

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pickering: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the legislature, 12 grade 3 and 4 students from the Minton Elementary School in Minton, Saskatchewan. Minton, Mr. Speaker, is about 100 miles straight south of Regina.

They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and they are accompanied here today by their teacher, Darnelle Field, and chaperons, Patti Schmitz and Heather Lambrecht. I hope they enjoy their stay in Regina. I look forward to meeting with them at 11 o'clock for refreshments and pictures and a discussion. I would like all members to join with me in welcoming these students. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to this legislature today some 11 students from Ecole Providence in Vonda, accompanied by their teachers — teacher, Mr. Conrad Bussière and Mme. Diane Bussière. I would like all members to welcome them and hope they have a fine visit to Regina and a safe trip home. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Saxinger: — Mr. Speaker, I do want to welcome the students from Vonda. Although Vonda is in the Humboldt constituency, the surrounding area, the north boundary of the school is in my constituency, and I'm sure there are some students. I want to welcome . . . take this opportunity to welcome you. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — M. le Président, et nos amis de langue français, bienvenue à la législature. Au nom du gouvernement je vous salue et nous espérons que vous allez enjouir de votre visite ici aujourd'hui.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, and our French-speaking friends, welcome to the legislature. On behalf of the government, I bid you welcome, and we hope you will enjoy your visit here today.)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Grain Trade Between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I guess will go to the Associate Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Minister, we saw yesterday that while the Prime Minister was down in the Caribbean celebrating his holiday, the U.S. were tending hard to business and made

another major contractual agreement with the U.S.S.R. for grain. This agreement will allow the U.S.S.R. to specify amounts at later dates.

Would you agree, Mr. Minister, that this deal will put extreme pressure on the Canadian Wheat Board to keep initial grain prices low when they're going to make their announcements later this spring? And when will you and your colleagues realize that this free trade agreement has put you and the government in Ottawa to sleep while the Americans continue to expand their world markets?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to draw attention to this Assembly on a couple of the issues that were raised by the member opposite, one of those being that the U.S.S.R. has probably got the right to buy from anyone they choose.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, is the Canadian Wheat Board has actively been pursuing some of those items as it relates to their marketing strategy. I was over there at the end of January and we talked a lot about the kinds of things that were mentioned here about the earlier sales to the Soviet Union.

As it relates to the low price, you really have to consider exactly what the Premier of this province has been talking about in export enhancement in relation to the U.S., in relation to the European Economic Community, and in relation to Japan. Those three must always be identified as a part of the solution.

And as we deal with this towards the end of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), you're going to see more and more pressure brought to bear on the things that related to this than you've ever seen before.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — A new question to same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we have seen and it's very evident that this export enhancement program in the U.S. has become a major factor in the marketing of grains between the U.S. and Canada, amongst the world countries. Now even the American hog producers want their own export enhancement program.

So, Mr. Minister, I refer you to an exchange in the House of Commons this week between Mr. Don Mazankowski and Mr. Vic Althouse, where Mr. Althouse asked the Minister of Agriculture if he was prepared to set up a \$1 billion contingency fund to protect farmers. And the minister, if you can believe it, replied that he wondered where Mr. Althouse had got the figure from.

Now considering that you have been pushing that program, can you explain to me in this House, and the farmers of this province, why Mr. Mazankowski was unfamiliar with the \$1 billion figure? Have you forgotten to tell him or is he simply not listening?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province has enunciated all of those kinds of things very well to the people of western Canada, which include the Deputy Prime Minister, who is the Minister of Agriculture. I really would suspect that the end result of the question and reason why he asked that to Mr. Althouse is the fact that he wanted him to identify where the source was. The source was from the Premier of this province, and I think that's the right place to have it. And it's because he represents western Canada as it relates to agriculture issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Well, Mr. Minister, while you and your boys in Ottawa are playing silly games with the farmers of Saskatchewan, they're going broke.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Now prior to 1980 when Ronald Reagan came into office, there was an international grains agreement which did a pretty good job controlling the export prices. Ronald Reagan bailed out of that program because he said, just like you're saying now, the market should decide.

Now farmers agree that we need an arrangement in the world that would guarantee a stabilized price to give them some stability in the market-place. Mr. Minister, would you be prepared to encourage the Prime Minister of this country to initiate talks to re-establishing an international grains agreement that would give our farm producers some stability in the market-place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — We have, Mr. Speaker, initiated a number of things that I think are unique to the province of Saskatchewan. First of all, the Premier went over to the east European countries to talk about export enhancement, GATT, and all those things related to that. He went to talk to them with four farmers from Saskatchewan, and I believe that is a very important start. These farmers from western Canada, from Saskatchewan, dealt specifically with farmers from Europe in relation to export enhancement, in relation to trade negotiations in GATT, and I think those are very important features to have as a part of the negotiation structure in putting agriculture on the table for the first time in GATT. That's the first time it's ever happened. It was initiated by this Premier and initiated by this Prime Minister, and I think it's the right thing to do, and it's about time it happened.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Export Enhancement Program and Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I'd like to go to the Minister of Trade on this question of the export enhancement program, because we're just not getting a proper treatment of the subject from the Associate Minister of Agriculture.

Now, Minister, with respect to this export enhancement program, it is our position that it is clearly a violation of article 701 subsection 4 of the free trade agreement. And I'll quote that for you; it's a short provision:

Each Party shall take into account the export interests of the other Party in the use of any export subsidy on any agricultural good exported to third countries, recognizing that such subsidies may have prejudicial effects on the export interests of the other Party.

Now wouldn't you agree that the Americans' use of this export enhancement program clearly violates this provision of the free trade agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that that is the case. If that were the case, we will certainly act on it. But it's not as clear as the member opposite indicates. And if we could use that particular clause, I give him an assurance that we will use that particular clause to fight what we all believe is a very unfair program with respect to meddling in international trade in wheat.

So I hope you are correct, because if you are correct, we'll try to use that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — A new question to the same minister. I am surprised that the minister is receiving this information as though it were some kind of new idea because we've been making this point again and again and again. The fact that there is a trade war going on between the United States and the European Economic Community doesn't relieve the United States from its obligation to comply with this agreement.

My question is this: will you try and bring this matter to a head by bringing pressure to your federal counterpart, John Crosbie, to take on the Americans on these export enhancement trade issues, including wheat and hogs, and try and protect the vital interests of the Canadian farmer and particularly the Saskatchewan farmer on these important questions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to the member's question is yes, I will. We have to understand though, that in trade wars, as other wars, there are very few rules. And we will do everything possible to try to alleviate this trade war because we are in a cross-fire in this particular trade war. The answer to your question is yes, I will do everything possible.

Mr. Mitchell: — A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. The point here, Minister, is that there are trade rules in existence between Canada and the United States, and it's your free trade agreement that does it. Now either the United States lives up this agreement or you cancel the agreement.

My question to you is: are you prepared to take that

position? Either the Americans comply with section 4 of article 701, or cancel the agreement. Will you take that position?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, we started this question on the export of grain, but I said we would do everything possible. We will do everything possible in all instances.

To try to tear up a trade agreement to try to solve a war, it's like trying to tear up a peace treaty to stop a minor skirmish. We're not going to do that. We're not going to throw away all of our trade with the United States. We're not going to throw away the bacon that moves there regularly. We're not going to throw away the meat that moves there regularly. We're not going to throw away the meat that moves down there. We're not going to throw away all of these things because we have a disagreement on one point. We will try to resolve it, but we are not going to escalate the trade war.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — A new question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, this is not a minor trade disagreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — This is not some kind of minor irritation. The life of Saskatchewan depends upon this export enhancement program being brought to heel and sanity returned to international grain pricing and the protection of Canadian farmers. So my question to you is: will you take this up with your federal counterpart and insist that either the United States complies with that provision of the agreement or we cancel the agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — I don't believe this, Mr. Speaker. The party opposite who has stood for peace for years and years are sounding here like warmongers today. The cold war is just ending and they want us to start a trade war. Are they not satisfied with peace? We will do our best to resolve this trade war, but we are not going to escalate it.

Purchase of Electric Guitar by STC Official

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company. Mr. Minister, I have here a VISA receipt made out to an STC account under the name of Donald Castle and signed with what is presumably Mr. Castle's signature. It is for the purchase of one Stinger electric guitar and amplifier and a case. Total cost is \$582.08. Can you tell this Assembly how many electric guitars, amplifiers and cases STC would normally carry in its inventory?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is no. I can't tell you about a guitar or anything, but I will tell the member this: he's saying to the House

today that he has a document, a copy of information which . . . and I would say as the Minister of Justice said yesterday, and I would encourage the member to do just that, as I would do if anything like this was in my possession. The member has a responsibility to turn it over to the inquiry which has been set up. This whole area is under the investigation of the inquiry. Obviously it's . . . and I would say to the honourable member, turn it over to the inquiry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — New question, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with you, Minister. This is not under the mandate of the judicial inquiry. The terms of reference that the Minister of Justice set out just the other day, this is not covered under those terms.

Mr. Minister, the date on this receipt is December 23, 1986, so I think it's quite natural for us to assume that it is for the purchase of a Christmas present. I think we can also reasonably assume that such a Christmas present is not normally part of Mr. Castle's official duties.

Is it Saskatchewan Transportation Company's policy that STC's (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) top officials are entitled to use company credit cards for personal purchases?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the official that the member is referring to, as everyone in this House and I believe probably everyone in this province knows, is under the investigation, and now under indictment in the courts of the United States. The manager of STC is there, the person that he is talking about.

I'll just say to the hon. member, as I said in my first answer, there's an inquiry which has been appointed under Mr. Justice Brownridge. I have turned all of the records and documents and been very open, and I would encourage that member, if he has documentation from whatever source and so on, to turn it over to the inquiry. That's exactly what he should do.

We have the accounting firm of Ernst and Young, a reputable national company which I have asked to go into the books of STC and to look at the way in which STC has been run. There's no question about that, and they will look at everything. I have been forthright from the outset on this, Mr. Speaker. I have been forthright from the outset. I would encourage the hon. member, who is a member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, if he has information, turn it over to the inquiry; turn it over so Ernst and Young and the justice, Mr. Justice Brownridge, can have a look at all this material. He has a responsibility to do that.

Mr. Trew: — New question to the same minister. Minister, to turn it over to the internal investigation would really make you pleased, but that is a closed-door operation and it doesn't wash with the public as anything other than a cover-up.

In regards to the judicial inquiry, the terms of the

mandate, as we pointed out in the legislature, are far too narrow. This is not covered under the terms of the legislature, and I want to further inform you that I have shared this information with the RCMP. They have this information, so get off of that case.

My question to you, sir, is: is it Saskatchewan Transportation Company policy that STC's top officials are entitled to use company credit cards for personal purchases?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my other answer, I've been forthright from the beginning on this, which is exactly what I believe should be the case and what I believe is the responsibility of the minister responsible, and I take that ministerial responsibility seriously. I said to the member, if you have documentation, turn it over. He now says he shared it with the RCMP. If he's turned it to the RCMP because he really wants to get to the bottom of everything that's gone on in there, then I would say that that would be the right place to do it.

Also, he should turn it over to the inquiry. I would ask the member to table it here today after question period, and I will undertake to be sure that Ernst and Young, I will undertake . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Minister, I've already told you where I've shared this information. It is with the RCMP. My question to you is very simple, and I ask you to pay close attention because this is the third time I've asked the question. You have not even closely come to addressing it.

Is it Saskatchewan Transportation Company policy that STC's top officials can use company credit cards for personal purchases. Is that your policy — yes or no?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I've said to the member in my very . . . in my initial answer, I have no knowledge of the purchase they refer to here specifically, but I will say to the member that it is not the policy. It is not the policy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Will the member from Regina North East, if the member from Regina North East would not interrupt, Mr. Speaker — it's become his habit — I'd would say to the hon. member, you have a responsibility, you have turned it to the RCMP and that part is good. You're to be commended for that, frankly. You're to be commended for that.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member from Regina North has put the question, the minister is attempting to answer it, but he is being consistently interrupted. I believe we need the co-operation of the House to allow the answer to come out. And if some hon. members don't like the answer, they have the right to ask another question, but we should allow the minister to proceed.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr.

Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, all that information, whatever information the member has, whether it's the documentation of today or the documentation that he intends to bring on Monday, or the documentation of Tuesday, because there are two elements to this as it relates to the opposition's approach, Mr. Speaker . . . one, as is the case with all of the public of Saskatchewan and as is the case with me, as the minister responsible, I want to get to the bottom of that. This government wants to get to the bottom of that. The reason for the inquiry has been set up. The reason the inquiry is set up, the reason I was forthright from the beginning and put Ernst and Young into the corporation for just that purpose, to get to the bottom of all of the allegations.

Mr. Speaker, the other reason that the member keeps bringing this forward is nothing to do with getting to the bottom of the allegations, nothing — has everything to do with the political muck-raking that they want to engage in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Further Purchases of Buses by STC

Mr. Anguish: — My question is to the same minister, Mr. Speaker, and the questions have everything to do with the credibility of this government. And if you would want to get to the bottom of it yourself, Mr. Minister, you would have wide open terms of reference for the inquiry that's taking place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Minister, yesterday in this House the Minister of Justice stated that he saw no reason why the corporation should not continue negotiations with, and even purchase a further 13 buses from Eagle bus lines of Brownsville, Texas. Now, Mr. Minister, do you share that opinion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well first of all, I don't think that what the member has quoted the Minister of Justice as saying is exactly correct in what he said. But I would say to the hon. member and say to the House that what is going on in all of this, all of the allegations and the court cases and so on that are going on, it is not the Eagle bus company or STC that is under investigation in the courts.

Two individuals are under investigation — more than two — but two individuals from Saskatchewan are under investigation, as far as I know, to this stage. Okay, that's for sure.

Mr. Speaker, the fact remains, the fact remains that Saskatchewan Transportation Company is in need of new buses. We needed 24 new buses; we have purchased 11 new buses. We need 13 more buses. There's no question that we will need to have 13 more buses to replace those which are in need of replacement.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will be tendering those buses, as the

Minister of Justice indicated yesterday. Tenders for new buses will go out and all companies who make buses — and there are very few of them in the North American continent — will have an opportunity to tender on buses.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — To the same minister, Mr. Speaker. There may be only two people under investigation in the United States, but they have made allegations, sir, that money went to higher-ups, whatever was meant by that. You have a responsibility to come clean with the Saskatchewan people.

Now, Mr. Minister, let me quote from the affidavit given by FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) agent, James B. Lamb, in the Dallas criminal justice system, and I quote:

In a separate conversation on February 13, 1990, the defendant LOWRY indicated that payments would have to be made in order to obtain future contracts, but that the payments would be handled in a different manner, to wit, that following the award of the new contract, options would be ordered for the buses, and the prices of these options would conceal the necessary bribe payments.

Now can you tell us, Mr. Minister, that it would still be appropriate at this point in time for you to be pursuing purchases of Eagle buses from Brownsville, Texas, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, I did not say that we are pursuing at this point in time. I did not say that. But I did say that the Eagle bus corporation nor STC are under investigation. As far as I know, that's the case.

But, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to other material that came forward in the court system of the United States, other material that has been turned over to the RCMP investigation here in Canada, any of that process which is under either the judicial inquiry here or the court system in the United States will obviously come to its end at the end of those processes, and it's not for me to comment on it here. And I have no intention of commenting on each of the proceedings of the court case in Dallas, Texas, which would not be the appropriate thing for me to do while the court is taking its course.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — To the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Now there's a couple of points of interest here. One is that these individuals on trial in the United States of America refer to money being paid for future purchases. How do we know that there isn't already some arrangement made for the purchase of these extra buses?

And I would call into question also your tendering practice, Mr. Minister. Motor Coach Industries out of Winnipeg on May 4, 1989 submitted a bid for the buses that were finally purchased from Eagle. September 29,

they hadn't heard anything so MCI wrote a letter to Premier Devine. On November 7, 1989 a reply came from Devine — the first acknowledgement they'd had that the contract was being let to Eagle bus lines. On February 16, 1990 . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I believe that the member's providing a great deal of information in his preamble and I believe that his preamble is getting inordinately long, and I ask him to get to the question.

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I respect that. It is a very detailed case and I wanted the minister to have all of the information.

My question to you: in light of the fact that a meeting was cancelled on February 16, 1990 because MCI was told that Donald Castle was not available for the meeting, can you tell us, Mr. Minister, that you have any kind of a fair tendering process for the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and if you do have a fair tendering process, lay it out to the public so we know what it is?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the member began his question by saying he had points of interest and then he proceeded to outline points of interest about letters back and forth between MCI . . . the MCI that he speaks of is a company in Winnipeg owned by Greyhound. Eagle bus company that he drags around as a reputable . . . it has been and is a reputable company around the world as far as I know, is owned by Greyhound. Mr. Speaker, there are few companies who make buses, very few. Eagle is just one of those. MCI is one other of those, both owned by Greyhound, Mr. Speaker, and that's another point of interest, just to carry on with the tenor of the nature of that question.

Mr. Speaker, the question that the member asks as it relates to the tendering process, it's my belief that there is a valid and good tendering process in STC. I believe that. But, Mr. Speaker, because of the allegations that were raised and because, as I said in an earlier answer, I wanted to be and I will be and continue to be forthright on all of this, I turned the whole process over to Ernst and Young, a national accounting firm, who will report, and that report will be public for everyone in Saskatchewan to see. That report will become public as soon as it's available to the public of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Toth.

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've finally seen the opposition drop to the depths of

muck-raking to only which they can achieve.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for quieting the opposition. I'm sure they'd be very interested in listening to what I have to say.

Mr. Speaker, last night I made a few introductory remarks in my reply to the throne speech, and I'm sure that members opposite took notice of the cordial exchange later on in the evening. We on this side of the House believe that the legislature, that this Assembly can work in a certain amount of harmony if people are willing to work together.

For three days, Mr. Speaker, three days we saw no questions come about agriculture — not one. Yesterday in response to the repeated comments by the government members as to how come there is no interest in agriculture, this morning we saw the Agriculture critic finally stand up and after three days ask a question of the Associate Minister of Agriculture, and it wasn't a very good one at that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this Assembly should be a place for discussion, should be a place wherein we can work together for the betterment of the people in Saskatchewan. What we have seen in the last four days is once again the opposition reverting to the old partisan politics, grandstanding, doing everything in their power simply to catch a headline, because they know that that's all that they have. That's all that they have. They have no new ideas, they have no new policies, they have no answers for the people in Saskatchewan as to what to do about the agricultural crisis. They can stand up and say it's too little, it's too late. How come you haven't heard from the Minister of Agriculture federally? How come this hasn't happened? But we don't hear any new ideas. Where is their policy, Mr. Speaker? Where is their policy?

I quoted yesterday from the member for Prince Albert wherein their best shot at what to do about agriculture was to bring back the land bank — bring back the land bank. That bastion of socialist thinking, the land bank.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they are totally bankrupt of new ideas. This is a time in our province when we are facing severe financial stress on our agricultural and small-business sectors. Our resource sectors are struggling, though they are doing somewhat better than our farm sector.

Mr. Speaker, it is a time for innovative ideas, a time for some different thought as to what we can do, not a time to go back to old ideas that were tried, experiments that failed. And I don't disclaim the fact that they tried, Mr. Speaker, but under their administration, in good times, 1,000 farmers a year left the farm — 1971 to 1982. And that's not partisan politics; that's a simple statistical fact. And under our administration from 1982 until the present day, there's been 1,000 farmers a year leave the farm in extremely difficult economic times, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll leave it for you and the people of Saskatchewan to judge. In good times they lost a

thousand farmers a year through such wonderful policies as land bank, wonderful policies like land bank. And in tough times, Mr. Speaker, trying as hard as we can, we too have seen a reduction in our farm population. But we have tried; we have tried with new ideas, Mr. Speaker. We have responded to requests from organizations like Sask Wheat Pool, the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), the National Farmers Union to provide assistance for farmers in tough times, and we've done it.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of health care, this year you see once again that our particular government is again placing emphasis on health care, bettering the lives of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, working with families. A new families portfolio was created to deal directly with family concerns, family problems, on a proactive basis. Not merely on a reactive basis as has been the practice in the past, but to be proactive, to try to get to the root cause of why we have a high incidence of family problems, why we have a high incidence of people who do not seem to be able to fit into the system.

Mr. Speaker, we have a commitment to our seniors, our senior population, again, part of the family. How do seniors fit in today's world where we have families moving rapidly from one city to the next? In Saskatchewan we've seen people move into Saskatchewan during the '80s. Until 1988 we had an increase in our population. In 1988 it peaked out at over a million people. And this year we've seen some people moving back to where the jobs are.

And where did they go? They went to Tory Alberta. Tory Alberta, where the jobs are right now. Tory Alberta. Tory Alberta, that created an infrastructure in the '70s during the times of high oil prices and good agricultural prices; who'd created a framework and a climate wherein people could find jobs, an infrastructure that has lasted through to the present time, through tough economic times.

And what do we have in Saskatchewan? Well we had a legacy of a government that, instead of building hospitals and nursing homes, built liquor board stores in my constituency. We had a legacy of a government in the 1970s that, instead of encouraging industry to set up in this province and create new jobs, bought them. Bought the holes in the ground. They bought the potash mines. No new jobs created, Mr. Speaker. No new production. No new mines. No new royalties. None of those things. They simply went out and bought those mines.

And, Mr. Speaker, they borrowed the money to buy those mines from the big multinational corporations that they hate so much, out of New York. They didn't go to the people of the province of Saskatchewan and say, well maybe you'd like to invest in these potash mines. They simply went out and said, well we're going to be the government that owns it all, and we don't have the money; we'll borrow it. Well you have to go to the money markets. Even the NDP didn't go so far as to try to print their own money, though I'm sure they would have liked to.

Mr. Speaker, that legacy is what we're left with today.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to do this in a historical fashion. I don't mean to be partisan, Mr. Speaker. I do, however, have to answer to some of the allegations and innuendo that comes from across the way.

They talk about mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. Mismanagement. Well what could be more mismanaged than building liquor board stores in small town Saskatchewan, in Wadena, in Foam Lake, in Kelvington — 350, \$400,000 liquor board stores at a time when they were telling us that there was a moratorium on nursing home bed construction. Mr. Speaker, how despicable. Talk about the ultimate of mismanagement.

They were buying potash mines. They were buying potash mines — nationalizing them. They didn't have the money to build nursing homes for our seniors, but they could buy potash mines that didn't create any new jobs and created a situation where it put the province into more debt. And we inherited that in 1982, Mr. Speaker.

We've tried very hard to work with the opposition, very hard to work with them. We've asked them to put forward new ideas. And what do we get? Land bank. I suppose if and when they are re-elected somewhere in the near distant future . . . I'm not too sure. They all claim that at the next election they are going to be the ones that are handling the reins of government. Well, Mr. Speaker, whoa to Saskatchewan, because we'll see more liquor board stores being built, Mr. Speaker. That's what we'll see. They'll stop the nursing home bed construction and build more liquor stores.

Mr. Speaker, we have sat in this Assembly and we have been soundly and roundly called down. We have heard them tell us how the throne speech does not address the needs in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we are in difficult economic times. We are working with the SARM, with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), with the federal government, and we'd like to be able to work with the members opposite.

But as we've seen time after time in this Assembly in the last four days, whenever they get on their feet to say anything, it is simply to say, too little, too late — simply to stand there and do political grandstanding, trying to grab the odd headline. They are so desperate for headlines because they are starting their campaign. They want headlines, Mr. Speaker, that's what they're trying for. They don't want answers, they don't want solutions. They want headlines. They don't care about people in Saskatchewan. They don't care.

The Minister of the Family was asked a question by an opposition member two days ago, about families and about hunger in Saskatchewan. And if you go back in *Hansard*, you'll see that we have addressed the needs of those who are hungry in the province of Saskatchewan, a straightforward answer. No political flimflam, no rhetoric. A straightforward answer. Yes, there are so many people that we are helping, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the program has been ongoing for the last 20 years. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are enhancing that program to deal with the hungry children in Saskatchewan.

Do we hear an acknowledgement from the members opposite? Do we have the member who asked the question standing up and thanking the member for that information? Do we have members opposite saying, it's a good thing that you're doing. No we don't, Mr. Speaker. We hear: too little, too late. They refuse to acknowledge advances in areas that they claim to be concerned about. They are simply looking for headlines.

Mr. Speaker, it clearly states that they are totally bankrupt of new ideas, completely in the wilderness, and are not sure what to do next except to lash out and hope that they can score a few cheap political points for the benefit of their next re-election plans.

Mr. Speaker, I started to talk about health care, Mr. Speaker, and our commitment to the families, to education in this province. In this province, one of the areas that we have to look at is the fact that we are a widely dispersed population, widely dispersed. A million people spread across one of the largest areas under one jurisdiction on the North American continent — less than a million people now. We're just under that million, we're just over that million, back and forth, depending on which statistics or which side of the House you care to believe, Mr. Speaker.

We have to have a system of moving the goods that we've produced, the products that we produce on our farms and our factories out into the world because we have to trade in the world, Mr. Speaker. We have no choice but to go out into the world and trade with people. We can't just close our doors and say, well, we're not going to go out and talk to people. We can't just sit here, Mr. Speaker, and say, I'm sorry, we're just going to be our own little world. We can't practise protectionism. We can't shut ourselves off from the world, Mr. Speaker, because we have always been a trading province. It is our life-blood. Eighty per cent of everything we produce here goes outside of Canada to be sold. So, Mr. Speaker, we have to go out into the world.

We have to look to new markets. We have to look to countries like Europe, eastern Europe, that are now, Mr. Speaker, achieving their freedom, achieving economic and political independence from the socialist and communist yoke that was placed on them years ago. Mr. Speaker, those countries are our new markets. Those countries are definitely there for us to work with.

And members opposite have asked questions about the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades, the latest round of negotiations. Well as they know, Mr. Speaker, because they claim to be the party of the labourer in the province and of the country, they insist on having tough negotiations, and they insist on having rounds of discussions and back to the bargaining table and all that kind of stuff.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly where we're at on a grand scale with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. That's exactly where we're at. And just as in negotiations and in situations where you get some pretty tough bargaining, you're going to see one side or the other make a move to try to put pressure on the rest of the group. And we see the United States once again putting

pressure on the European Economic Community by enhancing their trade subsidies, trying to say to the European Economic Community, if you want to play that game, we can play too. They're putting pressure on those countries.

(1045)

Mr. Speaker, we are caught in a bit of a cross-fire because we do not have the tax base that the United States has. We do not have the tax base of the European Economic Community. And countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, those countries are at a bit of a disadvantage in this war. We're at a bit of a disadvantage. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot sit here and say, well we're going to join in this war and escalate it even further. That would only complicate those discussions and negotiations.

We have made our points. We have stated our positions, and we are sticking to them, Mr. Speaker. We will not see this escalated. And, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the fact that 80 per cent of what we produce is traded outside of Canada, we have got to be able to maintain an infrastructure to move that product.

In recent years we've seen railroad companies and elevator companies talking about rationalization — closing down elevator points, closing down railroads, railroad abandonment. And it has put extra pressure on our provincial highway system, our provincial grid road system, Mr. Speaker.

In dealing with both SARM and SUMA, we have attempted to work with those groups in coming up with answers to what can be done. Now, Mr. Speaker, those groups are what I would consider to be fairly reputable groups. We have consulted with them; we have talked with them; we have worked with them. They have come up with ideas that we've implemented, Mr. Speaker. They have come up with new solutions, Mr. Speaker. They have been willing to sit down around a table with us; they've been willing to hear us at their conventions; they've been willing to talk to us.

Fourteen hundred people at the SARM convention listened to the Premier speak, and attended a bear pit session at which a number of ministers handled questions from the floor, openly and honestly, straightforward. There's no deception, there's no hiding. We're forthright. Sure we've made the odd mistake, Mr. Speaker, but we're not afraid to walk out and talk to people and listen to what they have to say.

And when we suggest that we are going to set up a group that will help to build on the consensus in this province that will help to put forward new ideas, it's ridiculed by members opposite, ridiculed by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, they're still living back in 1955, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact some of them still cut their hair like they were in 1955. I can't do that.

But, Mr. Speaker, those people across the way do not realize that we are into the '90s. We are into the '90s, Mr. Speaker. And we are into a world that is totally different from the type of world that was the basis for the old CCF

(Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) Party and indeed the NDP Party. That philosophy, that dogma, that rhetoric is old. It's gone. We're into a new world. We're into a world where we have instant communication world-wide.

The President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada, anyone, any leader of a country in the world today can be in instant communication with another leader. Information, information, Mr. Speaker, moved back and forth across the globe at phenomenal speeds is where we're at today.

We cannot fool people. You cannot sit back behind your little borders and say nothing's happening here. We've seen Romania, we've seen Bulgaria, Lithuania, East Germany. The eyes of the world are on any particular country or province or individual instantaneously today, Mr. Speaker. And members of the opposition have forgotten that. They are still trying to score cheap political points, trying to fool a few of their people back in their ridings that they're doing a wonderful job down here. And they're trying to do it by grandstanding, not by hard work, not by sitting down and trying to come up with solutions, but by grandstanding, Mr. Speaker.

And I would once again throw out the offer to members opposite, if any of them wish to sit down and discuss problems of transportation with me; come to my office, set up an appointment with me, meet me in the Assembly. I'd be happy to sit and talk with you. If you have ideas, bring them to me. Bring them to me. If you have a motion or a solution, put it forward on the floor of the Assembly. I'd be happy to discuss it. I'd be happy to work with you.

I don't think that members opposite really take that type of an offer seriously, Mr. Speaker. We can hear right now, Mr. Speaker, in the background, members of the opposition making comments about that offer. They're saying, oh, we did but you didn't understand; you wouldn't listen to us. I have not had one of those members opposite come to my office. I have had not had one of those members opposite give me a phone call. I have not had one of those members opposite sit down and say, Mr. Minister of Highways, we have a problem and here is a solution. They choose to use this Assembly simply to grandstand.

And I presume that somewhere I'll get a question in the next couple of weeks on something. And I would hope it would be on a topic that would be of importance for the day. I would hope it would be a serious matter that you would bring up and not simply some political grandstand that you think you're going to score a couple of cheap points on. I'm willing to work with you, but you have to also be willing to work with us.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is the basis of the throne speech, the fact that we as a government are willing to work with all groups in Saskatchewan today to bring our province into the 20th century, bring her along, take care of the 90s, work the problems out. And we are not scared to work with any group, not scared to work with any group at all, Mr. Speaker. But I will not stand for cheap, political grandstanding, as we have seen.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at some length. I could go on at some length, but I believe there are other members who wish to make comments. I will be supporting the motion on the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. Mr. Speaker, this is my first opportunity to speak in this new session, and I wish to bring you greetings and to wish you all success in this session, and I know you will do very well.

Mr. Speaker, I would also, since this is my first opportunity, like to take just a second to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Eastview over the last six months for their ideas and their concerns that they've expressed to me, and indeed for their support. It is truly a privilege to continue serving the constituents of Saskatoon Eastview, as I'm sure all members treasure and value the opportunity that we have as legislators to do that. I will just pledge to my constituents that I will continue to work hard on their behalf and to serve them to the best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I would like to put forward an amendment to the motion because I believe that the Speech from the Throne really fails to deal with the serious issues facing Saskatchewan families today. And so I will do that, seconded by my colleague from Regina Centre, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make just a few comments, very few, because they don't warrant too many, just made by the minister or the member for Kelvington-Wadena. And I listened carefully as he was talking and I really just heard a bunch of gibberish. This is a new minister. This is the new wave of ministers. This is a minister, I assume, that was brought in the cabinet because he had some vision of the future. He had some constructive ideas about how to deal with the real problems facing Saskatchewan families, as he acknowledged today.

And I thought he would have some new ideas — this is, after all, the throne speech. This is the opportunity for the government to defend its record, to put forward ideas for the next year. And, Mr. Speaker, while he talked about the NDP being partisan and let's get the partisanship out of this place and let's start co-operating, he spent 15 minutes attacking the New Democratic Party for ideas and policies that we had 10 and 15 years ago. And I might add that he played very loosely with the facts as well, Mr. Speaker.

And so the other thing that he did, which I found interesting, Mr. Speaker, is he's blaming the public of Saskatchewan, the poor people and those who can't adjust to the employment programs, and whatnot. He blamed them for not fitting into their system. So again, blamed everybody but the Premier of this province, which has been the theme of the ministers, the ministers of the Crown as they've been standing up, is to blame people for the problems that we find our province in at this time. Everybody but themselves.

And so I would say to the minister that some families are fitting into the system very well. Chuck Childers is fitting in very nicely and getting some 5 or \$600,000 dollars from the public treasury. His daughter is doing very well. George Hill is doing very, very well. So a few people are doing very well, Mr. Speaker, fitting into the minister's system. But the masses and the many of the people of Saskatchewan are not doing very well, thanks to the policies of this government.

So, so much for a sincere desire to be non-partisan. And one can only conclude, Mr. Speaker, that this is just the kind of hypocrisy that the Premier was exhibiting earlier in the week, is the kind of hypocrisy that we saw again this morning.

Again, the new Minister of Transportation who, by the way, might want to take a trip down Highway No. 11 to see the state of that road; it's an embarrassment to the province and, as my colleague says, that's some adventure. It's actually very dangerous right now.

But no vision, no vision from the minister of the Crown, no constructive policies, Mr. Speaker, and nothing to deal with the crisis of today. I didn't hear him say one thing, and I'm sure you didn't either, that would put food in the tummy of one hungry child or provide any employment or any sense of hope for people who are unemployed.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments I'd like to move on to my reaction to the throne speech on Monday. I guess the first thing I noticed in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, which sort of jumped right out at you when I sat down, is that we've got four rows of cabinet ministers and associate cabinet ministers and legislative secretaries. And I thought, boy oh boy, my expectations were raised because I thought this was going to be some positive throne speech with all those high-priced cabinet ministers and associates and legislative secretaries. And as you would have noticed during the ceremony, Mr. Speaker, there are so many ministers and associate ministers and legislative secretaries that there wasn't room for their spouses on the floor. They had to sort of move aside and bunch in together, and that was very startling. But I thought it would be a very good throne speech because not only are there a record number of cabinet ministers, we know that the Executive Council, the Premier's office, has some 89 staff, and I assume that they do more than phone into line shows, the program shows in the morning, that they would have some ideas to contribute.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I was greatly disappointed because what I didn't see was any vision articulated in the throne speech. I didn't see any constructive policies over the next year. I assumed, in my naïve way, I guess, that the purpose of the throne speech is to lay before the public your legislative platform for the year. That's what I thought that we were going to see on Monday. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a great disappointment, not only to me but to many of my constituents who have called me since the throne speech, expressing their sense of desperation that in fact this government has got no ideas again to deal with the very real needs that they're experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do for just a moment is

touch on how I believe most Saskatchewan citizens see the state of affairs in this province today. These are very difficult times. I acknowledge that, I accept that that was in the throne speech, that statement. We do have a sagging economy; we do have very high unemployment. We do have many, many people who are living in poverty. In fact we have in Saskatchewan the second highest rate of family poverty in all of Canada. And what's worse, Mr. Speaker, is that our public in Saskatchewan, our population, is falling into poverty at the highest rate of any other province in Canada. And that's an alarming trend, Mr. Speaker, that I'm sure all Saskatchewan people are concerned about.

We're in a situation where we have sold off at fire sale prices many of the assets that took many, many years to build up in the province of Saskatchewan — many of the assets that our seniors are very proud of; they worked hard to build up to create the kind of economic infrastructure that would serve us well in difficult times. We've sold off many of those, and I'll speak to those a bit more in a few minutes.

But we see a situation with increasing numbers of people having to rely on food banks. The Saskatchewan food bank is having to expand because their current space doesn't allow them to deal with the volume.

(1100)

And people are having to take numbers when they come in. They've had to bureaucratize the system because they can't cope any other way. And we met — my colleagues and I, including the Minister of Education — met with the school boards in Saskatoon over the last two or three weeks. And despite what the Minister of the Family says about the school lunch programs, I asked the question very clearly at that meeting with the public school board in Saskatoon, the question about hungry children. And they basically said, it's a crisis in the school system. The Minister of the Family is saying, well it's not that great a need from what he can see, which is another indication to me that the minister of families, while sincere and trying very hard, simply does not comprehend the problems that are faced by many people in the province.

And so we see very difficult times, Mr. Speaker. We see record level out-migration. Now the member from Kelvington-Wadena said that in fact the population was building up until 1988. The fact of the matter is that that isn't correct. We've lost some 54,000 people — net loss, Mr. Speaker — in the last five years. Surely that's a indication that the direction this government's going in is not the right direction, primarily because the out-migration numbers get greater every year. That must be a signal to the government that they need to rethink their economic plan, Mr. Speaker.

But last year we saw some 23,700 people leave the province in one year — net loss, Mr. Speaker. Many of these people, 60 per cent of these people are under the age of 34. Young people looking for opportunities — educational opportunities, employment opportunities in some other province, Mr. Speaker — having to leave their families in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not just a cyclical downturn in the economy. These people,

many of these people, will not come back.

We've also seen over a thousand people in the last three or four years come off the farm land, again because this government in eight years, despite its promises, has not dealt with the long-term problems in agriculture. They have not dealt with the issues of income stability in farming. They have not dealt with the issue of land transfers. They have not been able to deal with high interest rate. They've not been able to provide the kind of security and support, other than the *ad hoc*-ery programs around election times, for the agricultural situation in Saskatchewan.

And of course many of these people are young. I've been to a number of communities in Saskatchewan over the last six months. I've been to Eatonia. I've been to Norquay. I've been to Shaunavon. I've been to Foam Lake. And what people are telling me is that they simply have no way to transfer the land to their children. In fact they're asking them, urging them to get into the cities, to get to universities — of course they often can't get in because there are quotas — and to go to some other province, but not to stay in farming because they just can't afford to do that. So obviously everybody acknowledges that it's a difficult time on a farm. It's also a difficult time on Main Street, Saskatchewan, small town Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we also, in terms of the situation we find ourselves in, we have in the last three years in a row, we have set new records for the levels of personal and business bankruptcies. In 1989 over 1,200 personal and small-business bankruptcies in the province of Saskatchewan — the highest ever, Mr. Speaker.

And of course we've got record level debt. Mr. Speaker, we've got the highest per capita debt in all of Canada. This is a government that inherited a surplus just eight years ago — 139 million surplus. People are asking me in my constituency, how on earth in eight short years could this government have taken the province into a situation of some \$12 billion in debt, Mr. Speaker? People can't believe that the mismanagement has been that bad.

We've also seen, Mr. Speaker, eight straight deficit budgets, soon to be nine, and of course it was underestimated again this year, as it was last year, and now they're blaming the federal government for the big surprise that they didn't know that there was going to be a cut-back. So it's going to be higher than anticipated.

And so there's always a bogymen. There's always a bogymen, except this government, Mr. Speaker. But the point is, and the public won't forget it, this will be the ninth straight deficit budget — the ninth straight deficit budget, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague from Moose Jaw North says: now that's performance.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen as well record-level taxation. They bring in a tax, they realize it's not popular because they haven't thought it through, they phase it out. Mr. Speaker, they bring on a flat tax, 1985, which is now up to 2 per cent on net income.

They're supporting the GST (goods and services tax), and

my constituents are not fooled by this, Mr. Speaker. This Premier, the previous finance minister, were supporting the GST. They made that very clear in this House. They're now beginning to say — the Minister of Finance is — that well, we're not supporting the GST. But make no mistake about it, this Premier is supporting the GST. He's supporting his Prime Minister on this.

And the small-business people of Saskatoon Eastview and all of Saskatchewan, the seniors of Saskatchewan, the families of Saskatchewan, know this. They know this and they know that this government cannot be trusted, not only on taxes but on many, many other issues.

Mr. Speaker, this government cannot be believed. This Premier cannot be believed. He buys votes one term and phases out those programs in another term. A promise to this Premier is not a promise, Mr. Speaker.

In education, well, our education system, we've heard a lot about a commitment to education by the government. We hear that every throne speech and we hear that every budget speech. But, Mr. Speaker, again the K to 12 systems around the province are in a state of crisis. They can't get needed repairs to buildings. They can't get enough teaching staff and, Mr. Speaker, they're putting pressure on school boards to have to raise taxes at the local level.

Universities have quotas. We know that our library system in the University of Saskatchewan ranks about 101 out of 110 or 11. It's almost the worst. The computer equipment is breaking down all the time, and the president of the university is basically pleading with the government to in fact demonstrate that there is some commitment to post-secondary education in the province.

Of course, the technical schools are also in a state of crisis in the province, and we saw the labour dispute there, again which this government took no responsibility for, Mr. Speaker.

This is the government that just a few short years ago, again without being in the spirit of co-operation and consensus that they talked about in the throne speech, unilaterally reorganized the technical system, centralized the decision making and control, fired in a cold hearted way some 140 instructors, Mr. Speaker. This technical system is in a crisis.

So all these educational systems are in a crisis, and we see a 50 per cent increase since 1982 in the high school drop-out rate, Mr. Speaker. No solutions in the throne speech to try and deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, the farm crisis, and I've mentioned this briefly, but there is no question, Mr. Speaker, that there is tremendous stress on the family farm. There's tremendous stress in rural Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen by this government who professes to be concerned about the agricultural crisis, is we've seen thousands of legal actions against farm families, initiated by the government. Thousands of foreclosures on family farms initiated by this government, Mr. Speaker.

So who are they trying to fool that they're concerned about farmers. As my leader indicated a couple of days ago when he was quoting from a speech that the Premier gave . . . or an article he wrote in 1977, the Premier thinks that most of the small farmers in Saskatchewan are inefficient. He's not at all opposed to phasing out thousands of Saskatchewan farms, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, perhaps more cruel than his philosophical approach to doing away with small family farms and increasing the large farms and the corporate ownership of farms is that he is keeping farmers on the string, Mr. Speaker. He's playing politics. If there's anybody playing politics in the agricultural sector, it's this Premier.

We know the money is there by the federal government. We know it's there. The promise is there. All we know is that it's there and we don't know any of the details. And what the public of Saskatchewan suspects is that the Premier, at some politically expedient moment, is going to announce that it's coming through — possibly before he calls the election. Who knows? But again, he's holding Saskatchewan farmers out on a limb while he talks about co-operation and non-announcement with the federal government at the most political opportune time possible, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that the seniors of Saskatoon Eastview share with me — and I've met some some 300 of them over the last two or three weeks in the various seniors' complexes — is that they're very upset about the give-away of the assets by this government. They're very upset, for example, that just on oil alone, by changing the oil royalties that the Premier did in 1982, we have lost some \$2.7 billion in oil revenues, Mr. Speaker. This is objective information. We've lost some \$2.7 billion on oil alone, Mr. Speaker.

Health care, Mr. Speaker. The government thinks that they've . . . the previous speaker from Kelvington-Wadena talked about building a good health care system. Mr. Speaker, the health care system is still in a crisis; there is no question about that.

The dental plan in rural Saskatchewan is still a big issue. There are still many communities who don't have needed dental services. Another broken commitment by this government, Mr. Speaker.

What I found when I met with the seniors in Saskatoon Eastview is that there are still many people who can't afford to pay for the drugs that they have to pay for, Mr. Speaker. There are many seniors who can't afford the nursing home fees because there have been 10 or 12 increases in the last three or four years, Mr. Speaker.

There are still people in Saskatoon who can't get into hospital for needed surgery. The hospital waiting list hasn't been dealt with, Mr. Speaker. Home care people are concerned. Seniors are concerned because they can't get home care, because there's been a substantial reduction to the home care budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these are major concerns in health care that

were expressed by seniors in Saskatoon Eastview. The Minister of Education, I think is suggesting that the views that the seniors shared with me about their concerns regarding home care and the drug plan and the hospital waiting lists are not valid. Well I say to him that those are the people who are experiencing the impact of the cut-backs in health care by this government.

Mr. Speaker, families in the province are trying to cope. I would say I've spent 15 years as a social worker, Mr. Speaker, in a variety of settings in Saskatchewan, and I view in many ways being in public life similar to being a social worker. If people got a problem, they come and see you, and to all of us, and you try and help deal with their problems as best that we can.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would say that I have never seen, I have never seen in Saskatchewan so many desperate people as I see today, who are just desperate about what they're going to be doing; how they're going to feed their children; whether or not there'll be opportunities for them; how they're going to manage in their later years. There's a sense of desperation, Mr. Speaker. And worse, there's a sense that this government does not even comprehend that, let alone have ideas to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, we've also seen program cuts to family support agencies in the cities and throughout rural Saskatchewan, so human service agencies cannot deal with the increasing demands. They cannot respond to the needs that are out there.

We've seen all kinds of abuse levels increased as expressed because of the stress that's out there, and there are too few resources to respond to that stress, Mr. Speaker. We know that suicides are up with young people; the rate of suicide is up. We also know, as I noted in some of the belated annual reports that we got just a few days ago, that over the last two or three years that alcohol related accidents for young people are up and that the use of alcohol and the use of drugs is up among young people, Mr. Speaker. The use of alcohol is up among all categories, age categories, as people try to deal with their problems and try to dull the pain that they're experiencing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I guess another major concern, as I see it today, is the increasing intolerance that we see throughout Canada, on the Prairies, and indeed in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. As you will know from recent studies that the level of racism on the Prairies is about the highest in Canada, and we've seen pins, we've seen T-shirts. This morning of course we saw, we heard on the news that there's a hate letter floating around towards aboriginal people, directed towards aboriginal people. I've had two letters, Mr. Speaker, I assume as a critic for human rights, directed at minority groups — I've turned those over to the police — but directed at minority groups because of the increasing intolerance that we see in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

(1115)

And I would say that the situation has not been helped by this government. And I think this is important to put on the record that the discriminatory comments made by the

Premier of this province over the last two or three years, the discriminatory comments towards women by the minister of labour, who was at the time the minister responsible for the status of women, the discriminatory comments towards gay and lesbian people by this government, has in fact signalled to people who tend to be intolerant that it's okay to be intolerant. I mean, if they're getting those kinds of signals from the Premier and the top political leaders in the province, then I assume their message is that, well if the government is intolerant, well we will be too.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that those comments have contributed to the situation we find ourselves in today, and I don't think that that's stating the case too strongly or unfairly to the government.

I think we've also seen, Mr. Speaker, a total lack of leadership by this government in terms of dealing with increasing racism. I'm sure you will know, Mr. Speaker, that we're one of the very few political jurisdictions in Canada that has not actively, and in a proactive way, tried to deal with the issue of increasing racism. Manitoba has, Alberta has, B.C. has, Nova Scotia has, Ontario has, Quebec has, the federal government has; the cities of Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, and there may very well be other cities in Saskatchewan, have struck race relations committees. They are all trying to deal with the issue of intolerance. This is almost the only provincial government that isn't trying to deal with the issue of racism, that isn't trying to send out signals of creating and promoting a tolerant society, accepting of differences, a true multicultural society, Mr. Speaker, which should allow all minorities to be proud of their heritage and not be discriminated against when they do that. This is the only government who is not dealing with it.

They refused a native justice inquiry. They refused a child welfare native inquiry. Mr. Speaker, they cut the court worker program, the native court worker program, and they are not providing any educational services to try and deal with the issue of increasing intolerance in this province.

And that inaction, Mr. Speaker, I suggest, sends out the wrong signals to the public of Saskatchewan. Surely the people of Saskatchewan, surely the minority people in Saskatchewan, the minority groups, have the expectation that their political leaders will foster and promote a sense of compassion and tolerance. And in this regard, Mr. Speaker, this government has let them down.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the issues as I see confronting the province of Saskatchewan. These are the issues, of course, that I assumed would be addressed in the throne speech. We know it's a changing world; we know that. We know there are many challenges. These are complex issues, I'll acknowledge that; we're not suggesting they are not. We're not trying to minimize the magnitude of the issues that confront all of us.

On Monday though, Mr. Speaker, what the province was looking for was some vision. They were looking for some constructive policies; they were looking for a set of principles that the government would articulate. Surely this is not too much to ask in a throne speech. Surely it's

not too much to ask that the government would lay before us its legislative agenda for the next year.

In short, Mr. Speaker, what the public was looking for were ideas to deal with the real issues facing real individuals and real families in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's my assessment and the assessment of members on this side of the House that what Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan families are looking for is a sense of security. They're looking for opportunities for them to participate in the economic system in a meaningful way. And they're looking for a sense of hope, Mr. Speaker. They're looking for a glimmer of hope. And, Mr. Speaker, surely that's not too much to ask from the government — to provide that spark of hope.

I think it would be fair to say that it's generally felt throughout the province that the speech did not offer hope. It did not offer opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan, and it certainly gave nobody a sense of assurance that they were going to be more secure in the future than they are feeling that they are right now.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as people have called me in Saskatoon Eastview about this throne speech, they found it vague, to say the least.

An Hon. Member: — That's very kind.

Mr. Pringle: — They found it . . . As my colleague said — and that was kind. They found it offensive and they found it hypocritical in the extreme, Mr. Speaker.

I say that because this government took no responsibility for the situation we now find ourselves in. They blame the drought, they blame low prices, they blame subsidies, they've blamed other organizations. They blame the world for attacking Saskatchewan. This is dishonest, Mr. Speaker.

They talk about openness and honesty. It's time to level with the public. Take on some responsibility for the situation we find ourselves in. This didn't happen in the throne speech.

The second point that makes me say that the throne speech was hypocritical and offensive is that the government basically threw up its hands, that everything is beyond our control. There's nothing that we could do here in Saskatchewan to cope. We're pushed and pulled by world forces. We can't control the change or even try and tailor it or respond to it in any way. We can't influence it in any way.

They talked about the need for consultation and consensus as if it was a new idea, as if it was something that they just became aware of that the public wanted. Well they likely did, Mr. Speaker, because that's something that their poll probably showed them. Where was their sense of fair play and openness and consensus when they phased out the ward system, Mr. Speaker, in the face of almost unanimous public opposition to that. Where was their sense of consensus when they phased out the dental plan, Mr. Speaker, or when they broke their

promise on SaskEnergy and went against the will of the people?

An Hon. Member: — No consensus there either.

Mr. Pringle: — No consensus there either, as my colleague says. So this whole idea of a new consensus, Mr. Speaker, is phoney; it's because an election is around the corner; it's because they know the public is concerned. And, Mr. Speaker, the public sees through it.

What the speech throne also said, Mr. Speaker, is that we've moved too quickly. This is what the Premier keeps saying, we've moved too quickly. Privatization of SaskEnergy, we moved too quickly.

What he doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker, is he's moving in the wrong direction. Not that he moved too quickly, he's moving in the wrong direction . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . As the Family minister said, at least it's important to move even if you're going in the wrong direction, as long as you're moving.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. It's an affront, Mr. Speaker, it's an affront and offensive to the public of Saskatchewan when you say that you're ahead of the public. What the Premier is basically saying is that, look, I still intend to privatize SaskEnergy. We know now that they're making noises about privatizing parts of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), the general insurance side. And so there is no question, Mr. Speaker, that this is a government that cannot be trusted. It is not ahead of the people, Mr. Speaker, it is moving in the wrong direction. No wonder that the public trust is broken, Mr. Speaker.

They talked about getting revenue from natural resources, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated recently, or a few moments ago, they talk about that when they in fact have allowed the oil industry to take \$2.7 billion out of the industry that would have been returned to the coffers of Saskatchewan since 1982. They talk about getting revenue from natural resources, Mr. Speaker, when they decreased the large corporate tax, beginning of 1989. Or when they gave away the gas reserves, some \$300 million they received for 1.1 billion worth of gas reserves, Mr. Speaker. That's not getting revenue out of the resources, Mr. Speaker.

They talked about developing the Saskatchewan entrepreneurship. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that is hypocritical too, because to me that would be in terms of developing the entrepreneurship of small business people. We see by this government a commitment to the Cargills and the Pocklingtons and the Weyerhaeusers, yet we've had record level bankruptcies by small-business people the last three years in a row, Mr. Speaker. So what we've seen by this government is a betrayal of small-business people in favour of supporting their contributors to the PC Party, in favour of supporting their big buddies in the corporate sector.

Mr. Speaker, they painted themselves as protecting and stabilizing communities. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, with free trade and deregulation, with cuts to municipalities and privatization, what this government has done is that they've exposed small town

Saskatchewan to the world market forces, Mr. Speaker. They have not protected and sheltered and shielded small town Saskatchewan, they've left them open to the world market-place, Mr. Speaker. Well, that's not protecting and stabilizing communities in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech is filled with this kind of hypocrisy in many areas — many other areas — but I won't deal with them. It's filled with hypocrisies in the areas of development of rural services. Well how about the communities who still don't have dental services? How about the communities with post offices that are closed? How about the communities who don't have rail service? Mr. Speaker, did they say anything to their federal counterparts about those? No, they didn't.

They talk about protecting the environment, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what a sense of hypocrisy. Have they forgotten about Rafferty. Have they forgotten about the refusal to have a public inquiry into the pulp mills.

They talk about standing up for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They have not stood up for Saskatchewan. Everything that the federal government has done to Saskatchewan, like the GST, free trade, deregulation, privatization, VIA Rail cuts, this government has supported, Mr. Speaker. They're not standing up for Saskatchewan.

And the Minister of the Family, they talked about reducing poverty. Now I want the Minister of the Family to listen to this. The Minister of the Family says that the reduction . . . I have a heading here from the *Star-Phoenix*, Wednesday the 20th, 21st. The heading is "Reduction said goal of hunger initiative," and I quote, it says:

Mr. Martin admits that where the government says that through the Family Foundation we will introduce measure to co-ordinate and develop programs for the elimination (the elimination) of hunger in this province.

Goes on this quote, it says that:

Martin admits that the real intentions are more modest (the real intentions are more modest) than to eliminate hunger.

And then he goes on to say, which I don't understand, I don't understand this — the minister goes on to say:

I don't think it's possible to eliminate hunger totally. All we can do is react to what people who run the programs are saying. I think we can have some impact anyway.

What on earth is he saying there? I can't understand what the point he's trying to make, Mr. Speaker. Then he says:

. . . a comprehensive school lunch program, they're not asking for it anywhere. People are saying that all we need is a little help.

Well, what the Family minister is admitting here is that the objective to eliminate hunger that was quoted in the throne speech was not sincere. He admits that the real

intentions — unless he's misquoted — he admits that the real intentions are more modest.

Well, Mr. Speaker, is the entire throne speech a charade? Is the entire throne speech a charade? The minister is saying that the throne speech was not correct.

An Hon. Member: — He says from his seat: misprint in the throne speech.

Mr. Pringle: — Well he's saying from his seat a misprint in the throne speech. Well I would suggest, Mr. Speaker . . . if that is the case, then how is the public to believe the rest of the throne speech?

Mr. Speaker, to suggest that there is no demand for a school lunch program in the province of Saskatchewan shows that this minister does not comprehend the situation faced by hungry children in this province. You ask the minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Some hon. members on both sides of the House wish to enter the debate. That is a laudable and noble objective; however, if they would just be patient they will have their opportunity. Now the member from Saskatoon Eastview is speaking.

(1130)

Mr. Pringle: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that very much and I would be happy to listen very carefully to the throne speech debate from the Minister of the Family. I assume that he is going to articulate the vision that he has, and the government has, to provide some support and relief to Saskatchewan families. And he might even take the opportunity to articulate to the public what the mandate of his department is, which he still has not done, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Minister of the Family, who says that there's no need for a school lunch program, talk to the minister who is sitting right beside him, the Minister of Education, who was present the evening that the school board in Saskatoon said that hunger is a major problem in the Saskatoon school system.

And so . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes he did say that. I asked him the question. He did so say that. So, Mr. Speaker, that if the minister is sincere he will not make irresponsible statements like that, that there is no need for a school lunch program and, in fact, hunger isn't a major problem in the school systems.

After five months, after five months, Mr. Speaker, the Family minister, who is chirping at me from his seat, has not articulated his mandate to the public of Saskatchewan. I don't know what the Minister of the Family is all about. I get lots of calls asking me and I don't know what the Minister of the Family is about, except I will say he gave me a letter two or three days ago which outlined what he saw as his mandate, and I appreciate that very much. And I hope that he tells that to the public of Saskatchewan.

What I suggest, Mr. Speaker, is if this minister who says that the throne speech was misleading, who says that in

fact we're not out to eliminate hunger in Saskatchewan, that what he'd do is take a look, a look at the declaration, the United Nations declaration that this government signed in 1988, committing itself to the elimination of poverty in this province of Saskatchewan, and if he's not prepared to commit himself to that, Mr. Speaker, then I suggest that the best thing he can do is to resign and we could redirect that money toward school lunch programs.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech also talked about developing well-being of individuals in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I can't even respond to this because I just . . . they've fired insensitively so many people in Saskatchewan; they've put so many people out of work; they've driven people out of the province; they've muzzled their employees who tried to speak out, even though they're representing agencies on legitimate advisory boards, and they're muzzling people. Then they talk about developing the well-being of individuals.

They talk about supporting families. This government, this Premier, has talked a lot about the value of young people and the value of families, on the one hand. On the other hand, they let them starve; they let children go to school hungry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that again while some families are doing very well, thousands of families in Saskatchewan are not, and this is perhaps the biggest area of hypocrisy as I see it, is talking about the value of young people and families and then letting them starve, on the other hand.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech says that the public doesn't want waste. Well, that's correct Mr. Speaker. The public has been saying that for many years. But, Mr. Speaker, again the government does not take any responsibility for that waste. Mr. Speaker, what they're committing to do is get detailed financial statements from little NGOs, third party NGOs, from transition houses, as if the implication being that these organizations are not responsibly managing their money. But they're not asking Cargill to release any details of their accounting, even though we're putting up \$65 million and guaranteeing another 305 million. They're not prepared to have a public inquiry on GigaText, but they're going to hold transition houses to submit detailed public reports as if those are the groups that are wasting the money in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — Mr. Speaker, I have a little list that talks about 50 ways that this government is wasting money, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. They're wasting thousands of dollars daily, Mr. Speaker, on vacant government office space because they can't co-ordinate their cut-back of programs.

Mr. Speaker, they're world jet setting with no returns. Mr. Speaker, their waste on GigaText; their 20 cabinet ministers and all their EAs (executive assistants) and the Premier's 89 Executive Council staff, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, their sweetheart deals to Cargill, rather than taking that money and supporting small businesses in small town Saskatchewan. Their megaproject bomb, Mr. Speaker. It's a failing strategy. Small-business people are

saying this to the government, and they're not listening.

So it's this government that the public is saying needs to cut out its waste, Mr. Speaker, not the small transition houses and the small NGOs of this province.

So in all of these areas, Mr. Speaker, this government has been hypocritical. They have been . . . These are misleading statements, Mr. Speaker. And the public knows the record of this government, and they won't buy this attempt to be deceived.

Mr. Speaker, the blame, the responsibility for the broken public trust has got to be laid squarely on the shoulders of the Premier of this province, who is at an all-time low in his level of trust rating in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the mismanagement and waste by this government is very serious. But I would say, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps even more serious in the long term is their record on another level. This is the major emerging concern by the public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm talking about their record in the areas of public accountability, in the areas of withholding information, Mr. Speaker. They continue to reorganize departments from one year to the next making it impossible to compare expenditures. They did that through Bill 5 in 1986, right after they got re-elected.

Mr. Speaker, the public is concerned about the secretiveness of this government, the concern — small-business people particularly — because there are no tendering practices, no fair tendering practices. And so the minister today wonders why we get into the STC scandal. Well it's because again this government does not have a tendering policy that is open and fair and public.

Mr. Speaker, the government has been sabotaging public accounts. They have not been answering questions in this legislature even though they're ordered to do so. They still have not answered many questions that were asked up to two years ago. They were not co-operating with the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. In fact they attacked the Provincial Auditor when he wrote a special report expressing concern about the lack of accountability by this government, when he wrote a report saying that this government is breaking its own laws by withholding information from him.

Mr. Speaker, they are not giving the watch-dog agencies the resources to do the job, and then they blast the watch-dog agencies when they do their job, as my colleague says. When they issue a critical report, whether it's child care or the Principal Trust collapse, or the state of the withholding of information as the Provincial Auditor did, they blast publicly, servants of this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

That's the level of . . . that's the depth to which this government has sunk in terms of its trying to muzzle people, and their disregard for not being accountable, Mr. Speaker . . . for being accountable.

So while the Premier and every other member who has spoken has talked about the freedoms in South Africa, they've talked about the positive changes in Eastern

Europe, they are freely breaking their own promises. They have no tendering policies that are fair, and they are gerrymandering electoral boundaries here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, they talk about freedom in other parts of the world, but then they provide information to the federal secret service on Saskatchewan citizens without telling us and the public what the guide-lines are. So they like freedom in other countries, but in fact they're eroding the democratic institutions and freedoms here at home. Mr. Speaker, that is a dangerous signal that many people in Saskatchewan are concerned about.

So while they talk about democracy, they don't open their books to the Provincial Auditor. Mr. Speaker, they even break their own laws as regards to co-operating with the auditor — withholding information from him.

They set up Crown corporations so their expenditures can't be scrutinized. The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation is a good example, responsible for some 270 or \$280 million, Mr. Speaker, that is not cross-examined in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. They've done that on purpose. Mr. Speaker, these erosions of democratic practices and institutions are deliberate, they're insidious, and they are very dangerous.

This throne speech, Mr. Speaker, has very little support, has very little support. The public sees through it. This renewed phoney interest in consultation and consensus is viewed with a tremendous amount of scepticism.

Let me quote just a couple of lines from the *Star-Phoenix*, March 19. It's an editorial. The headline is "Expediency curbs bribes." And it says:

But don't be misled into believing that this government has changed in any fundamental way. It hasn't. As usual, it is only doing that which it perceives as politically popular.

Then it goes on to say:

Devine, like his federal colleagues, only embraces fiscal responsibility now that it is politically expedient to do so. It is the kind of leadership that watches where the crowd is going, then scrambles to be in the front.

Leaders worthy of the name would not have led us into this economic mess.

Mr. Speaker, that about sums up, I think, how the public of Saskatchewan views the record of this government and the throne speech.

I'd like to quote one other article, Mr. Speaker, again from the *Star-Phoenix*, because that's my home paper, and it's Tuesday, March 20. The headline is "Consultation carried too far." It says:

On Monday . . . the Devine government indicated it had no plans other than to allow a non-elected committee, called Consensus Saskatchewan, to

come up with ideas on how to run the province. By making this proposal, the government shows that it lacks the essential qualities of vision and leadership.

The people on this committee — 100 from across the province — are given some daunting tasks. They're supposed to examine diversification, survival of rural communities, government spending and efficiency.

That's exactly what government is elected to do (says the article).

The only reason for setting up this massive consultation committee seems to be that this is likely an election year.

So, Mr. Speaker, what it says basically is that the government is out of ideas, it has no vision, it has no positive policies. It says the government was elected to implement policies with ongoing input from all communities, not just at election time but at all times.

The last time this government talked about consensus was prior to the 1986 election. People of Saskatchewan haven't forgotten that. They won't be fooled by this, Mr. Speaker. You know that; I know that. And this is an insult to them.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the kind of society that this Tory government is building, this PC government, is like the U.S. government, the kind of society that they're building. It's like the kind of society that Margaret Thatcher is building. And this government likes to quote Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and George Bush, and I would suggest to them that these are the models that this government is supporting.

Now on a TV program two nights ago on CTV, we saw just how well things are going down there in this model society that the ministers like to talk about. The Premier likes to talk about this model U.S. society — supposedly the land of opportunity is the essence of the headline of the CTV documentary.

Mr. Speaker, it's a country that's broke, much like the province of Saskatchewan is going, under this government. It's a country that has some 40 million poor people. I would suspect that the Minister of the Family might say that's not a major problem.

Mr. Speaker, it's a country where there are some 35 million people have no health coverage. Again, much in the way that if this government continues to chip away at the health care program, we'll be in a similar situation as they privatize it.

Mr. Speaker, it's a country with a growing disparity between the rich and the poor, with fewer and fewer rich people and many poor people. It's a country, Mr. Speaker, where people lie on the grass, lie on the sidewalks across from the White House. Some 3 million Americans are homeless, Mr. Speaker. They're sleeping in alleys, they're sleeping in bridges, they're sleeping under shop covers, they're sleeping in garbage bins,

they're sleeping beside exhaust buildings, and in the ditches in the parks.

(1145)

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, not unlike this government, the U.S. government is cutting back on food; they're cutting back on education; they're cutting back on shelter programs; they're cutting back on social programs. Again, not unlike this government. Because the U.S. Tory government and the British Tory government, those are the models that these people look up to, and that's the kind of society that is being built down there in the U.S., Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of situation that this government is moving us towards, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of the Family has just indicated to me that he agrees that there is nothing wrong with that kind of society. Well I say, Mr. Speaker, that members of this side of the House do not buy that philosophy of a few winners and many losers.

The public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are a caring public. That's our history. We're a compassionate people. We're concerned about our fellow human beings. The seniors of Saskatchewan have built this province. Your parents, Mr. Speaker, your grandparents have built this great province. They've built it by co-operating and working together, not just at election times, but all year through, Mr. Speaker — urban people, rural people, minority groups working together, coming together and co-operating, Mr. Speaker. They built the province by working together.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the fact that this government is somewhere around 15 or 20 per cent in the polls is suggesting that they do not share the vision that the majority of the Saskatchewan public shares in terms of how to build this province.

Mr. Speaker, I believe and my colleagues believe in a Premier who stands up for Saskatchewan. We believe in a future that provides justice, fairness, and equality for all people, not just for a few. We believe in a future that provides all of us with the opportunity to make a living, a decent living, and the opportunity to raise our children in dignity. We believe in a future that provides for the security of our families and for our young people.

We believe in a future that is built upon a strong and well functioning mixed economy — not on megaprojects, not on privatization, but a strong and well functioning mixed economy, where decisions are based on sound environmental policies, Mr. Speaker.

We believe in a future that is built upon the people of this province having a large measure of control over their economy, over the decision making of their economy, and able to provide effective direction to their society, Mr. Speaker.

We do not believe in decisions being made outside the borders of Saskatchewan by the Cargills, by the Weyerhaeusers, and by the Chicago potash companies, Mr. Speaker.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, we believe in a future that all the people of Saskatchewan can look forward to with a sense of security, with hope, and with confidence. While we all look forward to the future, Mr. Speaker, today I share with the people of Saskatchewan a profound lack of confidence in the ability of this PC government to provide for our commonly held needs and concerns of today and tomorrow. This government, Mr. Speaker, as we've heard in the throne speech and as we've heard with the ministers who have spoken, does not have a vision, they do not have the policies, they do not have the will, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they do not have the ability to provide this kind of society.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, out of necessity I cannot support this throne speech, this motion. I cannot support a government that has no positive policies to offer or a government that is clearly out of step with the majority of Saskatchewan people. I cannot support a government that is out of touch with Saskatchewan residents. I cannot support a government or a leader or a Premier who is so mistrusted by the public of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this kind of situation that we find before us.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, because I can't accept this throne speech which I think was written by the PC pollsters, I would like to move the following amendment to the government motion, Mr. Speaker, seconded by my colleague from Regina Centre, and it reads:

That it be amended by adding to it the following words:

but regrets that the provincial government has betrayed Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan communities with the sham of its Consensus Saskatchewan proposal, by its continued wasteful mismanagement of the province's finances, by its failure to provide jobs and strengthen the economic base of all Saskatchewan communities, by its failure to develop an economic strategy which protects the environment, by its abject failure to provide long-term financial security to Saskatchewan farmers, and furthermore has failed to protect the province of Saskatchewan by following the lead of the federal government on the policies of free trade, privatization, deregulation, and the goods and services tax.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I want to begin by bringing greetings to the Assembly on behalf of the constituency of Regina Centre. This is the 15th year that I've brought greetings and, unless this government completely loses its nerve, it may well be the last time I do so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I was first elected in 1975 in the constituency of Regina Centre. The boundaries have . . .

An Hon. Member: — What have you accomplished?

Mr. Shillington: — Well the member from Regina South wants some assistance in knowing what has been accomplished. I have not nearly enough time to educate a man of intelligence, much less the member from Regina South.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — If the member from Regina South could . . . was able to listen, it would take too long.

I'm going to be listening with great interest when the member from Regina South finally takes his feet. Last time, in 1986, in 1982, he was elected in Regina North. He fled that riding because of poor prospects. All I want to know from the member from Regina South is, where are you fleeing to this time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I say to the member from Regina South, your prospects are equally poor in Regina South. I don't know whether there is a riding in Palm Springs, or something that might accept you or not. I just don't know. But it's going to have to be a long way south to get the member from Regina South re-elected.

I can dispose of my comments on the throne speech somewhat shortly, Mr. Minister. I don't think I have ever heard a throne speech with less comment on the legislative program of the government. I do not think . . . I think it's one of the longest I've listened to, and probably less said about the legislative program than any throne speech I can remember.

Virtually the only legislative item mentioned was what has been called . . . what is being called by the public "Sask con," "con Sask" — an attempt . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you know, I thought the name was a good one, but as time wears on, I think the name con Sask is becoming increasingly inappropriate because it hasn't conned a single soul.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Perhaps we can just call it the "non-con Sask," I don't know. But we do need a more descriptive name than con Sask, Mr. Speaker, because it hasn't conned anyone.

Mr. Speaker, there are any number of problems which this throne speech should have addressed itself to, and I want to point out just a very few of them. One is jobs. This province, for the first time in its history, has an unemployment rate which is within one per cent of the national rate. That has never been the case before. An abnormally large percentage of Saskatchewan people are self-employed. That means that they may be underemployed, but never joined the ranks of the unemployed. That's now changed to the point where

Saskatchewan has an unemployment rate which is virtually equal to that in Canada. What it means is, in real terms, is that this province is suffering a great deal more than it ever has before.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech might have dealt with the abysmal state of housing in this province. The housing statistics are really staggering. We are told that this year there will be somewhere between 1 and 2,000 houses built in this province. That compares, Mr. Speaker, with in excess of 10,000 houses a year when this government took office.

And in the good old days — perhaps they were not all that good — but in the mid-'70s we were building 14-15,000 houses a year. What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that those who depend on their living for the construction trades have simply had to go elsewhere. They've either had to find new work or go elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, if there were suddenly a demand today in Saskatchewan for 14,000 houses, I doubt very much if there would be the tradespeople to build them. Our tradespeople have simply left the province, and I suspect a good number of them will not come back.

The throne speech might have dealt in its legislative program with the problems facing agriculture. It spent a long time talking about agriculture and offered virtually no solution to what is becoming a very, very serious problem.

Those were the sort of things that I had hoped the throne speech would deal with. Instead we have a throne speech which droned on for 40 minutes and offered us only a committee of 100 which is supposedly to arrive at a consensus.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it should have taken 100 people. It doesn't take 100. Assuming that the brightest and best actually get on the committee, which is a very generous assumption that I don't think anyone makes — but assuming that the best and brightest get on the committee, it does not take 100 people, Mr. Speaker, to arrive at a consensus. Some items are very easy to arrive at a consensus. There is a consensus that this province needs a government with a bit more imagination and a bit more energy. There's a consensus that this province needs an election. And there's a consensus, Mr. Speaker, that this government is overstaying its welcome; this government ought to call an election and renew its mandate, Mr. Speaker.

I want to deal . . . Mr. Speaker, there being no legislative program, I want to deal for a moment with the province's finances. Mr. Speaker, last year the government forecast a deficit for the year which had . . . for the 1989-1990 year, up \$380 million. We were assured by the then minister of Finance that that matter would be rectified and that the deficit would go down sharply. We were assured at that time, Mr. Speaker, in his comments and in his address, that the deficit would be no greater than \$200 million. I certainly hope that's the case, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things I have done since we adjourned in August, in late August of last year, I have spent a fair

amount of time travelling around the province attending meetings on the goods and services tax — and I want to get to that in due course. But at the meetings, Mr. Speaker, inevitably the subject of taxation arose, and when the subject of taxation arose, so did the issue of government spending.

(1200)

If only one thing is clear, it is clear that the public are tired of the waste and mismanagement found at both levels of government. They are fed up with this government wasting their money; they are fed up with the federal government which is wasting their money. The public insist to the point of being — not at the point of a tax revolt, but to the point of being almost out of patience, the public insists that governments run a more efficient ship. They insist that there be no new taxes and that the deficit be reduced.

So we can only hope that the Minister of Finance, the new Minister of Finance, is able to meet the objectives of the former minister of Finance. We really hope that the deficit is no greater than \$200 million. That will simply not be acceptable to the public of Saskatchewan who are speaking as loudly and as clearly as they are able to.

And I say to members opposite that if the members opposite weren't so grossly out of touch, you'd understand that. And you would understand that the public are not prepared to tolerate the waste, the patronage, and the mismanagement which is just simply everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I recall for the benefit of members opposite, that between 1945 . . . 1944 actually, and 1982, this province only had three deficit budgets, none of them forecast. No government in the entire period, in the entire 37-year period ever forecast a deficit. Three occurred. In any event, when the books were tallied up in the public accounts, there were actually three deficits, but only three.

Mr. Speaker, in the entire period from 1905 to 1982, the total of all deficits by all governments, including the period during the '30s when the government of the day had genuine financial problems, the total was only \$70 million. This government's first deficit was almost five times the total deficit.

Mr. Speaker, this government was left with a \$139 million surplus, a government which was often described by writers not particularly known for their NDP sympathies as being the best managed government in Canada. That was a compliment, not just to the government which had preceded it but all three governments since the Second World War.

What happened? What happened is that this government's budget deficits are seemingly out of control. The minister has said he'll bring them into control this year. We fervently hope so. We fervently hope that that figure of \$200 million which was promised last year is met. The deficit and this government's budgeting process is completely out of control.

Members opposite will say, ah, but there have been hard times; you've missed that, Mr. Shillington, there have been some hard times.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Members are not to refer to themselves or other members by name.

Mr. Shillington: — I may say, Mr. Speaker, I'm not quarrelling with the rules but when members are prohibited from using their own name, I'm just saying we are great purists when it comes to these rules. Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I've said I accepted the rule.

Mr. Speaker, this government was left \$139 million. They have run up enormous deficits. And when asked about it they say, ah but there have been hard times. There has been an agricultural crisis. We have not enjoyed the affluent times which the province previously enjoyed.

Not all of the province's economic problems were the making of this government. Some of them, perhaps most of them, were brought about by external causes. I say to members opposite, and the public are saying to members opposite in increasing numbers, if you didn't create it, you've done nothing to try to solve it. But that's a little beside the point. The point is, there are some economic problems.

Mr. Speaker, let's analyse that. Let's look at the figures to see what has happened and how the economic difficulties have affected the government.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of living, the CPI (consumer price index) . . . before giving this speech I phoned Statistics Canada. Inflation has gone up by 44 per cent from March 31, 1982 to March 31, 1990. Inflation has gone up by 44 per cent.

What has happened to government revenues? Have they, as members opposite would have us believe, have they stood still? Have they gone down? Have revenues gone down, as they say, while revenues have decreased because of . . . No, Mr. Speaker. Even in constant dollars, they've gone up.

During the same period of time from March 31, 1982 to March 31, 1990, when inflation went up by 44 per cent, government revenues went up by 53 per cent — increased at a rate which was 20 per cent faster than they rate of inflation. So while this province has had its economic problems, this government's revenue has not been so effective. This government's revenue has gone up faster than the rate of inflation. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, there are very few people in Saskatchewan who don't know that.

A subject of constant complaint, Mr. Speaker, is the taxes. Second probably to waste and mismanagement when I was travelling around the province with the goods and services tax meetings, the second rate of complaint was the level of taxes, and of course the two are related.

What happened to expenditures between March 31, 1989 and March 31, 1990? Expenditures went up not by the 44 per cent that inflation increased, not by the 53 per

cent that revenues increased; spending went up by 71 per cent in those eight years — 71 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, in case there is some doubt cast upon that, I would refer members to the *Public Accounts* of 1983, given to me compliments of the hon. Bob Andrew, gave it to me and I . . .

An Hon. Member: — Kept it ever since.

Mr. Shillington: — Never lose that, no, never lose that. These are the *Public Accounts* to which I refer. The total government revenue for the period ending March 31, 1982, was 2.4 billion. The revenue for the period . . . And I now refer to the *Estimates*. No little card this time. The member from Lumsden is apparently not quite as civil as the member from Kindersley. Got no little card with this one. Budgetary revenue now is 4 billion. A simple bit of arithmetic shows that that's a 53 per cent increase.

Spending. Going back to the document given to me by the hon. Bob Andrew, then minister of Finance, we see that . . .

An Hon. Member: — Where's he now?

Mr. Shillington: — There's some curiosity about what became of the member from Kindersley. I will have some comments on that before I am finished.

An Hon. Member: — And talk about Graham Taylor, too.

Mr. Shillington: — I may get around to the former member from Indian Head-Wolseley, who knows.

Budgetary revenue during that period, for the period ending March 31, 1982 was 2.4 billion; 2.5 billion was the amount of the expenditures. Expenditures are now at 4.3 billion. That's a 71 per cent increase. A 71 per cent increase. The public may ask, how on earth could revenues have gone up by a rate which is 20 per cent greater than inflation? How on earth could expenditures have gone up by a rate which is 70 per cent greater than inflation when almost all of the public services are in disarray?

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, to look at who the winners and losers are. As one would expect, the department with the lowest increase during this eight-year period, the lowest increase is Urban Affairs. Actually, Mr. Speaker, the spending on Urban Affairs has gone down by 38 per cent — has gone down by 38 per cent.

That's at a time, Mr. Speaker, when the municipalities have faced ever-increasing costs. Mr. Speaker, we can all think of programs which have been cut, programs to assist in building recreation facilities, programs to care for indigent people, programs to assist in building highways and roads within the city. Spending on urban affairs has actually decreased in absolute dollars by 38 per cent.

The public of Saskatchewan protested this in the 1986 election. Urban people voted massively against this government. That was part of the reason why the member from Regina South had to flee the riding in which he had ran, and in which he proudly boasts that he had had a

business, flee to the apparent safety of Regina South. Again I really want to know where the member is going to flee to this time . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member says he's going to run in Regina Centre. How like a Conservative, how like a Conservative to run in a riding which doesn't exist any more.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other losers, it will come as no surprise to anybody in this province that the second department that is the second worst off is Social Services. I remember, Mr. Speaker, in 1984 when the then minister of Social Services in May of that year, when the then minister of Social Services introduced welfare reform, I remember being shocked when he described it. It was nothing, however, to my horror a couple of months later on when the federal government called an election and the session was adjourned, and I began to do some door-to-door work in my riding. I was appalled when I saw what welfare reform had actually brought us — actual hunger. The bread-basket of the world — hunger was everywhere.

What department is the third worst off? Well I think this will also come as no surprise to find that the Department of the Environment, the Department of the Environment is right next to the Department of Social Services as being the department which is worst off. The Department of the Environment . . . and I might add the Department of the Environment has added to it a large area called Public Safety. That used to be in Labour. It's now in the Department of the Environment. If you took that out, the Department of the Environment would have actually suffered a decrease in spending. Not hard to see where the government's priorities are.

What government . . . what area's fourth? Well I think it'll come again as no surprise to this Assembly to find out that right next to Environment, Social Services, and Urban Affairs, is the Provincial Auditor. At a time when spending in this government has gone up by 71 per cent, and at a time when the administrative problems have ballooned out of sight, during that period of time his budget has increased at about half the rate of inflation.

Mr. Speaker, if my travels around this province convinced me of one thing, if this government is looking for a consensus there is one thing upon which the public of Saskatchewan agree, and that is that a lot more resources are needed in the office of the Provincial Auditor to try and do something about the waste and mismanagement in this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1215)

Mr. Shillington: — If there is one area in this government that the public would . . . everybody would heartily approve an increase in expenditure, it is the Provincial Auditor. I can say . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I can say to the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg that my response at those meetings was to say that if there is a change in administration, a government led by the member from Regina Riversdale will restore to that office . . . Saskatoon Riversdale will restore to that office sufficient resources to do a proper audit. And inevitably,

inevitably that brought an applause, inevitably that brought an applause . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Wilkie, thank you, no doubt has a great deal to teach us in those areas. We recognize him as one of the ringing authorities in this province in such areas — renowned, renowned.

Mr. Speaker, one has to ask: who are the winners? Education, patent problems in education — they're everywhere. The Regina schools — and I'm going to get back to the subject of education . . . The member from Saskatoon — his riding escapes me — who is the Minister of Education . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mayfair, thank you. The member from Saskatoon Mayfair looks at me as if to suggest something I said was not entirely accurate.

All I can say is I'm going to get back to the subject of education, because the statistics on education are absolutely appalling. I am appalled to be thought of as someone who is in public life during a period of time when this has happened. And I'm going to return to it. I'm going to return to it. So education is not one of the winners.

Is health one of the winners? Hardly, hardly. We have all of the professionals lining up to complain to the government, the doctors, the nurses, the staff at the hospitals, all of the professionals simply have to take numbers to take a shot at this government; they're lined up. Who are the winners? I might mention the one which is right next to the Provincial Auditor. It comes as no surprise to anyone to find out that that's Highways.

The five lowest, and they are very, very low in the scheme of things, includes the Department of Highways whose funding has increased at half the rate of inflation and about a third the rate of the increase in government spending. You don't have to drive very far along Saskatchewan roads, streets, or highways to see the concrete evidence of that.

Who are some of the winners? Well clearly one of the winners are the bankers in Zurich, Tokyo, New York, Hamburg, and so on. Clearly we are spending a lot of money on interest that we never did.

Indeed I was interested in going through this document given to me with the compliments of the Hon. Bob Andrew. I was interested in going through this to note that the first year . . . the last year that the government . . . in the year ending March 31, 1982, the last year the former government was in office, our interest that we got on deposits was greater than the interest we paid on our short-term borrowing. There was no long-term borrowing at all in those days. We actually had an item which was interest on funds in deposit.

Such I guess are the . . . One of the things . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, this government doesn't believe that that happened, but that actually did. One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that the government led by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale is pledged to, is to return this province to a state of affairs where interest becomes an item in budgetary revenue again and is taken out the side of budgetary expenditures.

Clearly one of the winners is the interest. Interest is now the second largest expenditure in the government — third largest expenditure in government. Just next to education and health. We're actually spending more on interest now than we are in feeding the hungry.

I was interested in the comments of the member from Regina Wascana. He made some comments about hungry people. All I can say is he is a remarkably unobservant soul. Members on this side of the Assembly, since May of 1984, have been telling this government that welfare reform brought to this province real hunger. And the members on this side of the Assembly are not the only people who have made the point.

I recall a large, a very large city of Regina-wide, fund-raising program for the food banks, the motto of which was the poor have been with us always, but hunger? That was the motto of that drive. That was in 1985. I believe that the then minister believed that hunger had been with us always.

Mr. Speaker, one of the winners clearly are those . . . The major reason why spending has gone up by a rate that is 60 per cent faster than the rate of inflation at the same time that government services have been collapsing, as they are patently are, the main reason for that is waste, mismanagement, and patronage.

Mr. Speaker, the waste, mismanagement, and patronage is everywhere and it is most evident at the senior levels in government. And by senior levels in government, I mean those people who sit on the treasury bench; those people who sit on the front row of the desks opposite.

I want to just mention a few. I don't think I was in a single, solitary community in Saskatchewan — and I was in a lot of them; I've lost count — I don't think I was in a single, solitary community in Saskatchewan that someone didn't mention the name of Bob Andrew and Graham Taylor . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they are. The word you're looking for is "notorious," I think. They spit the words out.

As someone in Assiniboia, the member from Assiniboia will be interested to know, as someone in Assiniboia phrased it, someone in Assiniboia phrased it properly, said here are two people who retired on a pension in excess of \$30,000 a year, got severance pay in excess of \$60,000 a year, continued to work for the same employer at in excess of \$100,000 a year. Those people are on the public treasury. They're getting severance pay and they remain on the public treasury.

Surely to goodness that must strike even members opposite as an abuse that the public will not tolerate. Surely that must strike members opposite as an abuse that the public simply won't tolerate.

Let us suppose — and I'm not prepared to grant this, but it's not really germane to my comments — let us suppose that you can justify a trade office in Hong Kong. Let us suppose you can justify one in Minneapolis. Who in their right mind would have chosen the former member from Indian Head-Wolseley and the former member from Kindersley for those offices?

An Hon. Member: — Who would we have taken? Gordon MacMurchy?

Mr. Shillington: — Well the member from Regina South who is between pondering where he's going to run next time, finds time to comment, who would we have chosen, Gordon MacMurchy? You might have considered someone with some understanding of the Chinese language. That might have been an advantage in Hong Kong. You might have considered, there are . . . well the member from Regina South might be interested in knowing that there are people working for you who understand the Chinese culture, understand the Chinese language, and they understand trade and development. That might come as a surprise . . . (inaudible) . . . That might come as a surprise to know that you employ such people.

So if you think, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . ah well, there's the member from Regina South. This is the man with such a tight grip on the Saskatchewan scene that he goes to Hong Kong and boasts about nine months of summer. Well I wonder if the member from Regina South would mind explaining that to anyone on this side of the Pacific Ocean, because people on this side of the Pacific Ocean have the notion that if you live north of the 49th parallel you don't enjoy quite that balmy a climate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . One of the members says six months of winter and six months of tough sledding, an old Saskatchewan song.

Let us supposing that you actually felt you could justify a trade office in those two cities. If you did, surely you'd hire a professional, someone with a knowledge of the area, someone whose background is in trade and commerce. It's not a job for amateurs. The promotion and development of trade and commerce is a job for professionals.

The federal government, one of the elite areas of the federal's public service is External Affairs and trade and commerce. That's often where the brightest and best of the public servants go. What do these people do? Send people to Hong Kong and Minneapolis who apparently were not particularly qualified to serve their riding since they left them, much less serve in those . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Yorkton is offering his advice on all of this. I will refrain from making the obvious comment which occurs to me about the ministerial skills. I'll refrain from making the obvious comment about display of ministerial skills.

If people at the very top of the ladder don't display some regard for the taxpayer, how on earth do you expect others to? There was a question raised today about an expenditure which has the appearances of being a fraudulent purchase. No one condones that. And I hope the RCMP investigate it and I hope there's no interference with that investigation from the Justice department. But how can one expect public servants to respect the taxpayer when the members of the treasury board don't?

Serving in public offices in Saskatchewan is not a licence to plunder, and that is the way this government has treated it. It is not a licence to plunder.

Let me take another minister, one who is still serving, although perhaps only barely. Let me take the member from Qu'Appelle . . .

An Hon. Member: — And in conclusion . . .

Mr. Shillington: — No, I'm a little ways from being finished. The member from Wilkie can dry his tears. I am not about to bring this to an end.

Let's deal with the now Minister of Justice. I asked him last year for his travel expenses in his estimates, done very late in August. He didn't have them. I complained at the time about not having them. I said, I have asked this of every minister and you have been asked this for all seven years you've been in office. Moreover, I wrote you a letter telling you I was going to ask you these questions; please bring the information. You didn't. I find out why. Because when I got it, he has spent just a few dollars short of \$100,000 on travel. The Department of Finance 1988-89, for the year ending March 31, 1989 . . .

An Hon. Member: — Now that they've got that out of their system, they put a freeze on travel. They're sick of travelling.

Mr. Shillington: — Well of course they're sick of travel. They're getting jet . . . It will take the members of the treasury benches a year to recover from the jet lag. My heavens.

Let me just recount the paltry visiting — the paltry . . . For the year ending March 31, 1989, travel by the Hon. J. Gary Lane — I'm reading, Mr. Speaker — Minister of Finance, total . . .

An Hon. Member: — I'm sure you can.

Mr. Shillington: — Well you perhaps had wished I couldn't. Total: \$99,816.

Mr. Speaker, he went to London, England for six . . . Let's give him the benefit of the doubt. Let's say he went for seven days, from the 15th to the 21st of July. Let's call it seven; let's include the first and the last. He went to London, England. I phoned to find out what the air fare is: first class, all the way, is less than \$1,500.

An Hon. Member: — Not on the Concorde.

Mr. Shillington: — He spent . . . Oh, he went on the Concorde. Well that might chip another \$1,000 off this figure, but it's still an embarrassment. The total spent was \$22,500 for seven days.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you . . . The air fare is \$1,500. That leaves \$21,000. He spent \$3,000 a day. How on earth do you spend \$3,000 a day on the face of the earth? What did he do — rent the upper floor of the Ritz Hotel in London? How on earth do you spend \$3,000 a day? These figures are obscene.

(1230)

I'm going to have a question for the minister, and I want

you to be ready for it. I want you to tell me whether or not Graham Taylor has a membership in the Jockey Club in Hong Kong. I want you to be ready to answer that question, because my information is he does, and it comes in at over \$50,000 for a year's fees. I want to know. I want to know. I want to know. I want to know.

But that's information which you're undoubtedly going to bring us willingly and without any fuss. I know they will come to us willingly and they will give us all the information about the Jockey Club in Hong Kong. I know they will.

But we now have the information about the minister's travel — \$21,000 for six days in London. That's obscene. My colleague from Saskatoon Eastview spoke eloquently about the hungry people. I see them every day in my riding. While people are going hungry, this minister is spending \$21,000 for a six or seven day trip.

However, he recovered, believe it or not, he recovered from the excesses of that trip and he managed to find time to go to — I can't even pronounce all these; I think I can though — he managed to go to Paris, Geneva, Zurich, Frankfurt, Amsterdam. What was the reason for the meeting? Meeting with the financial community. That cost another \$22,000.

As soon as he got the jet lag out of his system, he was back at it again. In April he went to Japan and Hong Kong, this time for two weeks, and spent \$34,000 — \$34,000.

Mr. Speaker, how do we expect the likes of second level public servants in STC to respect the public purse when ministers of the Crown treat their offices as a licence to plunder — and that's what you've been doing. You've been treating it as a licence to plunder.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just point out, if I might, that the last minister of Finance in the Blakeney government, the government that came to an end on March 31, 1982, the last government, was Walter Smishek. What did he spend? — \$99,000, \$10,000? No. It was \$6,000, and that included in-province travel. That included trips to the Saskatoon chamber of commerce, Saskatoon board of trade, P.A. chamber of commerce to speak to them. The \$6,000 figure included in-province travel flights on the aircraft. The figure of \$99,000 does not include in-province travel. I'm waiting for members opposite to get up and defend a figure of \$100,000 for a minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, there are some ministers with some occasion to travel, but one of them is not the Minister of Finance. There is actually, in a properly run government, very little travel by the Minister of Finance. Some travel in the province, certainly, to explain the budget; in fact a good deal of it. Little out-of-province travel, very little — one conference a year or two or so in Ottawa, perhaps a meeting in New York. But \$99,000 for the Minister of Finance in one year? Compared with \$6,000 spent, if you multiply it by the rate of inflation in constant dollars, in constant dollars it's about \$9,000 dollars. In constant dollars the Minister of Finance in the Blakeney government spent one-tenth as much. That's what was spent.

Who are the winners? Well, the bankers are the winners . . . so are the members of the treasury branch and their friends. And I say to members opposite, the time is long since past when you should have been cleaning up your act.

I said in a jocular fashion earlier to one of the members opposite, I regretted that he had never seen a government, whether in Saskatchewan or otherwise, that was running normally. This is not the way governments are supposed to work. This government has to be the most corrupt in Canada. I say that without any fear, any hesitation about being contradicted. It has to be the most wasteful and the most corrupt in Canada.

I want to talk for a minute about a couple of areas. And I'm long past the time that I should have taken, actually. But I want to mention one other field, one other field, because it's education. The member from Saskatoon Mayfair, who showed some interest earlier, has now disappeared, fleeing as all members are.

The Speaker: — Order. The hon. member knows the rule regarding referral to the members presence or absence. I bring it to his attention again.

Mr. Shillington: — The minister might be interested to know that, as I'm sure that he probably does, spending . . . this government spends a smaller percentage of its budget on education than any government in Canada. That is a fact; that is a fact. This government spends a smaller percentage of its budget on education than any government in Canada.

What does that result in? Well it results in abnormally high burden being borne by property owners. It also results in a system of education that is not all that it should be. We, Mr. Speaker, have no reason . . . people of my generation have no reason to be particularly proud of the world which we bequeath to our children. We have polluted it; we have scarred the landscape; we have created any number of problems, which I won't repeat.

The one thing we could do for the young people, the one thing which is within our power, is to give them the best possible education so that they may meet the very difficult challenges with the best of tools. What have we done? We've short-changed them. Children of this generation aren't getting anywhere near as good an education as the children of my generation did. I talk to young people about what universities and schools were like when I went to them, and they just stand with mouths agape. The schools and universities . . . and time does not permit me to get into a comparison, but it really is pretty stark when I compare schools and universities when I went to them and schools and universities now. There is no question but what they aren't anywhere as good as they were 20 years ago.

What does that mean? It means that this province pays its teachers less than any province in Canada except one . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's what it means. Well, the member from Regina Wascana earlier was . . . is so out of touch, is so out of touch. That's the kindest . . . I was about to be a little less charitable than that, but I will leave it by

saying the member from Regina Wascana is so out of touch. Yes, I'm going to resist the temptation to describe his brilliant career as a buccaneer capitalist. I'm going to resist that.

Mr. Speaker, what we see unfolding is an enormous tragedy. It is going to take a long time to — in fact it will not — for those who go through this school system now with underpaid teachers, overcrowded facilities. The member from Saskatoon Eastview described university; he's quite right. The member from Quill Lakes and I, a couple of years ago, went on a tour of universities and — I will confess I had not been back, had not spent much time in a university since I left — I was shocked at what I saw. I was shocked at what I saw.

I would have thought the member from Meadow Lake would have had some thoughts on education besides the blather which is now emanating from that corner of the Legislative Chamber. I would have thought that it . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I believe that the debate should not be between members from the benches and the individual giving his remarks on the throne speech. The individual is there to remark on the throne speech. The members should listen. And there should not be a continuous debate between members in their desks and the member from Regina Centre. I would like to draw that to the attention of all members.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What has it meant? It has meant that we are short-changing a generation of young people. Damage that simply cannot be undone.

I recall visiting through the universities with the member from Quill Lakes. The lab equipment was fit for nothing but a museum — fit for nothing but a museum. Computers that even GigaText wouldn't take. The libraries, libraries in which trade journals, things that students need to keep up on the latest developments, have not been renewed in years. They are years out of date. This is what children of this generation are supposed to learn with?

What, Mr. Speaker, what has it meant besides having teachers that are second lowest paid in Canada? It's meant that a lot of young teachers don't stay here. They go elsewhere. They go to Alberta and B.C. I suspect it is inevitable that we are losing the best and the brightest of the young people.

Professors at university? They're also the second lowest paid in Canada, the second lowest paid in Canada. Class-rooms are so crowded it is difficult to get from one to the other between class-rooms. If members opposite don't believe that this is the case, just try spending a day on either one of our campuses.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, I had intended to make some remarks as well about labour, and I'm going to do so very briefly. One of the departments which I could not make a comparison, because there are so many changes in it, was Labour. It must be however that the Department of Labour has one of the lowest of increase of any department. That simply must be.

When members opposite are asked about it, all you hear is the big eastern union boss. I say to members opposite, while the Department of Labour has some responsibility for organized workers, its primary responsibility is to protect the rights of unorganized workers, those who are at the bottom of the economic scale. They do not have the luxury, as members opposite do, of retiring on a pension in excess of \$30,000 after eight years service, or getting \$60,000 severance after eight years service. They do not have that luxury. These are people who need the protection of the public service, and the public service hasn't been provided with the resources to do the job.

I'd wanted, as well, Mr. Speaker, to make some comments about Social Services. It is an embarrassment to live in a period of time when hunger stalks the streets of Regina, as it certainly does. It's just amazing, Mr. Minister, that ministers for years and years and years denied the existence of hunger, notwithstanding some learned and some independent reports on the subject. Any number of . . .

We, our caucus, did what I think is some very useful work on the subject of poverty and hunger. You don't have to believe ours. Study has been done at the universities by some people who at one point in time actually supported this government. Those studies point out graphically the hunger, they point out what an expensive problem it is. Hungry people cannot work, hungry people cannot look for jobs. Hunger is a . . . to put it at its crassest and to forget all about the human suffering — and as a Christian nation we should not be doing that — but put at its absolute crassest, that's a terrible way to save money because it costs, it doesn't save, to put it at its very, very crassest. And that is not the basis upon which our responsibility to the indigent should be put. It should be put on the basis of compassion.

Mr. Speaker, now we have the member from Regina Wascana, the Minister of families, discovering hunger. What's he going to do? Well he's going to seek a consensus, going to seek a consensus on the subject. I say to the minister, if it isn't obvious to you, and it must be, it is obvious to anyone else that prompt, remedial action is needed. And I for one am going to be looking at the budget. I for one am going to be looking to see whether or not some of these discrepancies in the funding of departments is remedied. But I will want to hear more about hunger than simply a task force. There's no need to study this problem any longer. It is just an embarrassment. There's a need for action, and I am going to be looking at that budget very closely.

Mr. Speaker, there were other matters that I wanted to deal with. I have gone on somewhat longer than I intended to. I think it is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that I will be supporting the amendment and opposing the main motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1245)

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — I am pleased to stand today to address the Speech from the Throne. The theme of the speech is building the new Saskatchewan consensus. And that

theme is very appropriate today for the people of Saskatchewan. The people's priorities are our priorities and those priorities include many things laid before you in the Speech from the Throne.

I was very curious and interested in the comments made by the previous member about severances. And I know that he neglected to inform the other members here of their previous leader, one Mr. Broadbent. And I want to quote from an article from *The Globe and Mail*, and the headline is, "Broadbent could earn up to \$175,000." The article reads:

Edward Broadbent, former federal leader of the New Democratic Party, will earn between 109 and \$132,700 annually in his new job as president of the federal government's International Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Development.

It goes on and on and on. The member opposite talked about severances and the need for change, and I'd just like to say to the members opposite that we recognize the need for change and we changed it. But I'd also like to remind them of what their leader had to say about change and the need for change, and I quote from another article, *Leader-Post* article, dated February 22, 1990. The headline is "Devine blamed for budget woes." But if you read the article, it reads:

But when asked if he and other NDP MLAs would be willing to show leadership by proposing the elimination of their severance package and rolling back their own salaries, Romanow was not so willing.

The right symbolic restraints are important, the NDP leader said, and it is just as important to display those symbols in other areas.

Whatever we do has to be tempered by making sure the pay package for MLAs and ministers is sufficient to attract a wide spectrum of Saskatchewan people (and then in brackets) to run for political office.

So as we see once again, the members opposite tend to speak from both sides of their mouth. I'd also like to remind the members opposite of the previous leader of the Liberal Party. He took that severance and left very, very happily.

Saskatchewan faces many challenges, Mr. Speaker, and those challenges are enormous. And it's our responsibility to speak to them. It's time to put the partisan political rhetoric behind us. It's a time for us to come together. It's a time for us all to work together. People working together built this province, and people working together will rebuild this province, will rebuild agriculture, and will place it in the forefront, will place it in an excellent position to take advantage of the 1990s.

The world is changing, Mr. Speaker, and we must change with it. We must step forward together and we must forget the fights of the past. People from all over this province are concerned. They're concerned about themselves and their futures. They're concerned about their families and

their communities, Mr. Speaker. They're concerned. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that we'll be there to help them. We'll be there to work with them.

Mr. Speaker, health and education are priorities for this government. They're priorities for the people of Saskatchewan. They speak to the development of personal potential. They speak to our future and to the future of our children. Education has been and will be a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of what members opposite say, education spending has increased dramatically in the past eight years and it will increase again this year.

The opposition members play games with numbers, Mr. Speaker. They play games with percentages. They talk about the operating grant and they don't talk about the way that the formula was funded before. They play numbers with games and they play games with people's minds.

They forget to include capital construction — capital construction, of which the province funds some 80 per cent. They forget to talk about teachers' benefits and their pensions. They forget about those kinds of things and instead play games with people's minds. They forget to talk about the educational development fund and the regional colleges. They forget to talk about the real issues of today — the issues that the people care about.

They won't talk about core curriculum and the need for change. They won't talk about the need to step forward into the future with computers and cells and things like that. They're scared of the future. They're scared of change, Mr. Speaker, and we're not.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have talked about health care and I'm very pleased to stand here today to talk to you about health care. A lot of the members opposite really, really don't even know what health care is all about. I'd just like to bring to their attention, I'd like to bring to the members' attention just how large and how important the health care system of this province is.

A lot of the members opposite probably don't know, but the health care budget this year is in the order of fourteen hundred million dollars, some \$1,400 dollars for every man, woman and child. It's an enormous responsibility, Mr. Speaker, it really is. And there's lots of room to improve it if we work together, but we must work together.

The provincial health care sector alone employs over 25,000 people in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's very important to communities, it's very important to the people of this province. And a lot of the members opposite don't know, but I think it's time that they were informed that there's over 500 separate boards and agencies that we deal with. There's over 130 hospital boards, 13 integrated facilities, 148 special care facilities, some 108 district ambulance boards, over 45 home care boards, 31 alcohol and drug abuse service agencies, 24 mental health support agencies. The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

A lot of the members opposite don't know, but I do, that

there are some 1,400 physicians in this province and each and every one of them is important to us. Of that, about 900 are general practitioners, another 500 are specialists. There's something like 90 optometrists, 100 chiropractors and over 900 pharmacists, over 370 dentists. The list goes on and on. There's something like 8 to 9,000 nurses in this province, 2,500 nursing assistants, and they're all important to us all. And their issues need to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, we're the leaders in health care in this province and will continue to be the leader in health care for the years to come. We must address the future and we must step forward together.

For two years the commission on health care has toured this province. They have tried to seek a consensus. They've listened to people and they've worked with people, and they're putting a report together for the people of this province. And I'd just like to inform the members of this House that that report is a report that's been prepared by the people of this province for the people of this province. And we hope to have it presented to us and to the people of this province in the next month. They will present a plan for the future. The people have spoken and the people will speak again, Mr. Speaker.

Funding for health care is a large part of our provincial budget, Mr. Speaker. It's about a third of our provincial funding and a third of our budget. I would just like to mention a few of the accomplishments because I really feel that I must speak to health care and the spending increases that have occurred in the last eight years.

Over 2,400 nursing home beds have been built. And I would just like to ask the members opposite to rethink and just think a little bit about what happened in the seven years prior to 1982 and how many nursing home beds were built. And I would like the members opposite to think, just think a little bit about where seniors were and where special care homes were. They were in the Department of Social Services, Mr. Speaker. And I must say that I think we have made an awful, awful lot of progress.

Close to 2,000 hospital beds have been built since 1982, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Speaker, those beds have been built all over the province. We hold most of the rural seats, and yes, we do build facilities in rural areas. We build facilities for seniors, we build facilities for families across this province, but we build them in the cities also. Look at the base hospitals and the improvements that have occurred there. It's all over the province, Mr. Speaker, all over the province.

Think about the Saskatoon Cancer Clinic, Mr. Speaker; think about Whitespruce; think about the improvements to Calder centre; think about 1,100 nursing department positions and 600 special care home positions. Home care has been expanded. The member from Saskatoon talked about cuts and funding to home care. The increase has been over 100 per cent in the last eight years, Mr. Speaker, over 100 per cent, and home care is available to all of this province, not just a small part as it was prior to this.

The members opposite talk in words, and the members opposite talk in circles and they deceive the public, and I don't think it's fair. The public is confused and it's no wonder why, thanks to the members opposite.

Think about the drug plan and what it used to be, and think about what the drug plan is today and what it will be in the future. A lot of members opposite don't know, but from 1977 or 1978 to 1985 . . . The member opposite talks about candies, and I'd like to talk about health promotion, and they're probably not good for the member opposite. And I'm sure, I'm sure that the candy, or the money that's spent on the candies, might be better spent at providing some meals for some of the hungry kids downtown in his constituency.

The drug plan has been improved, Mr. Speaker. It's been improved drastically. In the past, maybe members opposite thought that more drugs meant better health, but the reality is that's not the case. From 1978 to 1985, Mr. Speaker, the increased use in anti-infectives was something like 85 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to ask everyone if they really think that more drugs mean better health. The reality is no, it really doesn't. It's time to evaluate our system; it's time to improve it. And we're going to do that, Mr. Speaker. I've already mentioned Whitespruce, I've mentioned Calder centre, and I'd like to mention to the members opposite that many improvements have been made in that area. Funding for alcohol and drug abuse have increased three times.

I'd also like to speak a little bit about our bench-marks and some of the things that we've done and how we've looked at health care, and what it is and what it could be. And in the past, Mr. Speaker, we've looked at numbers. We've looked at numbers of beds, we've looked at dollars spent, we've looked at numbers of drugs used, we've looked at numbers of visits to the doctor, and we've talked of those kinds of things and looked at them as accomplishments.

But if you really take a good look at health care and take a good look at the people of this province, you realize that more health care, more spending, doesn't necessarily relate to better health. And it's time for us to revisit that and to really think about it. Maybe what we should do, and when we're looking for bench-marks maybe what we should really do is take a look at the needs that are there. And maybe, I would hope in the next five to ten years, rather than needing more beds, rather than needing more drugs, rather than needing more surgery, we could hope for needing less, and we will have made some progress.

To address those fundamental issues, Mr. Speaker, there's been some major initiatives put forth by this government. First and foremost, one of the things that we have tried to do is try to identify the priorities. And the priorities as we see them include health promotion. It's time for people of this province to think of health and being healthy as a priority, and for people to take some self-control over that. We've initiated the Everyone Wins. We've had to take a look at the system, and we've had to listen to the people, and we'll listen to the people in the future.

One of the things that we're doing is evaluating. I mentioned the utilization study on drugs, but we have to

evaluate more. We've increased funding to the Health Research Board, something like a half a million dollars this year to evaluate the system, to take a look at procedures, to take a look at drugs, to see, do we really need them, and could we do better with less, and less of the things that maybe we really don't need.

Mr. Speaker, we've set up a lot of committees. We've set up a committee on the safe use of drugs or the safe use of medicines. Seniors use about 45 per cent of the drug plan, believe it or not. And we all know, I think each and every one of us who's had a grandmother or grandfather who's had a purse full of pills and sometimes she was confused about what those pills were and what they should be used for . . . And I think it's time that we took a really, really good look at those sorts of things and tried to make some progress.

Mr. Speaker, our system is changing. It must change and it can be improved a whole lot. Something mentioned in the throne speech was a technological advisory committee to assess new technology, to take a look at it before we introduce it, and to select the right technology for tomorrow. We must be careful; the challenges are great.

We've set up a nursing advisory committee. Nurses across this province serve us very, very well, Mr. Speaker, and they have a lot of concerns. And it's time we brought them together and brought them together with the ministers. It's time that they came together with us and talked about education, talked about the work place, talked about their role in the future. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at quite a length for health, but I think it's time that we got back to the economic base of the province. And I know members opposite don't like to talk about agriculture. I know a lot of the members opposite, really, they've really forgotten that our roots are agriculture. Our economic base is agriculture and the challenges in agriculture are enormous.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn the debate, seeing as it's close to 1 o'clock.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.