the people who are going to do their fill-ups will hang on to their receipts so that they can get go for their rebate and apply for their rebate.

Unfortunately, this system is not something that they like either, they're saying, because it's just a completely

cumbersome system. It's something that people look at as sort of a time consuming thing, a very inefficient way of getting money back from the government and the government shouldn't be collecting from them in the first place. And as a result of this, there's a lot of people who end up not applying for the tax rebate.

So in that sense, and because it's such a cumbersome thing, the government actually ends up taxing people where it shouldn't be taxing people, where it says it's not taxing people because it offers a rebate but actually ends up taxing them — approximately a third of the sales on gasoline which are never . . . where the rebates are never applied for either because they're lost or forgotten or misplaced.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that if the government was serious about this aspect of getting the money back to everybody that there would be a better way of handling this tax, and we've made that suggestion in the past that the government should not be levying a tax using this rebate system.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only the individuals who don't apply for the tax, for a rebate on the tax, that are gouged by this system. Most of all, I suppose, this tax could be called a tax on small business. My colleague later will be dealing with this later this day in more detail.

I would say at this time, Mr. Speaker, that we know that small-business people of Saskatchewan are the ones that are hurt, along with some boards, are hurt the most by this tax. As an example, if you take a small business, say a trucking firm that's operating 12 diesel units, our estimate is that they'll have to pay a total of \$107,000 per year in fuel tax. Now when you add that \$107,000 into any business, additional, as an additional expense, you know what it does to the cost of goods and services in Saskatchewan.

Another area that . . . or people that are . . . that is rather unjustly gouged by this tax is the taxpayers through the school boards who now have to pay this gas tax for school buses, for operating school buses. Now any bus company, say an independent bus company with, say, 12 buses, would be paying in the vicinity of \$20,000 a year extra tax. If you apply this to school boards, take all the school boards in the province and all the extra tax dollars that you're going to have to pay, it comes out to about \$2.6 million per year in the gasoline tax that school boards are going to have to pay.

Now when it comes to school boards, it makes me wonder why the government didn't work out some system of rebating the boards on this gas tax. Because if they impose a tax on the buses on the school boards, all you're doing is transferring the tax burden from the provincial level to the school board level. The school boards, in order to accommodate this unexpected increase, had to take money from other parts of their budget.

They have either that alternative — take it from other parts of the budget, which means program cuts — or they would have to cut school programs, or they would simply have to raise the mill rate. That's the only alternatives

they've got.

Now we know that school mill rates have been going up in parts of the province at rather alarming rates. And you know that there are areas in the province where people are actually revolting against the school tax that's been levied, and doing it rather dramatically.

In the area of the constituency of Shell-Torch, Mr. Speaker, you know that one of the councils there has taken measures just to show that the taxes have been going up rather dramatically — excessively. The people are upset at the rate that the taxes have gone up, and so they've taken a measure which has been unprecedented in this province.

Now you think about why that happened. It's not because the people in that constituency dislike paying taxes any more than people in any other constituency. It happened because there's been a transfer of liability from the province to the local tax level at an unprecedented rate. They had an increase in taxes due to some increase in services, true, they're willing to pay for that. They had dramatic increases in assessment, and this, coupled with the increase in services and on top of that, in the percentage that the school board now pays for the expenses of the board in that area, that expense . . . they've found that they've had to pay an increased share of their expenses compared to what the province use to pay. And when you put all of those things together it led to a mini tax revolt which is not over yet. So there are signs of tax revolts across the province, based on the inability of this government to manage its finances efficiently.

(1100)

Another situation that's happening right now, Mr. Speaker, is a situation we see happening across the province at every kiosk and at every bingo hall. That tax that's being charged there by this government, much like the tax that is in this Bill — Bill 30, the tax on fuel — is being opposed as well.

And I want to draw a comparison, Mr. Speaker, because a person can't really come up to the gas pumps and refuse to pay the gas tax, because that tax, if they refuse to pay it, they simply won't get the fuel for their vehicles. It's hidden. It's not as visible. They know they're paying it, but it's not as visible.

But instead of revolting against that tax then, they're revolting against property tax increases where they've got a little bit of leverage, and they're revolting against the tax increases in lotteries — the new tax, the new 10 per cent lottery tax — which really is effectively a tax on charities because they're the ones that end up getting short-changed. And people are saying, well look, the government has gone too far with their tax measures; this is where we stop; this is some place where I can make a statement.

And I think the government ought to take a good look at what's happening in those cases where people can make a legitimate protest and look at the overall picture, including this gas tax, and change your direction so that they can show that people are actually getting something

for their tax dollars. You've got to turn it around so that the . . . If you're going to charge more taxes, either you're going to have to get an increase in service or you've got to show that you're attacking the deficit. And exactly the opposite's happening. We're getting tax increases, deficits increasing, services going down.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated the difficulty that this tax has caused for school boards. I've indicated briefly that what this . . . the difficulty this tax is causing to the small businesses. I've indicated that this tax is being considered as something that's unfair, in the sense that it's another tax being levied by a tax-hungry government, a government which seems to look desperately at any source of new revenue for it, instead of looking more carefully at where they're spending their money and how they're spending their money.

And I would add, Mr. Speaker, that you're not getting any help, you're not getting any help from your federal counterparts who are talking about a goods and services tax. They're giving you, the Tories, a reputation, together with this government; you're giving the Tories a reputation of somebody that taxes everything in sight. Because when you put them all together, put the fuel tax together with a value added, or goods and services tax, which will tax everything from haircuts to every commercial transaction, virtually every commercial transaction. People are just getting fed up, and they're saying you're taxing too much, far too much, and they want relief from this. And if there's anything that people are not willing to put up with, it's tax after tax after tax.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned those four or five things, and then on top of that I indicated also that this — and I would wind up on this statement — that it would be to this government's advantage to take a good look at the way they're raising these taxes and how they're spending it, particularly in view of the fact that it's a broken promise, particularly in the view of it's a broken promise. Because when you get governments which will promise one thing and deliver something exactly the opposite, it hurts the entire political system. It's hurt their credibility.

Now at this stage it's hurting very much the credibility of the Tory government, but it would be a sad thing if all of this reflected on the credibility of an institution, of our democratic institutions the way they are. We have to take a personal responsibility and reverse this so that if you come into election and you're making a promise, that you live up to that promise — live up to it. It might hurt, but live up to it. Take the consequences. But if you come into an election and you promise one thing, and a year or a month or two years or three years you deliver the exact opposite, the credibility is completely shot.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, people are fed up with paying taxes. And that's why I predict we're going to see more and more tax revolt. We're going to see more tax revolt in the lottery schemes because that's one place where they can do it. And we're going to see more problems come property taxes. It needs to be addressed, Mr. Speaker, and I ask this government to do so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleague from Prince Albert ended off his remarks on this piece of legislation referring to trust, trust of the electorate regarding politicians and what they expect from their politicians. And I, in the course of my remarks today, would want to speak to that very issue. I would like to refer to the effects on the small-business community in Saskatchewan of this unfair tax. And I would like to indicate that I oppose a government that has two tunes and whistles two tunes, one that happens before an election, and another tune shortly after an election.

I want to take you back to 1982, and it's almost to me like a fairy-tale. Only this fairy-tale doesn't begin with "once upon a time", this fairy-tale began with "there's so much more we can be," and that "we're building and diversifying." Those were sort of the key phrases to this fairy-tale.

This government tried to paint a picture of a group of men and women who were running for public office to deliver a fair and a business-like government. That's what I remember of the fairy-tale of 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they tried to paint a picture of a political party that cared about the people of this province, cared about the future of this province.

But I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before the paint was even dry on that picture, they were rubbing it off and underneath was the true picture, the true agenda, the true motivation of this government and of these members opposite. And the people of this province are not very happy with the picture that really is there because they would like to believe in the people that they elect to represent them, to believe that they trust them, but they can't.

In 1982 they told the people that there was going to be a saving of 40 cents a gallon, 40 cents a gallon on fuel tax, and every time you drove up to the pump you would save this 40 cents a gallon. Well that happened for a short while, but it didn't last long.

And what we're looking at now is a tax of, not 40 cents a gallon, we're looking at a tax of 45 cents a gallon imposed upon school boards and municipal governments and small businesses who can ill afford the kind of deceitful taxation that we see now. To me it's not an argument of whether or not the government needs the 10 cents a litre revenue, because clearly, with this government's record of mismanagement, they need revenue. They have to generate revenue from some place in order to pay for their incompetence and their mismanagement.

And we understand that governments need to raise money in order to finance their expenditures, but what the people of this province are looking for is fair expenditure of the tax dollars that are imposed upon them. They're not looking for a government that will blow \$5 million on an ill-conceived scheme, the GigaText scandal. They're not looking for expenditures of that nature, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're looking for a fair distribution of tax dollars — a distribution of tax dollars that will create a future for Saskatchewan's young men

and women who hope to start businesses in this province and raise their families here in Saskatchewan.

That's what the people of this province are going to demand from this government, although I'm afraid they're not going to get it because this government no longer listens to what the people of the province are saying.

We've seen hotels go bankrupt and close their doors by record numbers in this province; seen record numbers of personal and corporate bankruptcies in the last year in Saskatchewan, and there's a number of reasons, one of which is a massive increase in the taxes that they've been paying since this government took power in 1982. And another reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because the amount of disposable income that's available to average men and women in this province is disappearing at a rate that's unparalleled anywhere in this country.

Saskatchewan is one of the highest taxed provinces in this country, and that's not the way it used to be. The middle income people of this province are being taxed out of existence, all because there are a few friends of this PC Party who are collecting untold amounts of Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollars.

And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people in this province understand what's happening in terms of this gas tax and that this government can't be trusted. They understand clearly where their tax dollars are going, and they understand very, very clearly why there's a need to rid themselves of this Premier, of this cabinet, and of the members on the other side of this House.

You can go from one end of this province to the other, as members of the official opposition have been doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to say, whether you're talking to the business community, whether you're talking to people who are unemployed, looking for work, whether you're talking with people in the agricultural sector, it doesn't matter what sector of our populace that you talk to, there's dissatisfaction with this government that I believe is unparalleled at any time in the history of this province.

There's a growing desire to be able to voice that frustration through the ballot box. And it all boils down, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that people of Saskatchewan no longer trust the Premier. They no longer trust his cabinet, and they don't trust the MLAs who are supporting the kind of unfair government that's being delivered in Saskatchewan.

(1115)

You know, my colleague from Prince Albert was talking about the credibility of this Legislative Chamber and this institution, and it's come to the point where you can't even trust the members opposite in terms of the agenda of this House. And I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I raise that point all in light of the trust that this government has betrayed the people when they promised that as long as there was a PC government, there'd never be a fuel tax in this province.

You couldn't trust them in 1982 when they told you that there'd never be a fuel tax under a PC government, and you can't trust them to cut a deal in this legislature either. You can't trust this government to let you know what's going to be up in the House. You can't trust them in terms of taxation. In short, Mr. Speaker, it's a government that doesn't deserve to be here because they can't be trusted.

They promised in '82 that there would be no fuel tax; they promised that they would run a business-like government, and we never saw either of those things happen. They promised to lower the personal income tax 10 per cent and we never saw that happen

An Hon. Member: — 108 per cent.

Mr. Lautermilch: — My colleague from Regina North West tells me that the personal income tax in this province from 1982 has increased 108 per cent.

There are other words that I would like to use, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are unparliamentary, but it's really what the people of this province feel in terms of the members on the government side. But because of tradition of this House, I'll have to refer to it as a lack of trust in what this PC government is all about.

I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government told us that we were going to be a province of have, and that everyone would share in the new tomorrow that this government was indicating in 1982 was on the horizon.

But let's talk about what that new tomorrow really means. It means that we're losing a record number of people from this province, young men and women who wanted to raise their families here, educate their children. But they're fleeing this province because of increased taxes, a lack of job opportunities, and a government that they don't trust.

And as I said before, you can go to any corner of the province you want, and in terms of trust I would want to indicate to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was in the riding of the Deputy House leader a week and a half ago. And I was walking up and down Main Street, talking to business men and women, some of whom worked for that member, some of whom worked to elect him. And I want to tell you about the kinds of stories and the kinds of things they're saying about that member and his cabinet and your government, Mr. Deputy Premier, because if you're afraid to go out there and listen, we'll come back and report to you.

And I want to tell you that they're waiting for a chance to explain to you in the ballot box, your open-for-business philosophy and your hinging on private enterprise. Private enterprise, my eye! They know why they lost the fertilizer plant up there. They know what your government is about, and they don't trust you any more. They know that your friends, Cargill, mean more to you than independent business men and women in this province who would like to see new jobs created in Melfort.

And the same goes for Rosetown. When you meet with

elected officials from across this province who say you can't be trusted any more, that goes around this province like wildfire, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I suggest that it's a feeling that you will never recover from. And I would suggest that each and every one of you would start looking for another vocation, because you're not going to be elected officials after the next election is over.

In 1982, Mr. Speaker, they promised no fuel tax under a PC government. Well what's this Bill about? What does this Bill deliver? This Bill delivers a tax of 45 cents a gallon. And what are the results of that increased tax?

You're going to push some small businesses out of operation. There are small businesses in this province that, because of the economy that's been caused by this government, because of that economy, are operating on a shoe-string. Businesses that have been in existence in this province for decades have closed their doors already, and there are those that are hanging on a shoe-string and are trying to stave off the sheriff from their doors because they know, if they get any more increases in taxes from this government, that they can't survive in this province.

When I see business men and women from my home community in Prince Albert who are closing down small businesses . . . And I can give you one example of a flower shop, where a former business colleague of mine in Prince Albert couldn't make it under your administration and he's now in Alberta looking for an opportunity to open another business or gain employment.

And that's just one example, Mr. Speaker, because there are thousands of them in this province. And this government's own figures, your government, Mr. Speaker, your own figures show very clearly that there are not . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member's . . . I'm not interfering because he's off the topic. I would just like to bring to the hon. member's attention that in his remarks, I would appreciate it if the Speaker was left out of the comments.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I was speaking through the Chair, and perhaps I was a little excited, and my remarks . . . and I will refrain from doing that.

What I guess I should be doing is speaking to the Premier and the Deputy Premier and the Executive Council and all the back-benchers who were supporting the kind of incompetence that this government is displaying, and from now on I can assure you that I'll refer my remarks directly to those who are directly responsible for the problems that are created in this province.

As I said before, this government promised to deliver a business-like government; were the spokespeople for private enterprise, for the small businesses in Saskatchewan. But this gas tax imposed upon the Saskatchewan small-business community is just another example indicating who their real friends are.

You know, they blow \$5 million on a GigaText scam. A French-Canadian business man walks out of this province

with \$4 million, flies jets around, sends money to his account in Bermuda — taxpayers' dollars, hard-earned taxpayers' dollars that are raised through things like the gas tax.

But if this government had a priority to put that 4 or \$5 million into some small-business programs to help the business community in this province survive, there may be some respect and some trust for them. But when you see a French-Canadian business man walk out of this province with 4 or \$5 million of hard-earned tax dollars, how can the business community, how can the agricultural community, how can working men and women in this province any longer support them?

As I say, Mr. Speaker, that's a story that we're hearing from one end of this province to the other. You can go to Cadillac, you can go to Shaunavon, you can go to Tisdale, you can go to Melfort, you can go to any community. You can go to Esterhazy and the story is the same.

There's a mistrust of this government, partly because of the deceitful statements that were made. Indicating one of them as an example, that there'd never be a gas tax in this province as long as they were in power. Those are the reasons that people no longer trust this PC government or this Deputy Premier or the Premier or his cabinet. And I say to you again, Mr. Speaker, that they're looking for an opportunity to exercise their right to unload a government that they don't trust or that they don't believe any longer should be in power.

I made mention of the fact that we're one of the highest taxed provinces in this country, and it didn't use to be that way. Mr. Speaker, it didn't use to be that way. We used to have one of the lowest tax rates anywhere in this country, but because of improper priorities, because this government's decision as to who their real friends were, middle income people are becoming higher and higher taxed and becoming low income people.

The large multinational corporations, the Cargills, can come in here and gather up provincial support, gather up provincial backing, gather up provincial taxpayers' dollars to support their own needs. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that that's a misdirection in terms of government priorities.

School boards who have faced revenue cut-backs from this government, who still have to transport our children back and forth to school, are filling up at the gas pumps the same as small business people, and what it's meaning is increased costs to them. And those increased costs have to come from somewhere, so where do they go? Again to the local taxpayer through municipal taxes. And it's come to a point, Mr. Speaker, where municipal governments can no longer survive without massive increases in the mill rates, and the same with school boards. It's a shift of taxes from the provincial government to the local governments.

And I want to tell you who all understands that in my conversation with Saskatchewan people. The parents whose children are being educated in this province and who are paying taxes understand that; the business community who pay school taxes understand that; the

farming community who pay property and school taxes understand that; the school boards who administer those mill rate increases understand that; the municipal governments understand that, Mr. Speaker. It seems that almost every one understands it except this government opposite.

And when there comes a barrier between the people of this province and their government, there's only one thing that's going to happen, that the government will only be there as long as the people will allow them to be there. And I would want to suggest to you that the people of this province understand that there's a barrier there, and they want politicians who will relate to their needs and who will understand their desires and who will govern in a fashion that they want, not in a fashion that suits the Cargills, not in a fashion that suits the oil millionaires, but that suits the people, the real people of this province, the men and women who built this province and who want to continue building this province. And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that that barrier will come tumbling down, but it's going to take an election.

Mr. Speaker, there is an awful lot that needs to be said about this government, the actions of this government and the direction this government has moved in. There is an awful lot that needs to be said about increased taxation and decreased services and a lack of trust and misrepresentation of government to the people that they represent.

There's an awful lot that needs to be said, and I would want to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, in the course of this session of the legislature, there's much more that's going to be said about this government's betrayal of the people of Saskatchewan; about the incompetence that they display on a daily basis. And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be an awful lot said on the streets by people who are talking to their friends and neighbours and encouraging them not to give this government any consideration if ever an election comes.

Because there's a movement that's building out there and that's growing out there, and whether the Deputy Premier will admit it or whether the member who's elected in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg will admit it, I want to tell him that it's there, the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

I just visited his riding on Monday and had an opportunity to speak with a number of people. And the conversations were in regard to not only health care but increased taxes and actions of members opposite. And I want to tell you that I would suggest the 130-some vote margin that he got in that by-election has probably disappeared fivefold or sixfold by now, because the people understand what members of this government are about.

(1130)

And I want to say that I would ask the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to encourage the Premier of this province to call an election so he can go back and either reconfirm his mandate — but I would want to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that he doesn't have the courage to do that because he knows the mere 135 votes that he won

by, or 138, whatever the figure was, have disappeared, they're gone, and he'd be back serving the people of that riding in the profession that he chose before he got involved in politics.

And probably he would better serve the people of that riding, rather than to be here supporting increases in gas taxes, rather than to be supporting \$5 million to Guy Montpetit and the kind of incompetence that the Premier and Deputy Premier have displayed. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this will be one of the shortest-sitting members in the history of this legislature if an election is called soon.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that a number of people in other ridings throughout this province would want the opportunity to display their dissatisfaction with this government as well.

And I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to be supporting a piece of legislation that will increase taxes, only to go into the hands of the friends of the Tories. And that's what I'm afraid is going to happen with the increase in the fuel tax, because the examples are becoming far and wide in this province. They're coming to life more and more often, and people don't want their tax dollars frittered away and they don't want friends of the PC parties to walk out of this province as millionaires simply because of government patronage and incompetence of this government and the Premier and the Executive Council on the other side of this House.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member from Regina North West, would like to share, I'm sure, some of his concerns with this House and members opposite. I have much more that I would like to say on this Bill, but I would want to share some time with my friends and my colleagues on this side of the House.

But I just want to close by saying, Mr. Speaker, that members on this side of the House — and I want to give assurance to the people of this province — that members on this side of the House aren't allowing these gouges into their pockets to go unnoticed, and that we will be speaking up for the people of Saskatchewan, speaking up and trying to protect them against an unfeeling, an uncaring, and an incompetent government.

And I want to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that members of the opposition will continue their fight to ensure fairness for the people of this province, because that's what the people are demanding of the elected representatives to this legislature, and I would indicate that no matter how long it will take, whether it be in this session or whether it's till the next election, whenever that happens to be, that the members of the opposition will continue to fight strongly and vigorously on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and fighting this unfair tax is just one of the methods.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with my colleagues, the member from Prince Albert and the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, in saying a few words about Bill No. 30, An Act to amend The Fuel

Tax Act, 1987.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is an extension of a betrayal that occurred just three short years ago. This government in 1982 made a number of commitments. One of them was to never reintroduce this gas tax. The member from Prince Albert talked about the deficits and what the government has undertaken to get themselves into this very difficult situation.

But we in this opposition, Mr. Speaker, oppose the extension and increase of the gas tax for a couple or three reasons: it's unfair, it's unfair to those who must consume gasoline to earn a livelihood; it's unfair to the small-business community that my colleague, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, referred to; it's unfair to the ratepayers who live in the urban municipalities and rural municipalities, who have had their mill rates increased as the result of increased costs by the municipalities for consuming this gasoline and paying this unfair gas tax.

It's also unfair to the tourist business. The government opposite has stood in this House and they've bellowed loudly about what a wonderful job they're doing in attracting tourists. I can relate to you a very, very small example of some acquaintances who came in from Alberta and Manitoba to visit my family over the last month or so. And in the past when they visited they would empty their tanks until they got to the Saskatchewan border, and they would purchase gasoline because it was a reasonable price, and they would tour the province and contribute in their small way to the affairs of the province by purchasing that gas. They came here and they were not just concerned, but they were quite upset that they were tricked in coming back to this province to tour and spend their vacation, and they ended up paying higher gasoline prices as a result of this increase in gas tax than they were paying in Manitoba and Ontario and in Alberta as well. So they were quite shocked.

But also we're opposed to this because it's similar to a consumption tax and, very simply put, it's the wrong-headed approach to deal with the problems of this province.

This provincial government has created a deficit that is the fastest-growing deficit in all of North America. We've come in 1982 from a balanced operating budget, in fact a surplus budget of 125 to \$150 million, to the point now where we are about \$4 billion in debt on an operating basis, as well as an \$8.8 billion Crown corporation capital debt.

So this province has dug ourselves into a hole . . . or this government opposite, they've dug the province into a hole financially. Their economic program, their five-pronged economic program of privatization and deficit building and high interest rates and tax increases and big-business grants have totally destroyed the economy of this province and have destroyed the confidence of the people in this province that they had in their futures.

What we've seen, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this, another — Bill 30 — another tax increase, is a wrong-headed

approach to resolving the economic problems. They believe their economic approach of increasing taxes is going to do a great job for the people in this province. And we submit, Mr. Speaker, that they have, number one, no credibility; and number two, that this approach to resolving the economic problems of this province is just totally opposite of what they should be doing. They should be cutting taxes and injecting money into the economy, rather than taking out money out of the economy.

And of course the other major reason why we oppose this is because the government opposite, by increasing this fuel tax, does not resolve their mismanaging and their patronage approach to government. They are, rather than taking a look in their own house and resolving some of their problems, looking at ways of increasing revenues in an unfair way from individuals who are trapped into contributing this tax, so that they can bail themselves out in some very small fashion from the deep hole they've dug themselves in with regard to mismanagement and patronage.

But, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues referred to the lack of credibility that this government has. With the extension of this betrayal of the increase in the fuel tax, this government has basically eliminated and done away with what little credibility they had. And I have here, Mr. Speaker, a number of things that I want to raise in this regard.

This Conservative government opposite in the 1982 election, almost every candidate across there we have records of, made a commitment that when they got elected they were going to eliminate the gas tax. They said, and there was headlines in the *Leader-Post*, that the Conservatives will eliminate the gas tax. And we have, Mr. Speaker, here, photocopies of leaflets that candidates of the Conservative Party distributed widely in their constituencies, and they got elected as a result of this, and many of these documents show what they had planned to do, but in fact they've proven, as a result of 1986-87 increase in the gas tax, a return of the gas tax and today the increase of that return, that they have betrayed the people of this province.

And I refer to the former member from Regina South, Mr. Paul Rousseau. He believes in a better Saskatchewan and he believes the Progressive Conservative Party can make Saskatchewan better by removing the gasoline sales tax, and that's what he worked to do. Now the current member from Regina South, the former member for Regina North, now the Minister of Urban Affairs, I believe, he bragged in one of his constituency newsletters that The Fuel Tax Act, as of midnight, May 8, 1982, did away with the gasoline tax. They carried out the promise that they made.

And I recall vividly, as many people in this province do, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, on May 8, standing in front of this legislative building, and you were there, and all of the members in the Conservative government were there as they were sworn in, promising the people of this province that they . . . as a matter of fact, initiating the doing away of the gas tax. They eliminated the gas tax, and he said, and it's a quote: "As long as there's a Conservative

government in this province, we will never reintroduce or reimpose the gas tax.” That was a commitment of the Premier of this province, Mr. Speaker, and, as we see today, an extension of the betrayal of that commitment by the Premier.

We’ve seen a couple of MLAs that have made those comments as well. We see the current front-bencher, the member from Rosetown-Elrose, the Minister of the Environment, in his leaflet. He said that they would eliminate the gasoline tax — that’s the commitment, the commitment of a new PC government. Well I suppose the government’s no longer new, so maybe that’s their out, but I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that because of this betrayal and other betrayals in this House and in this province over the years, they will not only be an old government, they’ll be a former government come the next election campaign.

We see the minister of consumer and corporate affairs, the member from, I believe it’s Maple Creek, and she says in her leaflet that they will eliminate the gas tax. The member from Kelsey-Tisdale, who’s now a cabinet minister as well, indicates that they will eliminate the gas tax. The member from Melville, the Minister of Social Services, in his leaflet says they will roll back the 20 per cent gasoline sales tax.

Well I suppose there was some element of truth in that; they rolled it back. But now they’ve increased it. The member from Biggar, who’s not in cabinet, but in his leaflet again he says that he was going to lower the gasoline tax. And I quote:

There is no reason in the world gas prices in Saskatchewan should be more than Ontario.

Well now they’re more than in Ontario, because I was there in April and gasoline prices in Ontario and Toronto were 3 or 4 cents a litre less than we’re paying in Saskatchewan. He goes on to say:

Farmers and business men need every break they can get, and we will immediately remove the province’s 20 per cent road tax, a saving of over 40 cents a gallon.

And even that has a bit of a lack of credibility, Mr. Speaker. They promised in the 1982 campaign to give every driver a break of 40 cents a gallon. Well they misled the people of the province right from square one because at that time it was only 6 cents a litre, or 27 cents a gallon. That’s all it was — 27 cents a gallon.

In 1987 they brought the gas tax back. They didn’t just bring it back; they increased it from 6 cents a litre to 7 cents a litre. And now we’re seeing an increase from 7 cents to 10 cents a litre in this fuel tax, a total increase of 67 per cent more than what it was just a few short years ago — 67 per cent increase over what it was in 1982.

Now it wouldn’t be so bad if they were increasing the taxes, as my colleagues have shared with everybody, the sales tax and the income tax and other taxes. It wouldn’t be so bad if the revenues from those taxes were used to create jobs, to improve services, and to improve and

create new programs for the people of this province. But this government has broken all studies in the past. They have proven all governments in the past wrong, because the objective of governments, Mr. Speaker, has been, in times of difficult economy, to participate in the economy, to help create jobs, improve services, to do a little economic planning.

But they’ve increased these taxes, not to create jobs, not to improve the economy, but just to buy elections — to buy elections and to pay for their mismanagement and patronage jobs. We’ve seen an increase of 125 per cent in the number of political hacks the ministers have hired. And not only that, they’ve increased the salary since ’82 by over 100 per cent on average.

So we’ve seen massive increases of patronage appointments just at their ministerial level. We’ve seen the massive political patronage appointments that the members of the opposition have raised over the last number of years, that we could go into for another six or seven hours if we wanted to, but I think you understand the point I’m making. I think the members opposite do as well.

(1145)

What they’ve done, what the Conservative government has done in this province, they’ve increased taxes, they’ve increased the deficit, and they’ve decreased services and programs. That’s totally opposite of all economic theories of government that have been practised and written about and proven in the past. Either you do one or the other. You never do all of them at the same time unless: a) you’re incompetent; b) there’s some corruption there; and 3) you don’t know what you’re doing. I mean, take your pick.

And I think in this scenario, with this government, with the increase of an extension of the betrayal of the gas tax promise, we’ve seen, Mr. Speaker, elements of all three: they’ve mismanaged; they’ve given away money to their big business friends; they’ve sold off the assets, or they’re trying to sell off the assets of the people of this province at discount prices to their big-business friends. And they’re saying that’s economic development. All that is, is giving away what little revenue generating projects there are in the province to outside control, to out-of-province multinational and large corporations.

I go on. I have here the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster; he talks about eliminating the gas tax in 1982 — he promises that. The former member from Humboldt, the former cabinet minister, Louis Domotor, he promises to reduce gasoline tax by 40 cents a gallon. Right off the bat, right off the bat a minor betrayal, and it’s been confirmed.

The former member from Lakeview, Tim Embury, who’s now on the government payroll at \$500,000 a year, his firm is receiving \$500,000 a year as a political pay-off to help them design and construct government privatization programs. And what a pay-off. He says in his . . . the blueprint for economic common sense . . . Mr. Embury quotes, he says, “Our blueprint for economic common sense is to eliminate the sales tax and to eliminate the gas

tax.”

We see here the former member from Rosemont, Gordon Dirks, who is a former member of Social Services. He promises to reduce personal income tax by 10 per cent, to abolish the 5 per cent sales tax, and to eliminate the gasoline tax.

And I suppose abolish and eliminate and reduce might mean one thing to some people. To most people, what the meaning is is to decrease or to do away with. The government opposite here, they believe that whenever they make those promises they mean the opposite.

We see the former member from Saskatoon Sutherland promising the elimination of the 20 per cent gasoline sales tax. Paul Schoenhals, he's now on the government patronage roll at \$150,000 or more a year at the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

We see the former member from Wilkie, the predecessor of the current member, this is Mr. Jim Garner. He was the minister of Highways. He promised to eliminate the 20 per cent sliding gas tax. And he says, we will eliminate, and this will be a saving of between 35 and 40 cents per gallon of gas at the pumps. Of course he got his fingers caught in a little scandal and he resigned.

We see the current member for Saltcoats. He's in the House today, and I'm sure he's feeling really proud . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The hon. member fully realizes the error he's made and I'd like him to acknowledge that.

Mr. Solomon: — Pardon me.

The Speaker: — The hon. member has referred to the presence of a member in the House, and I would like him to acknowledge that that is not according to the rules of the House.

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saltcoats, who is still elected in this House, in his literature here he promises to reduce gasoline prices 40 cents a gallon or \$8 for each 20-gallon fill-up — \$8. Of course that never happened because it was never that high. And I wonder how the member from Saltcoats feels; I wonder how the member from Saltcoats feels about this commitment. He's standing up and he's going to support the government on the extension of their own betrayal of the increase in The Fuel Tax Act.

We see as well there are other members in here, and I can go on. The member from Yorkton, who's still a member, former cabinet minister, he promised to eliminate the gas tax. The member from Shellbrook-Torch River, the same thing. And I can go on, I won't get to filibustering . . . I'm not planning to filibuster here, all I'm doing is trying to explain to the people of this province that not one Conservative candidate, not two Conservative candidates, or three, or four, but every single Conservative member sitting in this legislature, every single one, Mr. Speaker, who sits in this Assembly made the promise to eliminate the gas tax.

The Premier made the promise never to reintroduce the

gas tax as long as there was a Conservative government in power, and the government opposite has betrayed that commitment. And I'm just not talking about some of the back-benchers. I see here the Minister of Justice, the member from Kindersley, he promised to eliminate the gasoline tax, and I can go on. The other cabinet ministers, the member from Maple Creek, the Deputy House Leader; the member from Melfort, the Minister of Highways, he promised to eliminate the provincial gas tax by 40 cents per gallon. And we can go on; there's the member from Melville, all cabinet ministers.

And I think the point I'm trying to make here, Mr. Speaker, is that this government have made promises and in every case of the promise they've broken those promises, and in our view, Mr. Speaker, that is something that we cannot in opposition condone and accept. We find that abhorrent that this government and these people would stand in this House and make a commitment and the next day break that commitment. So there's a question of credibility, in our view.

But the other thing I want to raise about this gas tax is that it's the craziest scheme that's ever been devised by a government. This government on many occasions talked about eliminating red tape. We have seen with this program the biggest bureaucratic red tape nightmare in the history of all governments — 641,000 licensed vehicle operators in this province generate over 30 million gas receipts each year. The government thought it was wise to lay off and fire 411 dental therapists and destroy the dental program, dental therapists who contributed to a number of communities around the province, but found it wise to generate all these bureaucratic initiatives and hire 100 or 200 part-time students which cost more than gutting the dental program saved.

So we're looking at, Mr. Speaker, a real crazy scheme that doesn't make any sense, and now today on Bill 30 we see an extension of this crazy scheme, making it even more difficult.

You've heard some of the comments made by many individuals that I've picked up in my constituency. They're telling me now that the crime wave has changed in Regina since this gas tax was instituted. People who are now breaking into cars rather than taking stereos and cassette tapes; they're breaking into cars, going into glove compartments and stealing gas tax receipts because they can claim the money back come year end. A little bit of abuse on that. So, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a program which is really a crazy program; it doesn't make any sense, and we're seeing today an extension of that program.

One of the things I want to say before I sit down is in relation to the small-business community. The imposition of this gas tax and the extension of this gas tax and the increase of it represents a contradictory decision, in my view, harmful to small business in both rural and urban areas. A 10 cent per litre gas tax has been severely criticized throughout the Saskatchewan business community. I've had a number of business people talk to me about the increased pressure on their business, on their bottom line, as a result of this gas tax, because they

can't claim it.

When the PCs came into power they eliminated the property improvement grants to small business and to farmers and to home owners, and what we've seen is an additional burden of taxes on the small-business community. And to quote one business leader, Garth Whyte, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. He says, and I quote: "It takes away a competitive advantage Saskatchewan business once enjoyed."

And since the tax was reintroduced we've seen an extension now of 67 per cent, an increase on that fuel tax. The business people I've spoken to — I've got three or four here that I want to raise with you — one has 10 vehicles that average about 2,200 kilometres per month, and over the year, 264,000 kilometres per year. Their average fuel consumption is about 9 litres per 100 kilometres, and they, under the initial tax increase, started paying almost \$2,000 a month more than what they were paying, in terms of business costs. This increase alone means a 47 per cent increase for them in terms of their gas tax bill, and they will now be paying somewhere around \$2,800 in gas tax.

And the member from Regina Wascana wants to hear about other business people that have had problems, and I'll tell him. He sits in his chair and he laughs about the increase in tax for the business people. He feels it's quite humorous. He would never know because he's never been in business. He's been an employee of a business all his life, never had any initiative to go out and work in business and experience some of the difficulties that small business experience.

So today the member from Regina Wascana laughs at small-business people who have to pay this extra tax. He himself is getting a salary of about \$45,000 a year, plus a Legislative Secretary salary of 8,000, plus a per diem of about 8,000, so he's looking at \$60,000 a year of taxpayers' money. He doesn't have to worry about paying increased gas taxes. He's got staff person . . .

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

Mr. Martin: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman, or Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Okay. It's fine. Would you proceed with your point of order, sir.

Mr. Martin: — Sorry, I can't hear you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Would you proceed with your point of order.

Mr. Martin: — My point of order, Mr. Speaker, has to do with accuracy. I was privately employed for 21 years. I have never been an employee in my entire life, Mr. Speaker. I've always been employed by myself for 21 years. I just want to correct the hon. member, so if that's a point of order, I'd appreciate it correcting.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the hon. member, and the

hon. member's issue is not a point of order; it is a dispute between two members. And we will go back to the debate by the member.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Wascana, I would hope, would stand in this House and apologize for laughing at small business having to pay the extra taxes, but instead he ignored that fact. And that concerns me because that's indicative of all members opposite.

We've seen small business . . . I'd like to quote from this newspaper article; the member wanted me to and I like to co-operate from time to time. I think it's important to have that feeling of co-operation in this House. But I have here an April 5 article from the *Leader-Post* and the title is: "Small firms want gas tax rebate." And in this article, there's a trucking firm with 12 diesel units who pay \$107,000 annually in gas tax, and a Regina taxi driver who works 246 days a year who will pay \$5,000.

And the member from Saltcoats said I raised this a couple of days ago in my remarks with regard to small business, and that's correct; I did. And I think it's pertinent with regard to the gas tax as well, because it shows that there are people out there who have to raise that money to pay the taxes that they're levied by the government through this Fuel Tax Act.

And there's only one way they can do that, Mr. Speaker. The only way they can do that is to increase the price of their products or services to the consumer. So it's a direct tax on the consumer, and it costs a lot of money.

We see, Mr. Speaker, small business is suffering. Rather than in tough economic times provide a shot in the arm for business, this government, through increasing the fuel tax and other taxes, provides a kick in the head, a shot in the head, rather than a shot in the arm. And they're really abusing business in this province.

And I want to share with you, Mr. Speaker, an example. We've seen that this province has . . . the small-business community has been battered by this government. They have been beaten up severely with regard to their tax increases. And I want to refer to a newspaper article in the *Leader-Post* just this week, Thursday, July 13, where it says, "A tough year for Regina's small businesses." And as the member from Regina North West, I'd like to make a comment about this if I can, and I quote:

Things are slower in Regina's business community than in drought-stricken 1988, according to a six-month summary of business turnover in the city.

The doors closed for a final time on 172 Regina enterprises during the first half of this year . . . That's 29 more businesses than shut down in the first six months of 1988.

City hall has . . . recorded 128 newly opened businesses during the first half of 1989, so Regina's business community shrunk by 44 (businesses) overall.

That's 44 businesses in the first six months, compared to only 23 businesses in a comparable six-month period in '88. It's almost 100 per cent increase in net loss of the business community in this province.

(1200)

So in those six-month periods, we've lost 67 businesses net; that's 67 families plus employees. We don't know how many employees that involves, but there's normally more than one employee per business. So we're looking at a significant loss to the income tax revenues to the municipal government and to the provincial government, because these small businesses can't afford increased taxes when their revenues and their sales are on a decline as a result of the economic programs of this government.

So I would maintain and submit, Mr. Speaker, that because of these difficulties and because of the growing number of bankruptcies in this province, we've seen the highest rate of bankruptcies in our province in the last number of years in our history. And I want to share with you that the number of bankruptcies in this last seven years of the NDP government averaged about 94 each year, 94 each year. From '82 to '88, the number of bankruptcies under the first seven years of the Conservative government was not 94 each year, but 340 each year. That's 360 per cent increase, or almost four times what it was in the last seven years of an NDP government.

And this is a government that pronounces at every opportunity that they're a pro-business government. Well they've slammed and hammered small business. The only pro-business sector that they support is the big business: the Cargills and the GigaTexts and other major corporations. So we've seen a major increase in bankruptcies. I maintain, Mr. Speaker, and the opposition submits that with this increase in fuel tax, you will see in 1989 more bankruptcies than the record number in '88. And that's my contention and that has a great deal of concern for me.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to end my remarks by saying that this is an increase in fuel tax which is an extension of the betrayal of the Conservative government opposite. It's bad timing; business is on the ropes and they're hurting small business. It's bad timing, because tourism is on the decline and the increase in fuel tax will certainly accelerate that. They've shown their insensitivity in the past with used car taxes and lottery taxes and now fuel tax increases that have back-fired on them.

And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that from the calls I've had, that this is yet another nail in their coffin, and that when the next election is called, this government will not be re-elected. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to enter into debate on Bill 30, to concentrate not so much on what the Bill says, but very importantly one of the things it doesn't deal with.

There has been a perception and I would say an accurate perception, Mr. Speaker, that is commonplace throughout Saskatchewan about this fuel tax and the way

that it has been introduced and the way that it's administered.

As has been referred to a number of times previously by my colleagues, for Saskatchewan people who are faced with this fuel tax, it introduces for many of them a good number of complications. Particularly, I know through my constituency office a number of senior citizens who have found the exercise of saving receipts and recording them and being able to submit them for rebate to be a complicated exercise at best.

In fact the opinion has been expressed to me that it would almost seem that there is someone in the PC government who's got interests in a filing cabinet company of some sort that was the brainstorm behind this idea when it was first introduced.

So, Mr. Speaker, it has clearly been the experience of Saskatchewan people that, in dealing with the realities of the fuel tax rebate system that's been introduced, that it's provided complications. Unfortunately, what's happened as a result of that is that a good number of people have consciously chosen not to bother to even apply. And unfortunately there are a number of senior citizens who fall into that category, as I've been advised in my constituency office.

And I would go further, Mr. Speaker, to add that it's my view that that was specifically the intention of the government when introducing this system, because clearly to receive a fuel tax payment of non-residents is not a difficult thing to administer. It could be administered much more simply without being complicated by the fact that people have to apply for a rebate, simply with the Saskatchewan health card. This kind of thing could be dealt with very clearly at the pumps when gas is being filled.

And so we have to ask, Mr. Speaker, why it is that the government chose to go this route, and why it is that in their budget estimates that they clearly indicate that their anticipated net revenue from the fuel tax paid is about half of what is collected? In other words, that about half of it will not be rebated. And so you look at that and you say, Mr. Speaker, well at best what's your interpretation of what's going on here.

At best, at best what's happening is that Saskatchewan people are making an interest-free loan to the debt-ridden PC Government of Saskatchewan — at best. That's the most positive kind of interpretation that you can give to this administration of this fuel tax; that's the most kind and the most positive.

For many people in fact, Mr. Speaker, that's not even the reality. It's not even the reality that they're making an interest-free loan to the debt-ridden PC Government of Saskatchewan. For far too many people, what they are making is a tax deduction free . . . there's not even a tax deduction for this charitable contribution to the Government of Saskatchewan. They're just paying a tax for which they are eligible to receive money, but not collecting it. I've already referred to the specific example of those, and many of whom are seniors unfortunately, who find it too complicated or cumbersome to go through

the exercise of collecting.

But there is built into the system another injustice, Mr. Speaker. And what I want to focus my attention on for just a moment is the fact that this Bill does nothing to alleviate even that injustice. And that injustice is this, Mr. Speaker, that if you are a Saskatchewan resident and you're living in Saskatchewan from January 1, 1989, and you leave this province, you move out of this province on December 30, 1989 — in other words if you leave this province one day before December 31 — all of the money that has been paid on the fuel tax will not be rebated to that individual.

Now there'll be a large number of people in my constituency and in the city of Moose Jaw, or near the city of Moose Jaw, who are directly affected by this, obviously. And I refer to the Canadian Forces Base Moose Jaw, which is constantly transferring people in and transferring them out. And it's just not an acceptable reason to delay a transfer out of Canadian Forces Base Moose Jaw to say, I've got to hang around until January 1 so that I can get my fuel tax rebate from the debt-ridden Government of Saskatchewan. And I find it kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill does absolutely nothing to rectify that injustice.

There is absolutely nothing except for political will that is stopping the Government of Saskatchewan from implementing, in its legislation, that people will be eligible to reclaim the fuel tax rebate . . . sorry, to reclaim the fuel tax paid for that portion of the year in which they were citizens of our fair province.

And I look across; I find it amazing that none of the government members opposite have seen fit to bring this to the attention of the Minister of Finance, or if they have seen fit, have been overridden by his lust for tax dollars from Saskatchewan people at any cost.

It's not a difficult thing to administer. There's absolutely no more paper work required by the citizen or by the administrative body of the fuel tax rebate system to provide for that.

And I simply want to put on record in this House, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of those people who are citizens of our province — and heaven only knows that there are more and more people who are leaving this province. This year alone, this year alone, Mr. Speaker, in the first six months of 1989 we have had a net loss of over 13,000 people who have packed up and left Saskatchewan. Now the real loss is somewhere in excess of . . . would be approximately 20,000 people who have packed up and left our province in the first six months of this year alone.

Now if that continues, Mr. Speaker, what that means is that we will come to the end of 1989 and there will be some 40,000 people who will have left the province of Saskatchewan, many of whom . . . the majority of whom will have paid a significant amount of fuel tax into the coffers and in effect will have made a non-tax-deductible charitable contribution to the debt-ridden PC Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I say that that is an injustice in the system. It is an injustice that is clearly correctable if the political will of this government was

there to do that. And on behalf of those people, I bring this to the attention of this Assembly.

And for that reason, along with the reasons that have been expounded articulately by my colleagues, I will be joining them in voting against this unfair legislation in Bill 30.

Mr. Shillington: — I had a couple of comments I wanted to make on this — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was a bit slow off the mark. I had a couple of comments I wanted to make. I had . . . unaccustomed, unaccustomed, unaccustomed. Everything happens once. I say to the member from Redberry, everything happens once . . . Turtleford. Everything happens once.

I want to make a couple of comments in addition to those I made the other day when the Bill was introduced. I really would ask government members opposite to reconsider this particular piece of legislation. It is a great nuisance. I'm not sure how much revenue, how much additional . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Meadow Lake needs some assistance; always ready to assist someone as in need of assistance as the member from Meadow Lake. I spoke on it and adjourned the debate. If the member from Meadow Lake needs assistance with anything else, I'm sure he'll feel free to ask.

An Hon. Member: — Thank you.

Mr. Shillington: — You're welcome. Mr. Speaker, we really would ask the government members opposite to reconsider this thing. It is — as the member from Moose Jaw North alluded to it — it is an unholy tax. It is an unholy nuisance.

Mr. Speaker, for a relatively modest amount of revenue, people are asked to keep receipts for a length of time. They're asked to keep them, to compile them. I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that it's possible for the government to adequately check the receipts and submissions for tax.

This is a very foolish way to raise tax. It's a very foolish way for the government to do it — foolish for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker. It's foolish politically. Cardinal Richelieu, who was chief administrator for Louis XIII, once said that the art of taxation was like getting down from a goose; the idea was to get the maximum amount of down with the least amount of squawk. With this tax, this government is maximizing the squawk and minimizing the down. You ought to try it a little differently. You ought to try to maximize the amount of tax you get and minimize some of the complaints.

I think we would be hard put to find another tax like the fuel tax which is such a nuisance for people. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that without imputing any unworthy motives to the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, I believe that this was very intentional. I believe that the government very intentionally set up this procedure whereby you have to get your receipts, when you get the fuel you've got to keep them, you've got to file them, add them up, you've got to submit them. I think it was done very intentionally. I think the member from Arm River would agree; it was done very intentionally, so that a goodly

number of people would not apply and the government would maximize the amount of tax.

So I say to members opposite, if you care not for your political future — and the way you're behaving these days it doesn't seem as if you do — surely you can have some thought for the public of Saskatchewan. It's bad enough they have to pay this tax, it's quite another thing to put them to the work and the nuisance of having to apply for the refund . . .

An Hon. Member: — And then not refunding it.

(1215)

Mr. Shillington: — . . . and then not refunding it, as the member from Moose Jaw North well said. Not refunding it to people who have left the province — done for the crassest of all reasons — they don't refund the tax to the people who leave because they're not going to vote. That's the only explanation that can be inserted for such a crass provision.

So I suggest to government members opposite, we'll be raising this again in Committee of the Whole. Being a tax Bill, it is virtually impossible for us to offer amendments to a tax Bill. It can only be done by members of the treasury bench. We really cannot offer amendments, but we really will be suggesting to the Minister of Finance and treasury bench that we would like that tax amended. We'd ask you to sincerely consider it.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hodgins that **Bill No. 47 — An Act to amend The Municipal Revenue Sharing Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to on division, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Andrew that **Bill No. 42 — An Act respecting the protection of spousal rights in Homesteads** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this legislation ensures a couple of different things: firstly, that existing landholding practices comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with respect to equality; and these Bills extend homestead protection to male spouses, Mr. Speaker.

Previously this protection only covered female spouses, and in fact where a woman was a registered owner of property, she still had to comply with a Homesteads Act consent, which was a little redundant, but nevertheless it was a requirement.

The legislation, Mr. Speaker, now provides for both spouses to consent to releasing their rights, and recognizes a registered owner in such a manner that that spouse's consent is not required to the homesteads

declaration. It is an attempt to make things more equal between spouses and to give equality to men with respect to the homesteads legislation, which we agree with, Mr. Speaker, and we wholeheartedly endorse.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that while we are looking at equality, one thing that I wish to bring to the government's attention is the very glaring inequality for women when they are trying to pursue their maintenance rights in courts and simply don't have the money to do it. And I would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge the government and the Minister of Justice to look at some sort of system whereby women who are pursuing maintenance rights or custody rights are not being dragged through the courts when they are unable to pay for legal fees and pursue these rights.

I believe there should be some system in society that allows women to pursue the legal rights in that regard, and therefore we would have more equality in that aspect as well, because the situation now is that the husband holds most of the money; he can pursue his rights; she's unable to hire a lawyer to defend, and often is not covered by legal aid.

So we do support this legislation with respect to homestead rights and equality for men, but we also are asking the government to look further, that there can be other things that could be changed to ensure more equality between the spouses. Thank you.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member for Moose Jaw North, would the member for Moose Jaw North come to order. It's impossible to hear what the Clerk is saying. I mean, have some consideration.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Andrew that **Bill No. 50 — An Act respecting Certain Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Homesteads Act, 1989** be now read a second time.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, these amendments are consequential upon the amendments to Bill 42, and therefore the same comments apply, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Maxwell that **Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The Parks Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mrs. Duncan that **Bill No. 82 — An Act respecting Small Business Investment**

Incentives be now read a second time.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I'm going to make a few comments, and they'll be very brief, given the hour. I want to address some comments to the Minister of Urban Affairs who, I believe, handles this — I may be wrong. I hope she will have an opportunity to review these comments. We are not . . . and at the end of the comments, I'm going to be adjourning this Bill; one of my colleagues has some additional comments he'll want to make. I will stress to members opposite that we will not be opposing this Bill. We merely want to put on record some concerns that we sincerely hope that the minister and the treasury benches and the caucus opposite will take some of these concerns into effect.

One of the concerns I'm going to mention — and then I'm going to adjourn it and leave it for the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake who is more directly in business than I am — one of the comments we have is that there is nothing in the legislation to ensure that the grants and incentives are given out on a fair and equitable basis, and there's nothing to ensure that patronage will not play a role in the giving out of these grants. There's a lot of money involved, a great deal of money involved.

One of the complaints which I get when I visit on Main Street as I do from time to time in places like Kindersley or Meadow Lake, one of the places . . . or Carlyle — one of the complaints I get is that there's too much patronage involved in the awarding of government contracts. It's a constant refrain. It's a constant refrain in the business community. Therefore we raise this issue in the context of this legislation because there's nothing in this Bill to prevent the money and the incentives being doled out on the basis of patronage.

I say to members opposite, if you don't care about the public, then have some regard for yourselves. If patronage creeps into, and plays the role in the small business incentives Act that it has played in the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, this is going to be an unpopular piece of legislation, and you'll have the business community complaining.

One of the cautions and concerns which we have is that patronage, which has been so much a part of this government from its very beginning, there's nothing to prevent patronage playing a role, indeed a major role, in the incentives and the grants which are given out. We believe this has the potential to be a fairly constructive piece of legislation. Like so much of what government members opposite do, relatively good legislation is destroyed by bad administration and patronage.

If I could name — I won't, given the hour of the day, because there's some work I think we want to finish before we leave at 1. I could name a number of programs that this government has had which had every potential for success which have just become a disaster because of too much patronage and, just to put it bluntly, self-interest. So we want to caution the government opposite that there should be some safeguards in place to ensure that patronage doesn't play a role in the awarding of these grants.

One of the ways you could do that is to revert to a system which used to be honoured in this House, and that is that where legislation is largely regulatory authority — and basically this Bill is regulatory authority — a draft set of regulations should be tabled when the Bill is passed. Government is not bound to actually introduce those regulations, and may change them, but we are given some idea of what the government's intention is. That's a practice which used to be very common, Mr. Speaker, with previous governments, both Liberal and NDP, and CCF for that matter. That practice has disappeared, and it's lamentable.

We would like to ask the member, and the minister, member from Maple Creek, to consider tabling with this Bill a draft set of regulations so that we and the public may be assured that her intention is not to establish one more pork barrel. The last thing, Mr. Speaker, this province needs is one more pork barrel. With those comments, Mr. Speaker, and with an eye on the clock, I am going to move that this debate on this Bill be adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that **Bill No. 20 — An Act respecting the Reorganization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan** be now read a second time.

Mr. Shillington: — The members opposite want the question called. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say that the public of Saskatchewan would like to be able to call question on the term of office of this government, and would dearly like to be able to say "question" and be able to determine whether or not this government continues in office.

There are a number of reasons why the public of Saskatchewan are concerned about the term of office of this . . . about how long this government is going to continue in office. One of them is its whole approach to privatization. The public of this province have made up their minds, and I think have made up their minds irrevocably, that they do not want this government privatizing the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. They certainly don't want any public utility, whether it be SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) — SGI's a semi-public utility — or SaskPower, which is a pure public utility, they do not want these corporations privatized, certainly not by this government.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why the public of Saskatchewan have made up their minds and, as I say, I think have done so irrevocably, that they don't want the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan being sold is because they've had a chance to watch this government in office for what is now almost eight years . . . seven years, seven long, lean years — seven long, lean years, for the member from Canora who liked that particular phraseology. I say to the member from Canora, they've very long and very lean if you happen to be a taxpayer in Saskatchewan or anyone who cares about good government and good administration, the longest, leanest seven years ever.

Mr. Speaker, the public of this province have watched this government over a period of seven years, have seen this government on a privatization path, and have had an opportunity to see the results. It is true, Mr. Speaker, that we often have a better appreciation of events after they're passed and looking at them through a rear-view mirror. We often have a keener appreciation of what events meant to us. It is often very difficult to judge events as we see them pass us.

(1230)

They have seen this government privatize a number of services. This privatization which we've seen in this session is, the public have come to understand, simply a difference in degree but not a difference in kind. The public of Saskatchewan have seen privatization in a number of respects. Mr. Speaker, I will not repeat what they've seen in detail. Suffice it to mention it in passing, they've seen the Manalta Coal operation at Coronach privatized. They've seen highway equipment privatized. They have had to drive, and I know members opposite do not use the roads, you fly. All I can say is, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that most airstrips in this province are too short to handle Citation jets, or you'd all be travelling in Citation jets.

Mr. Speaker, these members opposite don't travel on the highways, but if you did, you'd understand what the public of Saskatchewan understand is the worst thing to ever happened to the highways was the privatization of the highway equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly outline to members opposite, and to the public of Saskatchewan who are watching, what seven years of privatization, which they now want to cap-off with the privatization of three major Crown corporations — what's happened to the province over those years?

The unemployment rate, which had not within the living memory of most people exceeded 5 per cent, was usually under 4. Have to be a very old person — on December 26, 1982, Mr. Speaker, you had to be a very old person to remember a time when the unemployment rate had been over 5 per cent in the province of Saskatchewan; you had to be very, very old. Now, Mr. Speaker, if we look back it would seem a miracle if we could ever get back to 5 per cent; it would be Heaven. The unemployment rate is almost exactly twice what it was when the members opposite took office — almost exactly twice what it was then. That's what's happened to unemployment.

What's happened to our population? They're fleeing the province. Mr. Speaker, there's something missing in the emblems of our province. Tiger-lily, Scottish yellow, Scottish kilt — there should be one more thing added: that's the back end of a moving van, because that's the impression that most people have of Saskatchewan. They're getting out, they're getting out — getting out because this government has abandoned an approach to this province which worked and worked well. The Opposition Leader, member from Riversdale, refers to the three engines, the three cylinders: private, government, co-operative. They've abandoned two of those, and the engine is scarcely running.

Budgets, the budget: what has happened to the budget since this province has undertaken — incidentally, that's one of the things that privatization, such as the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, one of the things it's supposed to bring to the province, Mr. Speaker. It's supposed to bring a new efficiency. As I listen to these British people who come over and coach these people on privatization, one of the things they talk about is a more efficient, leaner government. What have we got here?

An Hon. Member: — Meaner, but not leaner.

Mr. Shillington: — Well put. One of the members says, meaner, but not leaner. That is well put.

What we have is a government that is spending 57 per cent more than it did when it took office, at a time when inflation has risen over those period of time by 37 per cent.

What's seven years of privatization, culminating in the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, brought us in budgetary terms? This province had a very good record, as good as any in North America with respect to budgets. Since the war, Mr. Speaker, before the war, this province was bankrupt. After the war, Mr. Speaker, governments of all ilk — be they conservative, be they very progressive as was the Douglas government or very conservative as was the Thatcher government — balanced the budget. We had three deficit budgets between 1944 and 1982.

What has privatization brought us? Has privatization which was, as I say, is supposed to culminate in the privatization of SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation and PSC (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan), what has it brought us in budgetary terms? It has brought us a numbing budgetary problem. We've gone from a surplus, as reported by the former minister of Finance, the member from Kindersley, in his first budget, in his first economic report on the province; we have gone from \$150 million surplus to a \$4 billion deficit — a \$4 billion deficit.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of our operating deficit, this province has the highest per capita in Canada. That is what seven years privatization culminating in the SPC and the PCS privatization, that is what it has brought us. It has not brought us leaner government.

An Hon. Member: — Meaner.

Mr. Shillington: — Meaner, but not leaner. Mr. Speaker, it's anything but lean. So it's all the trimness of a pregnant Holstein, this government's budget.

Mr. Speaker, what has seven years of privatization brought us in terms of investment in the province? What has seven years . . . That was one of the things it was supposed to do. One of the things it's supposed to do is to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well goodness, we are so fortunate to have the member from Regina Wascana entering into the debate, so fortunate to have the member for Regina . . .

An Hon. Member: — The intervention of brilliance.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, the brilliance, sparkling wit, charm; he just adds so much to the proceedings in this Assembly. Well we'll one day find out if he has any contribution to make on his feet.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things it was supposed to do, privatization is . . . and the Premier says this all the time about PCS — if you sell PCS, privatization will rush in. There's going to be an almighty collision with the people who are rushing out. If that ever occurs, there is going to be a very bad traffic accident on the borders of this province — very, very bad traffic accident.

But has it happened? The RCMP do not need . . . I hope that Saskatchewan's police force is not rushing to the province, rushing to the province's borders to prevent this collision, because it doesn't look as if it's going to happen, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't look as if it is going to happen at all.

What's happened to investment over the seven years?

An Hon. Member: — Tell us.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, in 1981 this province had a total outside investment of \$4.3 billion. That's a lot. But that was what the investment in this province was — \$4.3 billion. In no subsequent year have we ever approached that figure. The closest we ever came was, I think, 3.8, and that was blip. Most of the investments are much, much lower.

So a right-wing agenda doesn't necessarily attract the capital from other provinces. I suspect the truth of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why investment was so high during the days of the Blakeney administration, and has been so abysmally low during this government, which claims to have laid out a red carpet for business . . .

An Hon. Member: — First they were open; now they're hoping.

Mr. Shillington: — I think they've given up hoping. One of the . . . I think they want, not a favourable climate as these people define it. They don't want a red carpet; they want to see the bottom line. They want to see that the province is well managed. People who invest in this province want to look to a stable environment and a well managed environment, and they don't care a great deal about the complexion of the government.

It is not accurate to say that if you pretend you share the views of the folks from Johannesburg and New York and Frankfurt and Nagasaki, that you're going to get all their money. Those people have money all over the world. They have money in some very, very conservative countries, and some money in very liberal countries. What they want is a good administration, something this government has absolutely refused to give.

Mr. Speaker, if you listen to the Premier opposite, and if you listen to the member from Melville and some of the other members of the treasury benches, and when you

say — if you listen to the member from Nipawin, particularly the member from Nipawin, — when you say, what's wrong, why is the province going to pieces, why is there this mass exodus out of the province, why is there no traffic collision with money coming in, they'll say: we're still cleaning up the mess that the socialists left. That's what the member from Melville will say.

I say to the member from Melville that that's a refrain which wore out before it was used the first time. To be still trying to sing that silly tune seven years later is a serious mistake, a very serious mistake.

What's wrong? One of the things that's wrong and one of the reasons why these abysmal statistics which I've just given are true is that this government is trying to dismantle a network which we've had of public, private, and co-operative. It has worked so well, so well for us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when the CCF left office in 1964, it is accurate to say Saskatchewan had the highest per capita income in Canada — a surprising statistic, but it's true. I say, and I believe I still have a copy of the *Financial Post* cited that fact that Saskatchewan had the highest per capita income in Canada, and then said that the government of Woodrow Lloyd would have to go out and shoot women and children in the streets to lose the election. We then have the highest per capita income, but it just goes to show that elections are more complex than some people may think.

Mr. Speaker, in 1982, when the government of Allan Blakeney left office, a government which, under so much pain and fire from the forces of reaction, brought the potash industry into the public sector, when that government left office after those years of socialist . . . of rampant socialism, this province had in fact the best managed government in North America. It didn't have the highest per capita income, couldn't compete with Alberta, but did have the best managed government.

That is what brings in investment, not pretending that we're exactly the same as they are in Johannesburg and Frankfurt. We're a different people. We developed this province differently. We did it through private means, and we're doing it through public means. The two work together. It has always been integral to the fabric of this province that public and private have mixed.

My ancestors came from Ireland, and members opposite came from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, at that time a part of Austria. They came here because they wanted — why? Why did they come half way around the world? One word, Mr. Speaker — land. Wanted to own a piece of land, and they couldn't do that in the old country. So they came believing in private property. That's what caused them to undertake the incredible journeys they did. What did they do when they get here? They immediately set up probably a church, maybe a school came second, but the third was a co-operative — worked together. While they wanted to own their own land, they did not want to have to deal with the private sector in many spheres; didn't want to have to deal with the private sector when it came to selling grain; wanted to sell their grain through elevators which they owned. One of the first

co-operatives was the co-operative elevator company. They believed in public and private working together.

It was here from the very beginning. When they came, when they came as they did from Europe, they came believing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . while the member from . . . I see I have a fan, I have a fan opposite. The member from Cut Knife-Lloyd doesn't apparently believe that people came to this country not having a doctrinaire belief as to how the economy should be organized. One of the problems with members opposite is that you have a doctrinaire approach . . .

An Hon. Member: — A what?

(1245)

Mr. Shillington: — Doctrinaire. It means that you follow a theory; it means that you've got a theory and you follow it, contrary to empirical evidence. That is not an unfair definition of being doctrinaire.

The people who first came to this province weren't doctrinaire. They were peasants from Ireland, people in sheepskin coats from eastern Europe, came across, came across . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . There's serious doubt as to whether or not the member from Wascana ever, ever descended from anything that belonged to the human race actually. But I'd lay that allegation . . . I do not make that allegation. Some serious doubt about it — serious doubt about it — serious doubt about the member from Wascana. I say, very serious doubt.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member from Moose Jaw. Perhaps the debate between the member from Wascana and the member from Regina Centre could take place at another time, and the member for Regina Centre could address the House on the topic under discussion, and the member for Regina Wascana could perhaps restrain himself.

Mr. Shillington: — I should not have been discussing the ancestry of the member from Regina Wascana. I realize that's out of order.

I will say and I will conclude with a more civilized subject. I will say that this government misunderstands this province — they really do. People in this province have, by and large, been what I would call agrarian socialists. They believe in private ownership of land. Nobody can sell them on a different concept. But they believe in co-operativism and working through the public sector in other areas. They believe . . .

An Hon. Member: — That's conscience, not socialism.

Mr. Shillington: — Well the member from Kelvington-Wadena raises a question of social conscience. I'm going to get to that and I will. I know the member from Kelvington-Wadena finds my comments so interesting that he's in fact racing ahead, he wants to eat before lunch has been served. I say to the member from Kelvington-Wadena, I will get to the question of a social conscience and you will come to understand.

Mr. Speaker, the people in this province from the very

beginning were different, unlike the ranchers who, often free-booting buccaneers, Americans who came into Alberta, settled the southern plains of Alberta; unlike the people who came to Winnipeg, who were a different people, people who came to Saskatchewan were different yet. They developed their own concept of how a society should be developed. They believed it should be partially private, partially public, and from the very beginning that's how our province has been structured.

We've had private ownership of land and, Mr. Speaker, we've had SaskTel. It's not generally recognized, but I think it's accurate: SaskTel was the first publicly owned telephone company in Canada — I think that's accurate, that's accurate — by a government which was never defeated, by a Premier, rather, which was never defeated. Walter Scott understood the make-up of this province.

An Hon. Member: — A Scotsman.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, indeed, a Scotsman, a canny Scotsman. Indeed he was, sir, indeed he was.

He was a canny Scotsman who understood the make-up of the province, understood that people wanted to own their own square corner of the world, but didn't want to get fleeced by the line elevator companies; didn't want to have to depend on CP for telephone service. They wanted some things done privately and some things done publicly, and they had a pretty fair idea of what was what. And a government, which was the government of Walter Scott, which understood that and understood how people felt, remained in office for 24 years. And Walter Scott was never defeated in office — never came close; never came close.

You people have lost sight of what this province is about. These are agrarian socialists. It's a concept which — an American term, but which really has a different meaning in Saskatchewan than it does anywhere else. You forget that and you're going to be out of office. And you're making every pretence that you've forgotten about what this province is all about.

There's little point in having people from England come and tell you how to organize the economy, any more than it would make sense for British trade unionists to come and tell people how to organize trade unions. England's a different country. We share the language, but we certainly . . . and we share the parliamentary traditions, and I'm always thankful we do, but we don't share the culture. It's a different people, a different culture.

The British people and the British experts — who, incidentally, make a fat fee for crossing the pond and sharing this wisdom — can't tell you what this province is like, and it's different. This is a different province. It's different from England; it's different from Oklahoma. This province is different, and you've forgotten that.

When you bring in the nationalization of the potash industry, you've forgotten it. You'd do well to forget a couple of other things. The member from Melfort would do well to try to forget his line that all the evils of the world can be blamed on a former NDP administration. Not true; you've created them yourselves.

An Hon. Member: — That's Melville.

Mr. Shillington: — I'm sorry, Melville. I think I might have said Melfort; I meant Melville.

The member from Melville who is always saying this, should realize that these problems are self-induced. They've been self-induced through privatization and you're going to aggravate them a lot. You're going to aggravate them a very great deal if you don't come to your senses with respect to the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that members opposite have . . . one of the galling things about the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and SPC, one of the really galling things, is that you promised you wouldn't do it. You promised you wouldn't do it. There can be no excuse for such behaviour — none at all — nor will the public make any excuse for you. If you think this kind of guilt-edged, leather-bound commitment should be altered, then it is time for an election, because you got elected on a false basis . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I have no intention of calling it 1 o'clock. I have no intention of calling it 1 o'clock. I have a number of comments I want to make. I happen to believe there are things that should be said, and I just wish some of them would be listened to.

An Hon. Member: — I haven't missed a word yet, Ned.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I can only say I wish the member were the minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan if that's the case.

One of the really galling things is that the Premier opposite promised this wouldn't happen. During the 1986 election, a former leader, a statesman of unblemished reputation and unmatched ability produced a document which suggested the government had plans to nationalize certain Crown corporations.

The Premier denied it, said it wasn't true, had no intention of it. This was the equivalent of mediscare. This was the NDP rumour mongering trying to arrest from office an undeserved term. I say . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Kindersley has an insatiable appetite to know what we said. I can understand that, Mr. Speaker, if the member from Kindersley would pay a little attention to what is said on this side of the House he might be a good deal wiser. Mr. Speaker, the member from Kindersley is . . . as I say, has an insatiable appetite to hear our words. Well I'm going to try to sate some of that thirst. I'm going to try to sate some of that thirst.

Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I shall observe carefully Monday morning, and if I feel that these comments have not been fully absorbed, you may find me repeating them; I say, Monday evening, you may find me summarizing or repeating them. So the member from Kindersley needn't worry that these pearls of wisdom are being dropped in a desert. I will carefully garner them again and sow them in more fertile soil if I find that the plants have not taken root by Monday.

Mr. Speaker, in the New Deal (For People) '75 members

opposite have accused us of not telling the public what we're going to do. Members opposite and the public will recall that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan was brought under public ownership in the fall of 1985 and the spring of 1986. No members opposite here, I think, were elected in that '75 election, but . . . no members opposite were elected in the '75 election, so I will . . . and they may not have read our platform. Mr. Speaker, it has been the practice of the New Democratic Party to set out our platform in fairly complete detail. We set out our platform in fairly complete detail.

I want the members opposite to hear what we said. I want members opposite to hear what we said in the 1975 election. Mr. Speaker, I know there's a rule against exhibits, so I won't hold this up to the camera, but I tell members opposite that I am reading from a photocopy of our 1975 platform. Unlike the trifling documents of about half a page which members opposite issue, this is a complete platform which extended some 25 pages. It's called New Deal '75. I would have liked, Mr. Speaker, to have tabled a copy of the document. I was unable to find an extra copy which somebody didn't want. Let me read what . . . under a picture — I'll try to describe this — under a picture of the potash mine, I believe at Rocanville, under a picture of that potash mine the following is stated:

Resources. In 1971 . . . (I'm going to deal with the 1971 platform as well because it's important; it's important.) Resources. In 1971 New Democrats promised to act decisively to see that resources are developed to benefit Saskatchewan people.

Now that's really the underlying theme in all of this is that resources should benefit the public of Saskatchewan. We promised in 1971 to do that. That brought the former administration a term of office. It was a central platform in the campaign. It was central to the very campaign. It was my first campaign, 1971.

The member from Shellbrook might recall, although he was not a member at the time, the member from Shellbrook might recall a good deal of controversy over the Prince Albert pulp mill and the Meadow Lake pulp mill — Meadow Lake pulp mill.

An Hon. Member: — It was Dore Lake, Dore Lake pulp mill.

Mr. Shillington: — That was a . . . Perhaps it was Dore Lake. The members opposite are correcting my memory of the northern community.

We were talking about how that pulp mill had been brought into effect. We said that that was not a proper way to do it, that you were giving away the province, giving away timber resources, in those cases, renewable resources, but we said you were doing it wrong.

We issued a statement saying that here's the principles which should be set out. And the member from Elphinstone, the then member from Regina Centre actually, Mr. Blakeney, the then member from Regina Centre . . .

The Speaker: — It being 1 o'clock, the House stands

adjourned until Monday, at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.