

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE
(BUDGET DEBATE)

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, before we left for dinner I was speaking on the issue of privatization and why this government had given up, at least for the time being, on the idea of privatization. And I'm sure that all the members in the Assembly know why the government has backed away from talking about privatization — because it was so unpopular during the debate on privatization of SaskPower, SaskEnergy, during the last session. The government remembers how badly they were burned on the issue of privatization, so they think by not talking about it they will lull the public, Mr. Speaker, into submission, and to forget about the fact that this is a government that privatizes, that sells off the assets, whether it's the coal mines at Coronach, or whether it's the highway equipment, \$40 million worth of highway equipment sold for \$5 million, or whether it's the potash mines, or the Saskoil — all of these assets that have been sold off and given away to the friends of the Conservative party . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well the Minister of Finance hollers from his seat that this is the same speech he has heard before on privatization. And I say that you'll hear it many more times now and during the election campaign. Whenever you get around to calling that, screwing up your courage and calling an election, we'll talk a lot to you about privatization.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Now the members opposite may think they have the public fooled that they have stopped privatizing, but I want to tell you that the Conservative Party obviously is still in favour of privatization. And I want to quote from the **Star-Phoenix**, Tuesday, December 19, 1989. That's not many weeks ago. But the headline is: "Privatization plans should go ahead, PCs tell Devine." And it says:

The Conservative government should aggressively continue to privatize its privatization plans for Crown corporations, but it should do it smartly, PC supporters say.

So now you hear the minister in charge of privatization, the member from Melville, talking not about privatization, but he now calls it people-izing, a new word. Not public participation, not privatization, but people-izing. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and the public knows it, that privatization by any other name is still selling off the assets of the province.

Now what is this big conference in Saskatoon during May on privatization all about? Have you ever had a chance to read what this privatization plan is about, the conference or congress that is being held? Well it's being sponsored by a group here in Saskatchewan called the Institute for Saskatchewan Enterprise, and I see a picture of Roger Phillips here, the president of the group. Now Roger Phillips, you will all know, heads up the Ipsco operation, but also a well-known Conservative, well-known Conservative.

And I read from the brochure where the Prime Minister, the Conservative Prime Minister of the country and the Premier of the province, are inviting people to come to this privatization conference. Now what is this going to be about? What is the privatization conference going to be about?

Who are some of the speakers who are going to be there? Well one I want to mention is a Herbert M. Birch, Jr., from the Birch and Davis Family of Corporations in the United States. Now Mr. Herbert M. Birch is responsible for the strategic planning and general management of the Birch and Davis Family of Corporations. Collectively, these companies constitute the largest free-standing management consulting organization in the United States, specializing principally in health care management. Birch will be speaking on privatization of health care on Monday, privatization of health care. The Premier of the province and the Prime Minister, inviting the people of the province — and it will be mainly bureaucrats from the government attending — going to listen to Mr. Herbert M. Birch, Jr., speak on privatizing health care.

Now why would the Premier want the bureaucrats and the people from the Health department to come to a congress in Saskatoon, where the fees are, I believe, are \$1,150 for entry fee into this congress? Why would they be going there to listen to Mr. Birch speak about privatizing health care, if the government wasn't planning to privatize health care after the next election, if the people of the province voted for them?

Well the member from Weyburn and the Minister of Finance wants to know who else is speaking. There's another person here. The second speaker — and I'll do a few of these — but the second speaker is a Dr. Eamonn Butler of the Adam Smith Institute in England. Now he is a director for the Adam Smith Institute in London, and:

Dr. Butler has served as a Research Associate for the U.S. House of Representatives, a Philosophy lecturer in Hillsdale College in Michigan, and a tutor at City Polytechnic and Hollins College. Dr. Butler will be discussing privatization of health care services on Monday.

That's two of them — two of them talking about privatization of health care.

Well I want to say a few more things about the conference. This conference is being held in Saskatoon. The registration fee is \$1,150, payable in advance, and includes a welcoming reception and luncheon, a

Saskatchewan evening, and conferences and sessions and material. Now we will be asking the government about their input into this conference — how many cabinet ministers will be attending, how many civil servants will be going . . .

An Hon. Member: — Who will be paying their fees?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Who will be paying their fees? That's a good question. And they're expecting 2,000 people to attend. Now that will be something over \$2 million in registration fees — \$2 million. Isn't that interesting?

Now it may be just a coincidence, but \$1,150 registration fee is the amount that political donations can be and still get a tax credit. May be a coincidence, may be a coincidence, but it could be possible that the Tory government is going to be paying about 1,000 civil servants to go to this conference at \$1,150 a crack. And we'll be watching to see who attends, but it could be that the government, the taxpayers of the province, will be paying the \$1,150 registration fee to attend this conference on privatization . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Where did we get this number from? It's in your brochure, Mr. Minister. No, it's in your brochure.

An Hon. Member: — Where does it say that? Read it again.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It says it right here. It says, the registration fee is \$1,150 Canadian or \$950 U.S., payable in advance. Now what we're indicating here is we're going to be watching to see how many civil servants will be there to discuss with Mr. Birch and Mr. Butler the privatization of health care . . .

An Hon. Member: — How many did you say were going to be there?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — We say there's going . . . You say there's going . . . It's not how many I say. You say there's going to be about 2,000 people there.

Now I say that when you get there . . . And the Minister of Health may be there discussing privatization. I imagine he will be, learning about how health was privatized in Great Britain. That's the main theme or at least the beginning theme of this conference.

Now again in the budget the minister refers to . . . This may be only by coincidence, but on page 8 of the budget, he says:

Can we, as taxpayers and users of the system (that is, the health care system) sustain double digit growth in health care spending year after year?

Now it may be only a coincidence that we have a health care privatization meeting on in Saskatoon and the minister talking about whether or not we are able to keep the health care system we have at the present time. What does that mean? Well I say when the Minister of Finance raises this concern about health care spending, it should be a warning to the people of the province that privatization of health care, which was started with the privatization of the dental program, is only the tip of the

iceberg. You better believe we're going to be talking about privatization during the next election campaign.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Now where is the minister of privatization? The one who was here last year, Graham Taylor, who sat in the seat that the Minister of Finance now sits in . . . It's a bad seat. Where did he go to, this guru of the free enterprise system? Where did he go to when he left his employment as a government elected member? Where did he go? Did he go to Hong Kong and take his money and invest over there and try to be on the leading edge of capitalism which these people believe in? Well no, he didn't. He went to Hong Kong at a salary of \$100,000 a year, maybe more. To do what? We have not a clue of what he will be doing over there. We don't know. No one has ever explained why the minister of privatization was promoted to a government position in Hong Kong, but what we do know is we no longer have a minister of privatization.

Well I just happen to have here a copy of the **Public Accounts** document that was tabled the other day in the House that deals with the expenditures of the privatization department last year. I want to spend a minute talking about where the money was spent in that department. I'm not going to read it all, Mr. Speaker, because it would take too much time.

But the minister, the Hon. Graham Taylor, he got \$37,000 extra pay as minister — that's understandable, he was the minister — and also \$8,294 in travel. Now the total travel budget for the department was \$75,000 — \$75,000 — people flying around, checking out privatization, health care, government services, all of those things that these people intend to privatize after the next election.

But what else did they spend money for in that department? Well Decima Research, people will know that name, \$13,000 to Decima Research. This was probably the polling done during the privatization of SaskPower where they found out that only about 25 to 30 per cent of the people supported what they were doing.

Then they have Dome Advertising, \$513,000.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Five hundred and thirteen thousand dollars. Now this is what happened after Decima told them they were only at 30 per cent on the issue. They brought in Dome Advertising to spend half a million dollars trying to get it back up again.

And then we have Dome Media Buying Services, \$361,000, and the Minister of Finance laughs at this. He thinks it's a big joke. He thinks it's a joke that the people of the province paid close to a million dollars on the privatization of SaskEnergy which — was a flop, which was a failure — which I say the Tories will never recover from because we're not going to let them forget it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well there's some other people who

got money. SJM Communications Services — and we're going to come to the bottom of this one as to what that company is about — they got \$552,000. There's one other interesting pay-out here to a Colin Hindle, \$34,000. I'm not sure what that would be for but we'll be asking more questions about that as well, and one other group, Strategic Public Affairs of Canada, \$25,000.

Now all of this money put into privatization to promote a concept that today we don't hear a word about, not a whisper — not a whisper. Decima and Nancy McLean have said, don't utter that word any more. But your idea that you went with privatization based on Decima and Nancy McLean last year — they told you to go with privatization. Now they're saying, don't go. Why don't you listen to your back-benchers, the people in the back benches, the people in your party who are telling you that? Well I say this is a government that is bankrupt of ideas. But we all know that privatization, if this government is ever re-elected, will go on to privatize not only SaskEnergy and SaskPower, but the health care of the province as well.

Well I want to turn to one last issue and that is the total issue of waste and mismanagement of this government. We've seen literally millions being paid out to companies like GigaText and Joytec and Supercart, Weyerhaeuser, Pocklington, Canapharm. Now we're talking about Cargill getting a big payment.

What I can't understand is why this government would give a deal to Weyerhaeuser of \$239 million in loan guarantees and loans at 8 per cent interest and at the same time ask the farmers to pay an interest rate of ten and three-quarters. Why is that, that a U.S. company would get an interest rate two and three-quarters per cent lower than what the farmers do? Why would the Minister of Finance do that? Why would they do that?

(1915)

An Hon. Member: — Where'd you get that number?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — That number was given to us by the government when you were privatizing that corporation. You gave us the documents. But not only that — you said that they didn't have to make any payment on the loan unless the profits were in excess of 12 per cent.

Now when did you offer that kind of a deal to the farmers? You didn't do it with the farm production loan at 6 per cent, In fact, when they don't make their payments, do you know what you do? You take their farm. That's what you do. That's what you do. You take their farm. Hundreds of the foreclosure notices that are on the books of this government come from the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier of this province.

Now he talks about holding hands with Weyerhaeuser and Cargill to build the province; and he does; he gives them special deals. But where is that handshake and holding hands with the farmers of this province? It isn't there.

I want to read to you a letter that appeared in the *Leader-Post* a few days ago from a former commissioner

of the Canadian Wheat Board, Charles Gibbings. And in the letter he talks about Cargill and the loan, and the letter is headed, "Cargill loan astounding." I won't read it all, Mr. Speaker, but I'll read a couple of important paragraphs:

I was astounded to read recently that the Saskatchewan government is proceeding with its plan to grant Cargill a loan guarantee of \$305 million to assist in the construction of a \$435 million fertilizer project at Belle Plaine . . . for a 49-per-cent equity in the project.

And he goes on to say:

Does this make sense to you, when you consider that Cargill is the largest private corporation in the world, with an annual budget . . . It is reported that 60 per cent of the farmers of Saskatchewan are in serious financial difficulty.

And it goes on to talk about why would you give this kind of a loan guarantee and special rates to Cargill grain when you don't have the same deal for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Minister of Finance, you can explain all you want about why it's important for Weyerhaeuser and Cargill to get special deals from the taxpayers of the province, but I'll tell you that the business people of Saskatchewan, the farmers, the working people, are not buying it. They simply are not buying the idea that Cargill grain would come to Saskatchewan and pick up this kind of cheap money from the taxpayers of the province.

So in closing, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that while it looks bleak, and while there are a great number of problems here in the province of Saskatchewan, that with a government that is committed to the farmers of the province, the working people, and the business people, we can turn this around — that the \$13 billion in debt that has been built up by this Finance minister and Finance ministers before him can be turned around.

But if we're to keep on with the privatization, with the mismanagement, with the privatization of health care that is predicted in this International Privatization Congress, we are doomed in this province to a life-style and an income that will match that of the third-world countries of the world.

Therefore I'll be voting in favour of the amendment and in opposition to the budget as presented by the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, in addressing the 1990 budget, I must again say it's a huge disappointment for the people of Saskatchewan.

I would like to outline some major aspects of the budget as it relates to the province and as it relates to the North. I would first of all like to raise that issue of the deficit. Everywhere I travel, whether I come to southern Saskatchewan or as I'm travelling throughout the North,

people are talking about the huge waste and mismanagement by this government. They are saying, how is it possible that we can have a \$4.4 billion deficit when we had \$139 million to the good back in 1982? Why is it that in one year we will be increasing to the tune of \$363 million, this coming year? And of course we knew that figure is probably not accurate because we well remember in one year the same government was \$800 million out in their calculations.

Last year, when we looked at the budget estimate, they said that we would have a projected deficit for that year '89-90 to the total of \$226 million. When I read the budget this year, we look at the figure of \$390 million. That's not 5 per cent out or 10 per cent out, that's over 70 per cent out. If any business or any farmer in this province was out 70 per cent they would have gone broke a long time ago. This government and their mismanagement has produced the worst situation that we've seen in the whole province's history.

When we look at it in another way, what it means is that, in terms of the debt, we'll be paying \$56,000 an hour. There are many people in this province who could use \$56,000, but yet we are unable to deal with seniors' programs, children's programs, and many health and education programs that people are asking for, whether in the rural area, the North, or the South. When you look at that, it means that the interest on the debt is now going to be \$1.344 million in one day. Each day we'll be spending over \$1.3 million.

When I look at a place like Cumberland House, in just a few days on this interest payment, they could build a brand-new bridge. When I look at this deficit, in just a few days we could have brand-new personal care home for the seniors in Creighton or for the seniors in Sandy Bay, or having home care expanded in many . . . well I would say in the two communities plus other communities in northern Saskatchewan.

We would be able to do much of the improvements on our dangerous roads in northern Saskatchewan. We would be able to help out a lot of the businesses and also the workers who are looking around for jobs in northern Saskatchewan. We would be able to find a way of supporting the business community right in

We would be able to do much of the improvements on our dangerous roads in northern Saskatchewan. We would be able to help out a lot of the businesses and also the workers who are looking around for jobs in northern Saskatchewan. We would be able to find a way of supporting the business community right in La Ronge, right now as it relates to Cameco . . . As usual, Cameco is bypassing the North. The town of La Ronge, the Indian band . . . (inaudible) . . . La Ronge have gotten together to try and meet with the government and Cameco so that they take part in the development at Contact Lake.

What they're being told is not very enlightening or is not very positive. What they're hearing are excuses and more excuses as to why a community will be bypassed. We know that the Contact Lake mine is only 40 miles north of La Ronge and 20 miles of which is paved. And I overheard that the excuse used was the fact that the roads weren't

good enough. I thought to myself, if they help the community people in that area, I am pretty sure that they would be most pleased to drive that extra 20 miles on gravel road to get to a job that they really, really need. And I'm pretty sure that many of the business people in the town of La Ronge would be very pleased to see a change in the direction by this government.

So what this budget does in regards to working people, and farmers, and business people, is that they are unable to get the support that would ordinarily be there. But instead, we have to pay the bankers and the financial institutions in regards to this huge debt. We at the same time have to forget about our families and our communities.

One of the interesting things in the budget is the fact of economic diversification. I've been around here since 1986 and I've been listening to the speeches for the past three and a half years in this legislature, and I've heard it also at the federal level with the western diversification fund. But the reality is this. We have seen very little action — a lot of talk about diversification this and diversification that, but we never see the results.

This year we hear a lot of talk again in the budget speech about diversification and trade and the amalgamation of the new department. In my opinion, the expectation that has been created is basically all talk. Because even in that economic diversification and trade budget, we see that it's been cut back by \$50 million. Fifty million dollars would help a lot of the communities throughout Saskatchewan.

We also looked at the fact of within that budget of economic development and tourism, we looked at the fact that 58 per cent has been cut, Mr. Speaker — a total of \$9.8 million. And here again, one of the diversification goals of this government was to get into that area of tourism. And when I see this cut-back of 9.8 million, all it does leave for this budget is \$7 million. That means that way over half has been cut.

(1930)

The other thing that I looked at in regards to the budget is the famous statement on page 13 of the address, and it says in there that there are no tax increases in this budget. I was quite amazed when I saw that actually written in bold letters. And here we have just come across a gas tax increase. And it is very interesting on that, Mr. Speaker, because on that particular gas tax, the Premier himself had stated very clearly that as long he was a Premier of Saskatchewan there would never, ever, ever be a gas tax. What we are seeing today is a 10 cents a litre gas tax — this that comes directly from a Premier who said he would simply not break his word, that he would follow up on it.

And here, he expects us to trust, he expects us to believe that he will have true consensus. In that particular instance many people of Saskatchewan threw their arms up in the air and said, what can we really believe; what can we really believe when even the Premier himself cannot live up to his words.

It's interesting, when I looked at the history of taxation in

Canada, one has to look at the amount paid by the ordinary citizen through income tax and how much the corporations are paying. During the '50s, corporate tax and income tax were balanced. They were approximately the same. They shared the equal burden of providing revenues for the needed services in our system. By the time the late '80s . . . by the time the late '60s, I mean, rolled around that amount had been trimmed for the corporations to a 20 per cent mark. They were now paying 20 per cent of the revenue.

When we looked at the ordinary person and their income tax level during the late '60s, we were now going on a level of 30 per cent. So by that time the Liberal and Tory governments across Canada and also provincially were moving in a direction of decreasing the amount of corporate tax. When the NDP was in office in this government during the '70s we increased the corporate tax and we made sure that they paid their fair share.

We know that in the case of potash, the potash corporation which this government wants to privatize was especially very important in providing revenues for this province. During the Liberal years, they were able to provide only about a \$16 million amount to this province in terms of revenue.

When the NDP came in and increased the corporate tax levels, they also provided a greater control of the Saskatchewan economy by providing public control of potash, which had about 40 per cent of the world resources. It was very important in the economic community, as everyone understands, that you have to have control of a good base of whatever resource you have.

Within a four-year period we had controlled about 40 per cent of the potash that was sold in the province. And at that time, in just a six-year period, we were able to get \$986 million. That was \$986 million less for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. That \$986 million was able to provide for a lot of the roads we now see in the province of Saskatchewan. That \$986 million we got from potash, during those years of the NDP when the potash corporation was around, provided a lot of money and built a lot of schools in this province. It also built a lot of hospitals.

And I think we have to recognize that as we look at the whole situation of the degradation of roads, not only in the rural areas but in the North, that the amount that they're able to collect from the corporations is very miniscule.

I would say this much in regards to the PC strategy. The PC strategy is basically to give more to the big companies; the PC strategy is basically to roll back the royalty rates. Six years following the NDP, the potash corporation along with the other potash companies returned to the province \$274 million. That was a loss of over \$700 million.

This is the reason why today we go into a situation where there are higher taxes. The promises that the PCs made, right from 1982 when there would be no increases in the gas tax and that there would never be a gas tax, have

proven completely false.

There is also the fact that the health and education tax was supposed to somehow disappear during PC rule. They even said we could mismanage our economy and still make money. They said that very, very clearly.

But we end up with a 40 per cent increase in regards to the E&H (education and health) tax. When a lot of families, whether in the northern Saskatchewan stores or in the rural areas or anything, go in to buy clothes for their children, they have to pay an extra 40 per cent since the PC government has come in. And this was a promise again that was broken by this government.

When I look at the fact of the flat tax, the flat tax at 2 per cent now takes away about \$600 for a person making \$30,000 a year. Six hundred dollars per person at that range is a lot of money. It buys a lot of clothes and a lot of food for families in this province. But the PC government simply will not provide a proper base and a fair tax system for the people of this province. In general, they have continued the trend where today we now pay over 40 per cent of the taxation revenue in this country and the corporations pay 10 per cent.

And it's even worse in this province. I know that the royalty tax roll-backs . . . Even in northern Saskatchewan there was a 1 per cent roll-back on the uranium mining companies. That was a total of \$7 million, because the production was about \$700 million a year in northern Saskatchewan.

In other words, when the communities ask for capital dollars and the municipalities ask for capital dollars so that they can develop, there is no increase. All they can expect from this government is greater taxation, and this government has the gumption to say that there is no tax increase in this budget.

We well know that every single school board in this province in regards to the taxation question is saying, we should go back at least to the 55 per cent rate that it used to be, where the province provided 55 per cent in regards to the amount provided to the school boards. What it is is under 50 per cent now.

A lot of the people, the organizations . . . I have said that really the formula should be 60-40; that in reality the province should be footing in 60 per cent of the revenue in regards to the school boards throughout this province. But of course the government, although in regards to the goal of . . . in regards to the rhetoric of consensus, will not make consensus with the school boards of this province. They will not provide for a proper revenue base for the school boards so that they can carry out a good education in this province.

I was listening to the radio this past week and also even today they were talking about the roll-backs and the problems of even colleges, the possibilities of colleges closing down, a college closing down at the University of Saskatchewan. I was listening to the news at supper time.

So this government simply provides too much money for the big corporations, and in the end result, the families,

the children, the seniors, the education and health systems in our province suffer.

One of the other things that had come out in the budget that was extremely disappointing was the so-called help to the children, the 64,000 children who are below the poverty line in this province. It was absolutely amazing that, number one, this province did not reinstate the northern food transportation subsidy program. This transportation subsidy program would provide good food to the children of northern Saskatchewan. It would provide fresh vegetables, it would provide many of the basic necessities that we enjoy in the South. But this government will continue to subsidize whisky, they will subsidize wine, they will subsidize all kinds of liquor that go up to northern Saskatchewan, but they will not subsidize the food for the children and families of northern Saskatchewan. That is a shameful part of Tory strategy in this province.

(1945)

I think it's very important to state that along with some of the northern concerns, most of them simply weren't addressed in this budget. Even the Northern Affairs Secretariat was cut back by \$68,600. Northern revenue sharing for the municipalities, zero per cent. It means they're going to have to pay for the extra over 4 per cent inflation rate. There is also a \$10 million cut in housing and \$12 million cut in highways, and this is at a time when a lot of our highways need improving.

The other thing that's very important in regards to the community level, and I noticed that the Minister of the Family was here the other day, was that in regards to alcohol and drug programs at the community level I noticed that SADAC (Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) was cut by 6.2 per cent. And here there was a lot of hoop-la in regards to saying that they cared. But a cut-back is not caring. They simply don't care about the people. And I am pretty sure, every time there is a general cut-back, we get hit at a greater rate in northern Saskatchewan because of the higher transportation costs, and so on. And this government never has paid much attention to that factor.

The Minister of the Family says they did nothing for them, the NDP did nothing for them. We had a lot of housing that was built in the North during NDP years. Most of the roads that you can't even maintain in northern Saskatchewan were built in NDP years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — And for the minister, most of those jobs . . . We were able to hire over 50 per cent of the people on the mines of northern Saskatchewan, and now they're down to about 8, 10 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — For the minister who dares to talk from his seat, I would say that he does not know the history of northern Saskatchewan.

I think it's very important to recognize also that the

environmental question is something that has to take on serious consideration in the North. I will only mention straightforward that this government was supposed to do some work in regards to the Namew Lake mine, 25 miles north of Cumberland, to provide much more jobs for the people of Cumberland by building a road towards that mine. Nothing in this budget, absolutely nothing.

At the same time again, I will mention the bridge. I will also mention the fact that the second phase was . . . They're supposed to do a proper environmental . . . a comprehensive environmental impact study on that, but they never, never did anything about it, absolutely no follow-up, and the second phase has started on that Namew Lake mine. And that's the only place where we . . . the only direction we can get clean water from, as far as Cumberland is concerned. Right now the Saskatchewan River is too filled up with dioxins, etc., to be able to drink from it.

I would state also that they did absolutely nothing in regards to the 250 gallon PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) spill in regards to Sandy Bay — absolutely nothing in the budget. Absolutely nothing! Eighty per cent of the emissions were supposed to be cut back on the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting mine in Flin Flon. On the Creighton side, a lot of our trout have just completely disappeared. There was supposed to be a cost-shared arrangement between the province, the federal government, and also the mining company — but nothing at all in this budget in regards to that.

There was nothing at all in regards to the pulp mill and the proposed pulp mill in the northern areas in regards to doing something of a more comprehensive nature. And I would say that the other important aspect — over 150 spills in the uranium mining companies — there still hasn't been decisive action taken by this government.

In summary, I would like to state this. I see the Premier standing up today in regard to the idea of consensus, and I was listening to what he had to say. And I just couldn't believe it because the other day I was sitting with some farmers from different parts of this province, and they were talking about how to deal with interest rates and the debt crisis.

When I read in the paper yesterday, I saw the Premier had created a conflict situation — not only between himself and the farmers, but also tried to create a divide and rule strategy between the farmers and labourers. And here he had just finished talking about consensus and getting people to work together in this province to create participation, and a lot of those people that left here must have thought that is hollow talk. Indeed for a leader like that to turn around and after talking a great line about consensus and partnership and putting down the farm community in that way was just . . . It was — In my own opinion, after meeting them and hearing their story, it was disgraceful.

When I looked at the fact that here you had the farmer and the labour people trying to work together to build consensus in this province, to co-operate, what does the Premier do? He takes a run at the fact that the farmers can have a meeting inside the SGEU (Saskatchewan

Government Employees' Union) building. I found that absolutely amazing because in many cases a lot of the . . . One of the other members mentioned that if some of those people from the Christian action group, if they had called a meeting at the Roman Catholic church, maybe the Premier may have called down the Roman Catholic Church, and that would be the logic of it. Why would you want to call down a group? I found that utterly irresponsible.

And here we see again the strategy of this government. They're trying to create division in this province; they're trying to create divisions. They do not want to see the farmers and the workers to get together. They don't want to see Indian and non-Indian people to get together in this province. They don't want to see men and women work together in this province. All I hear from them and their tactics and strategies is one of divide and rule. Every time we try and work together in this province, they say all the things that creates division.

I guess in regards, in a summary statement, I would say again, this budget is very, very disappointing to the people of Saskatchewan. It's very, very disappointing in a sense that it does not truly work with the families and the children of this province. It does not try to create consensus for the farm area, for the workers, for the business people, and so on. All we see is cut-backs and deception. The only thing that I see increased in this budget is advertising, and all we get from here is rhetoric. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I support the change that was made in regards to the resolution, and in regards to the amendment, and go against . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the hon. member from Weyburn and the Minister of Finance on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Will the member permit a question, Mr. Speaker? He referred to the travel budget not being . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The hon. member must inform me why he is on his feet before he begins to . . . before he tells . . . before he gives me the argument he is about to propose.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question?

The Speaker: — Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Goulet: — No.

The Speaker: — The hon. member refuses. The debate continues.

Mr. Goulet: — On a closing comment, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, as a closing comment, I would say in regards to the query by the minister that I think the government has had a chance to try and listen to the people. But the point that really struck me in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is this: the same Minister of Finance who tries to raise a question didn't even have the decency

to raise the issue of the people of northern Saskatchewan, and I was extremely disappointed with his budget when there was not even one word for the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I indeed count it an honour to rise in my place this evening to speak to the motion in the budget debate presented by my colleague, the member from Weyburn, the Minister of Finance, and also to add a couple of thoughts regarding the amendment presented by the member from Saskatoon — amendments, Mr. Speaker, which as I was listening to, presented this afternoon. I guess I have to ask the question: in the amendment, if I'm not mistaken, it brought out the idea about cutting taxes or cutting the deficit but increasing spending without raising taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I come from a farming background, and I'm very well aware of the problems that are being faced in agriculture today. As I recall the budget speech that was presented by the Minister of Finance, I recall some of the comments made by the Premier about a month ago regarding programs that had been in place that, due to economic difficulties and indeed trying to bring our budget closer to reality, were cut; programs that were cut to save dollars and save on money in the budget so we'd have more money for the areas of health and education, and indeed agriculture. I find it difficult wondering how we balance a budget with fewer taxes, and indeed adding money.

And I know the Minister of Finance and I'm sure cabinet had a great deal of difficulty as they wrestled with the problems confronting them in dealing with the problems we face in this province. And I know many of the members opposite in a lot of ways agree that we would like to have a balanced budget. The members opposite have talked at length on the fact that there should be a balanced budget in this province.

Some information I just received the other day, and I'm just taking note . . . When you look at a lot of the provinces across this nation and it appears that Saskatchewan isn't the only place facing difficult economic times, because most of the provinces in fact — not all — have deficit budgets which is an indication of the economic times we're facing at this time.

Mr. Speaker, when I . . . First of all I want to deal with a few comments in the field of agriculture and the fact that this budget is placing \$525 million and making it available to the farmers of this province.

And a comment was just raised that it's new debt. Mr. Speaker, I've met with many farm groups. I've met with many farmers over the past number of weeks, in fact months, since this Legislative Assembly recessed last June. And, Mr. Speaker, when I sit down with farm groups and as the comment came from across the floor about added debt and just recently, even this morning, Mr. Speaker, in talking with farm families and with agricultural groups, the \$525 million that was presented in the budget, Mr. Speaker, is a ten and three-quarter per cent loan. Yes it is a loan. We recognize the fact that it is a

loan.

(2000)

We recognize the fact that farm families are indeed in trouble and having difficult times. In fact the member from Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition, recognizes that fact as well. In a letter talking about agriculture, he talks about us emphasizing the fact that help for farm families is help for the entire province, and that indeed when farm families are struggling, small communities struggle, small businesses struggle, and in reality, everyone in the province struggles.

Ten per cent of Saskatchewan's economic output and 35 per cent of its exports, Mr. Speaker, presented by the member from Riversdale, indicates that come from agriculture, and we are well aware of that. And when we talk of a \$525 million loan, Mr. Speaker, I look at it, and as was addressed again today, \$525 million loan and yes, it is a loan, but I find there are a lot of farmers today that are trying to put their operating loans into place. And in reality ten and three-quarters per cent is certainly a lot better than 16 per cent, which . . . 16 per cent or so that the farm communities, the farm families, are facing when they go to the bank.

And I also am aware of, Mr. Speaker, that when farmers get assistance, when there's a dollar in the farmer's pocket, everyone benefits. We all realize that the farmers are more than willing to pay their debts and to take care of their commitments, and they go out and spend and support their local communities, the local businesses, many small businesses which in my constituency are having difficulty as well and are looking for help.

I asked one business . . . I shouldn't say one. I was doing a little bit of door-knocking in Indian Head-Wolseley two weeks ago and a number of businesses I walked into and I was talking to the business people and I said, I would imagine that things are difficult as well for you. And they said, yes they are. And I said, well what should we do as . . . or be trying to do to maybe help you out through the economic times? And they basically said: place the dollar in the hands of the farmer; he'll come in and my business will operate and I'll keep going, and in fact, become very efficient and have a good living out of it.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about putting money into agriculture, we're not talking of just putting money into agriculture. We're not talking of just putting money into the hands directly of a few people who are on the farm. But that money, Mr. Speaker, turns over and over from the farm to the small business and indeed right up into the large urban centres and large urban businesses.

I also want to reiterate the fact that in this Assembly a little over a week ago, Mr. Speaker, we all agreed that \$12.50 an acre . . . As one farmer said to me, what's that going to get me, it's not going to put a crop in the ground. And most people are aware of the fact that it can cost anywhere from 50 to \$100 an acre or \$120, depending on the inputs you put in, depending on what your cost of servicing debt, that that figure can vary from farm to farm, and \$12.50 isn't a large amount. We recognize that but, Mr. Speaker, the fact that \$12.50 is there, guaranteed by

the government, is an indication, in my opinion, to the lending institutions that we're committed to helping the farmers of this province.

But we're also working and employing and calling upon the federal government to recognize their responsibility in our country and in the area of agriculture. We all remember the debate which took place two weeks ago where everyone in this Assembly debated the fact that there should be a \$500 million cash injection into the province of Saskatchewan and there was unanimity right across this Assembly. We all agreed on that fact.

And, Mr. Speaker, recently when Mr. Mazankowski said there's \$220 million available if the provinces . . . or actually \$500 million available if the provinces will put up some money . . . I've talked to many farmers, and I've asked them, well if \$220 million roughly is available to Saskatchewan farmers at the present time and we're supposed to put up . . . Presently, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance brought in a budget which has a deficit indicated of roughly \$353 million; a \$200 cash injection out of the province of Saskatchewan automatically bumps that deficit to \$563 million.

When you start asking the farm community the fact that the prices that they are facing we in Saskatchewan have no control over; it's an international problem that we all have to work together with, and I believe it is indeed the responsibility of the federal government to exercise their leadership and provide that cash injection for the farm community, working together with the province. And there isn't a farm group in this province that doesn't believe that. There isn't a farmer in this province who doesn't believe that cash injection . . . In fact, members of the opposition agree as well that we must indeed hold the federal government responsible for the area that they are very careful for.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at our \$525 million loan, we've also indicated that we want that money out there to help farmers put the crop in the ground. I remember the Minister of Finance indicating that the major costs and the major areas of expense right now in putting the crop in the ground are your fertilizer, chemicals, your fuel, and your seed. And as farmers, if they have a dollar in their pocket, they will indeed, as they go and put that crop in the ground putting in the inputs that they feel are necessary, and the good Lord willing, we have the rains, I find that there isn't a farmer around who doesn't believe if he gets a good crop this year that it would give him the added incentive and the ability to become self-sufficient, and indeed to begin to pay some of the loans that he's fallen in arrears on.

Mr. Speaker, I also note in a letter from the Leader of the Opposition, calling for a moratorium on farm foreclosures in this province. Now we've talked to a lot of farm groups. I've talked to farmers; I've talked to farmers right across my constituency. I've talked to Sask Wheat Pool committees; I've talked to Sask Wheat Pool delegates. I've talked to farmers of all persuasions as far as political ideals. I haven't sat down just with farmers who supported me in the political sphere, but even last Friday sat down with some 26 farmers in the Rocanville area, and one farmer did in fact mention, well we should have a

moratorium in place.

Mr. Speaker, I've also sat down with many of our lending institutions, and I've sat down with local credit unions. And I happen to be a member of a local credit union, and the thing that has come through very loud and clear — and I suggested to the farmers I was sitting down with that their local credit union where most of them were dealing — they've indicated to me, in fact, in my constituency that a couple of credit unions have pretty well extended themselves to the limit and are facing very grave difficulties.

And the credit unions, it's not just the managers, but it's the board of directors who are local individuals, local people, local credit union members who are directors have said to me, do not impose a farm moratorium or you will hurt us very directly. And when you start hurting the credit unions across this province, Mr. Speaker, you hurt individuals like myself and like many members in this legislature. You hurt each one of us; you hurt the older people; you hurt young people who have put their money and their savings into credit unions. When you start explaining that, I have found most farmers have agreed a moratorium really is not the answer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that indeed as a government we have over the past number of years indicated and shown our willingness to work with the agricultural sector. We have poured a number of millions of dollars into the farm economy. And of course you can say, well you've poured millions of dollars but look where the farm economy still is. We realize that times are difficult. We realize that without a crop it's difficult for anyone. When you look at the fact that there is \$115 million directly into farmers' hands and the Saskatchewan crop insurance or the Canadian crop insurance and the drought assistance programs, that is the provincial commitment.

Saskatchewan Water Corporation water supply program last year, there was \$33.7 million. The farm purchase program, rebates to farmers of 94.5 million; counselling and assistance for farmers of 29.5 million; farmers' oil royalty rebate of 80.7 million; the livestock investment tax credit of 36.6 million; ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) capital loans interest subsidy of 16.5; production loan interest subsidy of 73.2; the livestock cash advance interest subsidy of 73.4 million; the irrigation subsidy of 22.4 million; provincial stabilization and livestock facilities and other drought programs; the green feed program.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of programs over the years geared towards agriculture, and in fact some \$823 million that this province has tied into agriculture since 1985, along with commitments with the federal government.

And we're well aware of the fact that farmers continue to have difficulty. In fact I don't think there is anyone on this side of the House or indeed on that side of the House, just to sit down with a local farmer or sit down around the table with a cup of coffee, will not agree. And when you're sitting down . . . And I remember being in one home with one young couple where the local lending institution was at the point of calling the note on them. It

wasn't easy, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't easy being there hearing of the difficulties they are facing, and I really felt for them. The unfortunate part, Mr. Speaker, in a lot of cases as I've talked to farm groups, there are many farm groups, and bar none, it doesn't matter whether it's the wheat pool, or whether it's the United Grain Growers, or the western wheat growers or whoever; your SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) delegates or SARM committees, or anyone in your community, there isn't one person who will say that every farmer is going to be viable.

In fact if I read statistics correctly, since 1971 we've had in the neighbourhood of 1,000 farm turnovers every year. And since 1985, Mr. Speaker, it's been around the 500 mark. And even today farm groups will say as money is put into agriculture, you can't target it. It can't be just put out for a certain few. As I've been talking to individuals. They said, of the 525 million, make sure that everyone has a chance to use it. For, Mr. Speaker, and you would ask why? Well they will say, the costs that I have are just as much as the costs that my neighbour has to bear. Everyone faces the same problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe this \$525 million that we are placing indeed will be placed in the hands of farm families, will go a long ways to giving the farm families an indication that we're with them, and that indeed the greatest thing that we can do is help them put the crop in the ground so that as they see that crop spring to life and begin to grow and get the moisture in the spring and the moisture in July and they pull off a substantially good crop — in fact, a bumper crop this fall, Mr. Speaker — there are going to be, as I've noticed around even my community right now with the moisture we've seen just in the last little while, the long, drawn faces have begun to turn into big and large smiles as people look ahead.

You know what farmers are? Farmers are optimists. They believe and they're willing to take a chance. In fact, farmers are, like you say, they're almost gamblers. One person made the comment about, as a farmer, he related farming to going to Vegas. He said the only difference in Vegas is that when you lose, you lose quickly. It doesn't take you a long time to lose your . . . The loss is immediate, whereas on the farm it isn't.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the privilege of attending the Saskatchewan provincial prayer breakfast, leadership prayer breakfast, and I had the privilege and a few other members in this House heard Mr. Olaf Friggstad, a gentleman from Frontier who had a vision a number of years ago and started to build farm machinery and farm equipment, and he related some of the difficulties he faced.

He related the fact that his father left Minnesota in 1911 and came on the rail to Gull Lake. And last night as we were sitting just having lunch with him, he said, I'm not sure exactly why Dad got tired of walking at Frontier. I wish he had walked a little further into some of the better land, but that's where he settled. And he related the fact of how his dad passed away in 1941, and that had been just through . . . They had just gone through the '30s. They had nothing, Mr. Speaker. He related that and it was touching as you heard this gentleman. As a 19-year-old lad, he had

to go out in 1942 and he said he never really worked the farm. He'd helped his dad a bit, but he had to figure out how to run the drills and he had to figure out to put the crop in, but that fall they had a bumper crop; he said the best crop. He just wished his dad could have lived one more year to see that.

(2015)

You know the comment, the few of the comments he made, one of the comments were, he said, he didn't blame the lending institutions. And he said he also wanted to thank those who helped him. When his dad passed away he was in Regina, and at that time there was no dental care. There was a bill at the Grey Nuns Hospital. He didn't know how he was going to get his dad's body back to Frontier for burial. He came and talked to one of the local funeral homes. He said, if you'll help me I promise I'll pay you back; I don't when, but I'll pay you back. And so they buried his father. Mr. Speaker, he related how when that crop came off and he sold that crop he came in and paid the medical bill. He went over to the funeral chapel and he paid the bill. And he said, thank you for helping me; you trusted me when I had nothing and I want to let you know I honour my word. Then he went and paid off the farm dealers that they were owing, that were bills that built up over the years.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, a good crop in the bin — a help right now and a good crop in the bin — many farmers will indeed do that. They will go and take care of the fertilizer and the chemical and the fuel dealer who is feeling the pinch right now but is putting a little faith in their farm community. And so this \$500 million loan may not be the total answer, but I believe it is a commitment on the part of this government and the taxpayers of this province to support our agricultural sector.

And so as I relate that, about Mr. Friggstad, Mr. Speaker, I just relate that to say . . . just to show you how farmers, when they put their mind to it . . . and in Mr. Friggstad's case as well, we're all aware of the fact he started this implement dealership; they lost it in 1985, but he's also got back into more manufacturing because he believes he can do something and he can offer something to the people of this province. He wants to give back something of what he has received.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just relate a few comments about health. Health in this budget received a major injection of funds. Mr. Speaker, the spending in health is now in the area of \$1.58 million. Almost a 10 per cent increase in funding was given in this budget to the area of health.

And as I look at my constituency of Moosomin and I think back a number of years where we had two care homes in my constituency, one in Kipling, a 26-bed in Kipling and a 42-bed in Moosomin, communities like Whitewood and Wawota had nothing, and the influx of seniors, the fact that the need was there. Mr. Speaker, in 1985 two new nursing homes were added to my constituency in Whitewood and Wawota, and I will say today, Mr. Speaker, that those two nursing homes in those two communities really mean a lot.

In fact, when you look at health in rural Saskatchewan

and in our small communities — and I don't think anyone will disagree with me — health is one of the major employers. In fact, I can't blame a small community for coming and asking their MLA, regardless of what their commitments are or which political party they represent, I can't blame them for coming and seeking extra funding to either add a care home or add a hospital or add hospital beds, because the care home, the hospital provides a service, provides employment, which in some cases may be 20 or 30 families with employment in a small community. That is a real economic injection into that community.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that we were able to announce that the community of Moosomin could proceed with their plans for a new hospital. When you look at the way the community has worked together, and I remember when I was elected in 1986 and even prior to . . . after I was nominated as the Conservative candidate in 1985 and from '85 to '86 and then after the '86 election, sitting down with every care home board in my constituency and every hospital board in my constituency listening to their concerns, also their requests.

I specifically remember sitting down with the two boards in Moosomin, and at that time, both boards were asking: one for a major nursing; one for a major hospital. And as I sat there as an MLA, it would have been easy to say, well we'll try and get two major facilities for you. But, Mr. Speaker, I had to bring reality to focus in my mind. And I just felt when there are so many . . . with 64 constituencies in this province — and there are other people looking for services as well — for me to go to my colleague, the Minister of Health, and ask him for two major facilities in one community, I just didn't really feel that would be fair. So I asked the care home board and the hospital board to work together with the economic development committee and decide what the priority was in that community.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was really refreshing to see how the two boards got together along with the economic development committee, the chamber of commerce, and the community, and they decided number one was a hospital. And then from a hospital we can proceed to a nursing home, and at present in my area there's a major study going on to relate what the needs will be for that area. And I'm sure many other communities around the province will be doing the same thing as they assess the needs in their area for health care facilities, whether it's providing level 4 care, some more care home beds, whether it's providing added services through home care.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we in Saskatchewan have learned over the years how to work together, how to co-operate, and how to develop. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, in the future more of that is going to be needed as we work to build our province and make it a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased with the way people have worked together through the home care program to reach out to many individuals. And I relate it to my constituency, but I know it's around the province. Many individuals who over the years have had their own home — they may be 80 years old, they may be 85 years old, but

they're still in a very healthy state, and they would like to, as my grandmother, until she had a stroke, she wanted to, even after that, stay in her own home as long as she could. And, Mr. Speaker, through home care we were able to offer that.

We're able to provide services to older people or people who have slight handicaps so they can stay in their homes and continue to be individuals and continue to operate and function as an individual through the home care service by providing nursing care, by providing food on wheels . . . or Meals on Wheels. And when you think of Meals on Wheels that program would not work if it wasn't for the co-operative effort of men and women throughout the communities who get together, plan the distribution system, and then give of their time to distribute the food. And the added aspect to distributing food throughout the community is the fact that you're stopping in and letting a person know that you're there, that you care. If you weren't there, you wouldn't be caring. And you're saying hello, a person isn't by himself.

Talking about individuals who have been healthy and thankful for their health, I remember, Mr. Speaker, just recently addressing the volunteer recognition awards banquet in Stoughton, and a lady from my constituency, a lady from Whitewood, was being recognized for her work in preservation of heritage site and property.

She's 93 years old, Mr. Speaker, and as I was visiting with her at this banquet and just prior to a performance that the Stoughton arts council was going to put on, we were commenting and she said, I'm sorry I can't speak very well. At that time I was fighting a cold and a sore throat and she had the same thing. And she said to me, she said — first of all I commented: 93, you don't look like you're 93 years old; you're really a very active and healthy woman. And she said, you know one way I've been able to keep a healthy body and mind is I've stayed away from all kinds of drugs. She said, unfortunately today I'm on a prescribed drug. And she said, I don't believe in them, but it just shows that you don't always have to run to the doctor to get prescription all the time, and at 93 I could see that she really believed in working for herself.

And her recognition that night was based on the fact of her willingness to work for her community to help them preserve their heritage so that they could show what's taken place over the last number of years, how the older generation, the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers, our parents' grandfathers and grandmothers, what they have done to build their community. It was just a delight, Mr. Speaker, to speak with her.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at ambulance services and we look at all the services that are required in health care, there is no doubt that health plays a very important role in our lives. And each one of us, Mr. Speaker, those of us who have the privilege of having healthy bodies and minds can be thankful because, Mr. Speaker, there are many men and women across this province and indeed in this country who do not have that privilege, and it's not due to any fault of their own. And the reason we have a health care system such as the medicare system in this province is so that those who are less fortunate can indeed have the privilege of receiving substantial medical

care and medical help without it becoming a financial drain on themselves.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon my colleague the member from Melfort mentioned a few . . . our commitment to the environment. And there's no doubt that over the past number of . . . I shouldn't say the . . . really the past number of years, probably more so the past few months, there has become even a greater awareness of the environment and the concern regarding the environment. And I believe that we as a province can provide a leading role in this country. And I believe the legislation that will be coming forward will be an indication of our commitment to the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the fact that . . . We're aware of the Rafferty-Alameda project that is on hold at the present time due to an environmental impact study. We're aware of the Old Man River project in Alberta. I was reading an article recently in a paper talking . . . really questioning how responsible maybe some of the environmentalists have been, and the question was raised, the environmental impact that is taking place in Quebec on the James Bay project. It appears right now that sometimes the environmental issues become more political issues than they do environmental . . . than they are really environmentally.

And the question was raised, I wonder if James Bay will continue to go ahead, when they are actually flooding and destroying more habitat than really the two small projects we have, one here in Saskatchewan and one in Alberta.

But that aside, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind, there is no doubt in the mind of my colleagues, that the environment is important; that we must protect and preserve our environment; that we must preserve this for future generations. And when I speak about the environment, I would think, Mr. Speaker, that there are areas not just in being careful how we allow development and diversification and major resources to be processed such as the pulp mills — making sure that we are not polluting our environment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe each and every one of us can have a part in the preservation of our environment and the habitat in this province. Even as the farming community . . . one farmer — I shouldn't say one — many farmers have indicated over the past number of years that we maybe are reaping some of the benefits for destroying so many acres and acres of trees that we have.

And I believe the program will save our soils; and I believe the program's reforestation, and I believe the programs of tree shelter belts are a very important aspect of working together to preserve our environment. I also believe, Mr. Speaker, the way we use chemicals responsibly and the collection of the chemical cans that the Minister has been talking about is showing a responsible attitude toward our environment. So I believe, Mr. Speaker, our commitment as a government and the Minister of Finance's towards preservation of the environment and working together to build a better place in which you and I can live.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, another area that I'm really happy to have had some involvement in is the area of working with those less fortunate, handicapped individuals. And I think of the community of Moosomin; I think of the community of Kipling where we have handicap shelter workshops.

When you walk into those workshops, and these workshops are basically are in place and are organized and are working and are going ahead because there are many men and women who have given up their time to volunteer their efforts — time and efforts — to work together to make life better for those who, due to no fault of their own, may have a speech handicap or whatever their handicap is, Mr. Speaker.

And it's interesting when you walk into the sheltered workshops and you start meeting with the individuals there. If we had as much of an expression of, if you would, love that they have, it might even make this place a lot of easier to live in and operate with. And I have found it very enjoyable walking into these sheltered workshops and just having these people come up and express their gratitude. And I know the men and women who are working in the workshops and working along with the handicapped people are very concerned and very lovable and very kind individuals as they just help these young men and women and older men and women make their life just that much nicer and better to live in.

(2030)

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about education, education was another major beneficiary of this budget. Now the opposition may claim that, well, it didn't receive enough. I guess we can always use that expression. There just wasn't enough; there should have been more. Mr. Speaker, every month I wish I had a little more as well.

When you look at the \$888 million that is being put into education, an increase of 5.6 per cent, Mr. Speaker, that is a substantial commitment to education in this province. And when you really sit down and look at education and you add the education dollars that come through property taxes, in reality the taxpayers of this province are putting up almost as much money for education as the health budget in this province is carrying. Basically almost better than \$1.4 billion is going into education when you add in the education directly from the province and that placed up by the taxpayers through property grants.

Education funding now accounts for almost one-fifth of the province's budget. In fact, we've heard it, and I just mention it again, that the government will spend \$2,600 for every primary and secondary student in the province — \$2,600. That is a substantial commitment. We will also spend \$8,500 for each post-secondary student in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we are also aware of the new core curriculum. Ten million dollars will be implemented or placed . . . implemented for the new core curriculum development. There's \$91 million for construction and renovation of schools and post-secondary institutions,

and again I'm going to digress a little bit, digress and get back, just speak a little bit about my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, we have, right where I live — I grew up in a small community of Langbank, and when I moved to that school from a small country school where we had grades 1 to 8, we moved into Langbank. I was in grade seven. At that time we had kindergarten to 12 in the community of Langbank. Four miles away, we had kindergarten to 12 in the community of Kennedy. Both schools were in separate school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, about 15 years ago, people started looking at where we were and the populations and started questioning whether we should have two schools only four miles apart, and I remember the controversy that was raised and created in the two communities as they were discussing back in forth and, in fact, getting heated arguments. Well if we're going to go to one school, it's got to be in Kennedy; no, it's got to be here in Langbank; no, it can't be, because you're in the Broadview School Division and Broadview happens to have a better working relationship, so we better go into the Broadview School Division. There were all kinds of arguments.

And I remember a vote taken, Mr. Speaker, and the realization was everyone decided to just stay where they were at, and after the vote I remember a number of younger families, all of a sudden, the comments they made were, you know, why didn't we get involved? They all of a sudden realized, the younger families in these two communities, even though they didn't have families — they were going to, hoping to have families some day — and they said, here we've kind of let the older generation, whose families are all grown up and gone, decide where the school should be, and we didn't get involved. Are we going to have a school there when our children start to grow up?

Well, Mr. Speaker, to make a long story short, the two communities got together and they amalgamated through consultation and agreement between the Broadview and Arcola school divisions. Kennedy was allowed to come into the Broadview school unit. We now have a fine K to 6 facility in Langbank; we have a 7 to 12 facility in Kennedy. And if you will, Mr. Speaker, these two communities, this one school in two communities has the distinct recognition of being the fastest-growing school in the area, in fact in the whole school unit. What I'm amazed, and what I'm pleased with to see is the fact that our kindergarten even to 1996 is projected to be in the 24 to 28 range. Because of that, Mr. Speaker, we put an add-on class-room in Langbank because our facilities, once you put all the K to 6 in the Langbank area, it just wasn't large enough, and we've got an add-on facility. At present the need is there in the immediate future for a new school in Kennedy and I will continue to work towards that.

Mr. Speaker, we've got \$46.7 million for student aid, 10.5 million for school boards. And, Mr. Speaker, I could list off all the areas of extra money that is going into education, but I don't think I will take the time of the House because many of my colleagues have already mentioned that. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a sincere commitment by this government towards the education,

towards the young people of this province to give them every opportunity to succeed and indeed to go ahead.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, as I would conclude tonight, draw to a conclusion, I just want to mention a few areas where, due to the fact that there weren't major increases in taxes, money had to be found some place. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't all that easy for me when I was asked by my colleagues to sign a little slip and take a decrease in my legislative secretary's salary. And I'm sure the cabinet ministers found that as well. In fact, I was led to believe that maybe all MLAs might just pass a motion to cut back on their salaries so we're all in it together, but to date we haven't really seen that.

Mr. Speaker, we've restricted government and Crown corporation travel and advertising. We've amalgamated . . . It's obvious my comments have created a little bit of debate between my colleagues and the colleagues opposite. But, Mr. Speaker, this government has amalgamated four government departments. We've frozen the size of civil service. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that as the Premier went on television a month ago to announce the termination of the home program, the phasing out of the fuel tax rebate program, and the modification of the mortgage protection plan, this wasn't easy for the Premier to do. But in the reality of the difficult economic times, it was essential in order for this government and this Finance minister to bring a budget in as close as he could to a position of a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, we terminated the fossil fuel and energy resource program, and we've all heard about the fact the elimination of the rail relocation assistance for Regina. There's no doubt that the citizens, some of the citizens — I won't say all of the citizens — some of the citizens of Regina were not happy to see that, but many citizens were, because the debate in this city is still out there as to where do you put the railway.

We eliminated the grant for the Saskatoon Centennial Auditorium. And, Mr. Speaker, much to my chagrin, we even had to . . . the Minister of Highways was asked to take a \$12 million cut in capital construction. And I say that much to my chagrin because there are areas of . . . other highways in my constituency that I would like to add for refurbishing and rebuilding.

We restricted new government construction projects. We eliminated the Saskatchewan stock savings plan. He eliminated the municipal transit assistance program, reduced grants for international aid and chose to reduce funding for 21 government departments and agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is an indication of the desire, the intent, and the willingness by the Minister of Finance and by this government to freeze funding so that the funding could be put in areas where it was needed most. And most of the polls would tell you, people indicate their priorities for spending are health and education.

And indeed, Mr. Speaker, I was really pleased to see a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) poll back in the end of January when they were asking Canadians,

where should the government cut its spending and where should it put its funding? to see that agriculture was in third place. First was health, second was education, and third was agriculture. I think that's an indication that the consumers even of this country realize the importance of agriculture in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by saying there were no tax increases in this budget. We did have a program of \$12.50 an acre for every farmer at ten and three-quarters per cent, a commitment to health care, \$1.5 billion. And when you look at the \$1.5 billion, it equals all the money from income tax, all the money from the sales tax, plus borrowing \$80 million in order to meet that \$1.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government has indicated their willingness, their desire and their ability to work with the people of the province and to provide the people of the province an efficient and an effective government.

And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, that I've been allowed to speak tonight. I will not be in support of the amendment, but I will indeed support my colleague in his motion on the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to enter this debate on the budget 1990-1991 and to make a few general observations about these and larger issues in the province of Saskatchewan in a few moments.

But I want to pick up on a couple of things that the member from Moosomin just talked about and cast my observations with respect to two or three of the points that he raised in the context of some of these larger issues of which I have just referred to.

The member from Moosomin, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talked about the question of the environment and environmental protection. The member from Moosomin professed his government's concern for environmental laws and concern for protection of the environment. Those were the words. Of course, he couched it with a bit of a caveat about the environmentalists getting carried away in his own area down where the Rafferty dam is being situated. He was a little bit worried about that. But nevertheless he couched his comments from what one might assume was the relatively sincere position that the environment and protection of it was a priority of this administration and of that particular member.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have two observations to make. Environmental protection is obviously a growing issue in the province of Saskatchewan as it is world-wide. All political parties should be concerned about it, and to the extent the member from Moosomin express his concerns, we endorse and we support him.

But two points need to be made. First of all with respect to environmental laws, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is required first and foremost are certain rules and certain guide-lines which are understood by all and are followed by all. That's what business wants. That's what the environmentalists want. They want clear-cut rules and

they want to know that the rules will be enforced.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the government opposite has done is they have never implemented clear-cut rules and they've never taken the determination to in fact enforce those rules. And the best example of course deals with Rafferty in and around the member's constituency and that of the former deputy premier and the Premier. And the result is the fiasco at Rafferty which is the inability and/or unwillingness of the government opposite to enforce environmental rules, environmental rules which provincially and certainly federally are very shaky at best.

If there is anything which business and environmentalists deplore is the uncertainty. What they deplore are the words. What they want are the tough laws even; they can adjust to that. What they deplore is the uncertainty, the vagueness, and the unclarity, the lack of clarity with respect to the implementation of environmental regulations and rules. That was an example in Saskatchewan which worked in my judgement to the detriment of the environment because of that policy.

But there's a second thing as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which people who concern themselves about the environment want as well. And that is to develop consensual models where the competing interests could meet in a forum to try to work out the solutions to the very difficult problems of environment versus economic development.

There's no doubt about it that there has been, and there will always probably be, a contest between those who seek to develop economically and perhaps who pay less attention to the environment as a consequence, on the one hand, and those whose interests on the environment may not be sufficiently aware of or sensitive to the need to develop. It is the balancing of the teeter-totter, the environmentalists at one end, the economic developers on the other end, and the necessity to develop that consensus model.

(2045)

In this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are no consensual models for the development of sound environmental laws, and there are no consensual models for the discussion and the trade-offs of economic development versus environmental protection. What there is in fact is confrontation, which leads me to my second point on the environment, my first point being that there are no clear rules and there is no clear determination to follow those rules, with the uncertainty as we've seen at Rafferty and Oldman.

And my second point is that there is not consensual models. There is a policy of confrontation which has been adopted by the members opposite by this particular government. And the best example of confrontation is the battle that this House has experienced for over a year now over Rafferty.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody in this House is going to be swayed or fooled by the talk today, at this late hour, the eleventh hour, five minutes before midnight when the election is called, the talk about consensus and

consensual models in environment, since we all remember and know very well the bitter attacks and confrontation on my colleague, the member from Regina Rosemont; the bitter attacks and the confrontation on the Canadian Wildlife Federation; the bitter attacks and confrontation by almost all the members in the front benches — not all of them, but most of them — the confrontation that this was a group of people who were extremists. There was no consensual model. There was no sitting around the table; there was attack and confrontation which exists this very day in the Estevan area, which brings me to the point about this budget. And I'm prompted as a result of the member of Moosomin to raise this as my first point.

If this was a visionary budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this was a budget which speaks to and spoke to this big issue of the environment, one of the big issues of our society today, one would think that there would be some devotion of funds, some articulation of policy which would either: (a) set out clear rules and a determination to enforce them; and/or (b) set out new consensual models to get the economic developers and the environmentalist together around a table in order to be able to ease their differences, in order to get on with the business of building and growing, and at the same time get on to the business of protecting our environment. And this budget had neither, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This government and this budget, by its silence in this area, displayed that it has no vision. Now keep in mind what I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I started my remarks, that I wished to pick up on two themes of the member from Moosomin in this debate — because that's what this is, is a debate — and to try to build from that the central issue of my proposition, my remarks.

And I'm beginning to develop that theme by saying there is no vision in this budget, and the hon. member from Moosomin who took his seat, and if one examines the budget, the confirmation is there. There is no new innovation. There is no new direction. This government is adrift. It's lost. It's finished on issues like environment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Now I said that a major theme I'm trying to develop here is the lack of vision. I want to expand on that, but before I do, I want to use another example based on the member from Moosomin's remarks, and this is the question of education and the budgetary provisions for education.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one can argue about the numbers which are allocated in the budget to education. No doubt my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance, will get up this evening and put the best face that he can on the numbers with respect to education, and he might be able to mount a case in that sense. I don't buy it, but he might be able to do that.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rebuttal to the argument lies in the brutal facts which every one of us knows exists in the field of education, notwithstanding the numbers. I mean, the educators and those who are administering the education program in the province of Saskatchewan

tell us clearly, absolutely clearly, that the system has been starved and we're paying the consequences for it now.

But above those arguments on numbers, the facts are shockingly clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have now for the first time — if not in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, I would say the first time in a long time, certainly in the last eight years — high levels of quotas on university students, for example. That's cheating the students of tomorrow and their futures for tomorrow.

We had the strike at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), Mr. Deputy Speaker, a strike which was bitter and prolonged, and the heart of which was, at the very core of that strike, was the fact that the instructors and everybody there at SIAST knew that this government simply had ignored the quality of education at that level of educational need and demand.

We know the statistics on the high drop-out rate in education. Mr. Deputy Speaker, at a time when the President of the United States, President Bush, talks about, for example, reaching the objective by the year 2000 of having 90 per cent of all American students complete grade 12 — at that time, we're seeing in the province of Saskatchewan a drop-out rate which is nowhere near 90 per cent today and is not likely to be even close to approaching that goal. We're seeing 82 per cent or less of our students actually completing grade 12, and of course the statistics are devastating, not only in individual terms but they're devastating for the consequences of the quality of life.

The Japanese today put out something like seven times more by way of patents and inventions with respect to an educational system which spawns science and innovation. The United States does three times, even on a prorated basis — on a prorated basis, I say to the Minister of Education. These aren't my figures. These are the figures of the Ontario Economic Council, the figures of the Ontario education council, and the minister being a former Minister of Education should know the crisis which faces us there.

We have the private schools scandal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan. We know what's happening here. This is a scandal which remains unaddressed. There are complaints after complaints which the minister himself, in his former life as Minister of Education, promised that he would look after and would address, and still no resolution of this outstanding issue.

So my point is to the member from Moosomin, the second point that I wish to make here is that whatever the numbers are, numbers which I will take the figures of those who work in education to show the inadequacy of the support for education, the cold, hard facts are, the cold-blooded truth is that our children and our students are being cheated — quotas, strikes, high incompleteness rates or drop-out rates, the private schools fiasco, an education policy which sees the core curriculum not being effectively implemented at the grass roots, a Department of Education which is overloaded by advisory committees — 50 or more advisory committees all in working — not one talking to the other; no co-ordination or collaboration; great talk but no

deliverance of the school programs and the needs for education.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a budget of talk, but what it really is, a budget which has no vision. It is a budget which has no knowledge of what Saskatchewan's history is all about. It is a budget which shows no guide-lines and points no direction to the future of the 1990s. And nothing could be more evidence of that than the two points than the member from Moosomin himself raised in the areas of environment and education. This is a government which is rudderless, which is lost at sea and does not know where it's going, and that's what the rest of this budget's about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Lost at sea, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know if that's such a good example to use in a Saskatchewan context. I guess it probably isn't. But I think that a lot of Saskatchewan boys who went over in the Second World War and other wars and became navy people turned out to be pretty good sailors, and I think we know what we mean when we say about lost at sea.

What is this government's answer in this budget? The government's answer is, to all of these problems — I'm going to talk a little bit more about some of the other ones in detail in a few minutes — but the government's basic answer is essentially twofold. This is what the defence of the budget really amounts to. This is what we're going to hear the Minister of Finance say in about a half an hour's time or so.

First of all the government says — doesn't say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it readily admits — that it does not have the answers. Its first and most innovative proposal is something called Consensus Saskatchewan. We've heard much talk about Saskatchewan consensus, the hundred famous people.

By the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think I've received my letter yet to nominate somebody. Maybe I have; I don't know. But I haven't received . . . maybe I haven't read my mail yet . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the former Minister of Highways says, do I need a copy?

Please send me over a copy. I might be able to take a look at the letter and see who I could recommend. I perhaps would like to recommend the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. I think it would be a good idea if he would start doing his job rather than delegating to a hundred other people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, apart from the ludicrousness of the idea — and the phrase that I like to use, I admit sometimes too much, in this legislature, from Alice-in-Wonderland — things in this province are getting curiouser and curiouser.

Here we've elected 64 MLAs at high rates of pay — too high according to the Minister of Finance and the minds of some — to do the job. Cabinet Ministers, legislative

secretaries, and this Premier and this government says we're going to set up Consensus Saskatchewan because we can't do the job. They're going to tell us what to do and how to do the job.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess the question that I have to ask about, apart from the obvious naivety and ludicrousness of that particular proposal is, how is it that Consensus Saskatchewan is going to do its job? Will Consensus Saskatchewan be given all of the internal documents and reports to which the government has access on these key areas of education and the environment and social policy or agriculture or farming? Because I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Consensus Saskatchewan gets those reports, that is going to be a real accomplishment because we, the members of the opposition, and the public can't get those reports.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And if we, the elected members of the legislature, can't get those reports on the most secret, most closed, most behind-the-closed-doors government in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, what in the world would make anybody believe that Consensus Saskatchewan is going to get those reports? Why should they?

And if they do get those reports, if they're going to get the back-up material, then the question that I've got to ask is: if they get it, why don't we get it? Why don't we start getting the information of which we ask?

You'll recall question period yesterday when we asked the Premier, I think, four questions in a row about expenditures on Crown investments corporation to which the Premier took notice. And I don't expect him to answer every question on the fingertips at every point — maybe this is a legitimate case for notice — but he took notice of these questions. I predict that the answers aren't going to be forthcoming, because like in those other areas they will be, this government will be close-doored, will be secretive, will be denying the reports as they will to Consensus Saskatchewan.

And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, things get curiouser and curiouser. This idea of the hundred consensus makers in Saskatchewan is only topped by the Liberal Party's proposal that there should be a senate on top of this Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Now I don't know what's behind this idea except that maybe some of the many former Liberals who are now Conservatives will some day end up in a Liberal-appointed provincial senate. Maybe that's what's behind it. I don't know what it is, but certainly there is a curiouser and a curiouser atmosphere in the province of Saskatchewan as we see the two old line parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, and the Conservatives and the Liberals vying to outdo each other in this business of listening to the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well I want to tell the Liberals and the Conservatives, it's

too late. You should have started listening to them eight years ago, in the case of the Conservatives, 20 years ago in the case of the Liberals. The people of Saskatchewan want leadership now. They want a vision, and they want a government determined to build compassion and fairness of opportunity in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Well, that's been one major defence of this government on this budget. Of course the other central, major theme apart from consensus and consultation — and the hon. House Leader who really is an engaging character in this House, and I say this admiring of him. He's got a certain cockiness and also a certain contrition which is a nice, interesting blend.

I don't think the people in Melfort have quite figured out which of the side is really the true Minister of Highways, but nevertheless he's kind of an interesting character. He would have this consensus process being the model for the free world for the year 2000 and beyond, is the way he'd have it portrayed. But that's their one solution.

But they have another solution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one other major theme — and the Minister of Finance will get up and give this today in a half an hour when he addresses his final remarks on this debate — his other main theme in this budget debate is: don't blame us for the mess that we brought the people of the province of Saskatchewan to; this is a world-wide problem.

(2100)

And there is another dimension to it. Not only do we have no control over our mess — because it doesn't rain; the European subsidies wars; international free trade; don't blame us; Romania; the Berlin Wall is down; grasshoppers are down in Czechoslovakia or Poland. Pretty hard to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how you're going blame Egon Krenz for this huge deficit in the province of Saskatchewan, but I don't know — I think maybe the people opposite can somehow figure a way.

Actually if you go to the speeches that these people give, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at various groups, the one at SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and SARM that the Premier and the ministers give are actually, frankly, bordering on the bizarre as they describe the great opportunities that exist in eastern Europe, all the while that Saskatchewan's rural economy is collapsing all around us, and these people are worried about what Egon Krenz in eastern Berlin is doing about it and how the European community is changing.

Now I don't make light of that totally. I think obviously we are a part of the world which is changing, and changing very dramatically. And you know, I think that actually a strong case for change can be made. And I think that a strong case for change can be made, I would say to the Minister of Finance, for change right here in the province of Saskatchewan . . . in fact, the winds of change are blowing — right here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you take a look at what's happening in eastern Europe when the first winds of change became evident, you saw the leadership there of the governments in eastern Europe trying all kinds of bizarre approaches to maintaining power for the first weeks or months, if they had months, before the regimes actually toppled.

They tried everything. I would even suspect if they had thought of the idea — mind you they still hadn't because this is a new idea for Saskatchewan — they probably would have something like consensus East Germany to try and help save the communist operation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these ideas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these machinations are the dying twitches of movements and regimes that the world is now discarding because of change. These are the machinations of people who are so arrogant and so out of touch and so confused and so visionless that they, in fact, have nowhere else to go except to resort to this old idea of, somehow, consensus or whatever the East Germany model or the other Czechoslovakian models might be, before finally the people got rid of those oppressive regimes and elected at least some semblance of democratic activity.

And I want to tell the Minister of Finance that I agree, the world is changing, but I want to tell the Minister of Finance that Consensus Saskatchewan isn't going to save this administration any more than it saved the communists of eastern Europe — not whatsoever. In fact, I predict that the Minister of Finance will probably go down in history as being Saskatchewan's equivalent to Egon Krenz. That's what I think is going to happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — The people are not going to be that easily fooled, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the silence from the government benches opposite, the studied silence from the government benches opposite, I think to a large extent indicates that they know the truth of what I speak. They know the truth of what I speak. They know the truth is that this is a government which is at sea. I'm going to come back to that analogy.

I used this the other day in the throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think it's a good example again to use about this Consensus Saskatchewan. This reminds me of the captain and the crew with a passenger load of a thousand or so caught in the mid-Atlantic in the midst of a storm. And the captain and the crew don't know what to do so they turn around and they say to the passengers, tell us which way to get to port. That's what Consensus Saskatchewan is all about.

They know what I'm saying is true. They know that this government has no vision, Mr. Speaker. I won't say no vision. This government has no vision which is acceptable to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That's the . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I'm going to close in a few moments with a few words about vision, but I want to leave aside for the moment vision or ideology. I'm going to ask the members of this House in a few moments when they vote on this budget, and the people of the province of Saskatchewan who might be watching this debate, to put aside ideology.

Just ask yourself about this government after eight years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Forget about ideology. Is this a government which is administratively competent? Is it a government which is honest in its dealings with people? Is it a government with a clear game plan? I mean just in terms of how government operates, I don't mean ideology or programs. I mean just the business of dealing with people civilly and responsibly and in a correct way.

Ask yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that's the case, if this government is the kind of government you want to sustain, and I bet you that you would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is I predict the vast majority of the people of the province of Saskatchewan will say, I don't care, they will say, about ideology any more. I don't care, they will say, about ideology any more. I don't care about the ideology of a political party. I am fed up to here with the incompetence of this government and the mismanagement of this government and the inability of this government just to carry out the basic precept of a government, and that is to govern properly. And if there is no other reason but that reason alone, Mr. Speaker, I predict this government is going to suffer the biggest defeat ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, why wouldn't, just on the non-ideological, pragmatic basis, the voters of Saskatchewan make that decision? I ask that of the Associate Minister of Agriculture, who's listening very intently to this debate. Why wouldn't they decide on the basis of competence? There are nine consecutive budgets, Mr. Speaker — nine in a row, having been left approximately \$140 million surplus in 1982, nine in a row.

Take a look at the forecasting record of the budget, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about competence now, the forecasting record. My colleague has the document which is . . . I have a summary here. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is appalling: 1984-85, the forecast for the deficit was out by only 42 per cent; '85-86, it was out by 98 per cent; 1986 to 1987 — which way are we going? — it was out by 217 per cent, Mr. Speaker, 217 per cent. That was an election year.

Now I will make a point about that. In 1988-89, last year, what were they out by? Seventy-three per cent, Mr. Speaker. Forty-two per cent, 98 per cent, 217 per cent, 73 per cent, Mr. Speaker — this from a government which say that it's going to be efficient and businesslike; this from a government which says it has a game plan. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that if this is a businesslike government, these PCs are giving business a bad name.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — That is incredible incompetence. Any responsible minister of finance for any corporation, private or public, that came in with that kind of budgeting forecast mistakes would be fired by the shareholders instantaneously. And that's what's going to happen to this PC government come next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to give you one other example — I could give you many — I'll give you another example of the waste and just the administrative sloppiness of this government. If you take a look at what's happened since 1982 about the level of expenditures — spending — the spending records of this government. From 1982 to 1990, according to my calculations, there has been an increase of 84 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in spending — this from a government that came in promising to hold the line. Mr. Speaker, 84 per cent increase in eight years in the total expenditures of the province of Saskatchewan under this profligate, wasteful, administratively incompetent government.

You don't have to be a New Democrat, you don't have to be a Liberal, you don't have to be a Conservative; all you have to be is a concerned citizen to know that that's government gone mad. That's government like little boys and girls in a candy shop not knowing which candy to buy, but buying all of them and buying them recklessly and wilfully and irresponsibly with that kind of spending levels, and then having the gall of getting up and saying, well you know, we've been doing something about it.

And how did they get this 84 per cent increase? Well first of all we've got foreign legations everywhere. We've got foreign legations in Minnesota. We've got foreign legations in Hong Kong. We've got foreign legations in . . .

An Hon. Member: — Austria.

Mr. Romanow: — Austria? Vienna still? We've got foreign legations in New York City. We've got foreign legations in Switzerland. London? Okay, I can buy London because there's an historical connection which has been there for years, but this proliferation of foreign legations with all of the staff which is required.

Now surely to goodness this is excessive, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-two million dollars, according to the public accounts, in travel last . . . two years ago, \$22 million for all the government. Now how in the world could you spend that amount of money travelling in one year. I don't know how one could do this, but they do it. Sixteen million dollars in government advertising last year alone; GigaText, 5 million plus — we haven't even begun to explore that.

Again, one could go on but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the point that I make I think now is abundantly clear. You do not have to be ideologically persuaded to vote New Democratic Party in this next election to vote for us. If you're committed to just the simple principle of clean government, honest government, competent government, not wasteful government, good

business-like government, then the choice is the New Democratic Party in order to build for the future and beyond.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, of course I'm not going to get on to the sorry question of taxes, the job creation record. But I said vision is my main theme; I want to close on vision. Was there a game plan announced for jobs, Mr. Speaker, in this budget? Nothing whatsoever.

Sixty people a day leave this province, and this Minister of Finance gets up and he delivers a budget and there's not a game plan for job creation, Mr. Speaker. None whatsoever. Either they don't have any ideas as to how to create jobs, or on the alternative, they're going to stick to their same old game plan, their vision of privatization, privatization and privatization. I think, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that that's exactly what they're going to do.

My colleagues earlier tonight discussed, as I understand it — I wasn't in the House, but as I understand it they discussed this privatization conference in 1990, May 13 to May 16, 1990, Saskatoon.

An Hon. Member: — Who sponsored it?

Mr. Romanow: — Sponsored by the Institute for Saskatchewan Enterprise? the Minister of Finance asks. However there is — and I don't want to use this by way of display, but I do point out to the Minister of Finance very nice complimentary words by, amongst others, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. And the Premier writes the following, quote:

I invite you to come to Saskatchewan to continue (to continue) the dialogue on the merits of privatization . . .

By the way, not the demerits, but to continue the dialogue on the merits of privatization:

. . . and to share your nation's experiences in that area. See you in 1990. Sincerely, Grant . . .

"Sincerely," it says . . . well it says, "Grant Devine" — the rules permit me — the Premier.

That's very interesting, Mr. Speaker. They're going to continue the dialogue and share experiences. Well I hope that they tell, I hope the Premier tells those people who come to that privatization conference what the record is of privatization. They sold off the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and they said, you know, we got the proceeds, and we're going to apply it all to debt.

No more potash corporation in Saskatchewan and the debt still goes up to \$4.4 billion. They privatized Saskoil. No more Saskoil and the debt still goes up. They privatized SMDC (Saskatchewan Development Mining Corporation). No SMDC and the debt still goes up. They privatized Sask Minerals. The debt goes up, one of the companies is in difficulty, no jobs, no control. I hope the Premier or somebody tells these people about

privatization, how their experience has been in the province of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — Dental therapists.

Mr. Romanow: — Tell them about the dental therapists, as my colleague points out. Tell them about the Highways workers who were privatized in 1985. I hope those experiences are shared by this government which wants to continue the dialogue about the merits of privatization, Mr. Speaker. That's what they want to talk about.

But I tell you, there's something more to this privatization conference, and now I'm moving toward vision and image when I get closer to this point, which I think should be very, very scary — it is to me.

The Minister of Finance, in his address, budget address about one week ago, talked about the health spending budgets. And again, he tried to make the point that the numbers are very good. I don't agree with the numbers being good.

(2115)

We all know what the situation is with hospital waiting lists. We know the nurses' situation which came to a near strike — was it last year? We know the ongoing struggle with nurses. We know the home care situation. We know the cut-back to the drug plan. We know the elimination of the children's school-based dental plan. We know those facts. And after all those cuts the minister comes along and says, look, I've got 9 per cent, 9 per cent on, not 100 per cent, but 9 per cent on 85 per cent. He portrays this as somehow a big apportionment after he's had a cut-back. It really is a deception.

But the thing that I find very interesting about the Minister of Finance's main speech, Mr. Speaker, was — you recall this because you were in the Chair, sir, at the time — the questions which he asked about health care. Mr. Speaker, the question I ask about those queries is this. Were they questions about health care, or were they warnings about health care? And I tell you why I ask that in the context of this privatization conference. Because amongst other people that these people are promoting, that they want to continue the dialogue, amongst others are at least two. One is a person called Herbert M. Birch, Jr., Birch and Davis Family of Corporations, United States. I'll just read you what they say about this person.

Herbert M. Birch, Jr. is responsible for strategic planning and general management of the Birch and Davis Family of Corporations. Collectively these companies constitute the largest free-standing management consulting organization in the United States (note these words, Mr. Speaker) specializing principally in health care management. Birch will be speaking about the privatization of health care on Monday.

Dr. Eamonn Butler on the privatization conference is another noted expert from the Adam Smith Institute — which, anybody knows about the Adam Smith Institute, I don't need to give you anything else about Dr. Butler's credentials. But he is, amongst other things, a research

associate for the U.S. House of Representatives, a lecturer at Hillsdale College in Michigan, and a tutor at the City Polytechnic and Hollins College, and I quote: "Dr. Butler will be discussing the privatization of health care services on Monday."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can go and look through this list of speakers. I don't see anybody talking about the non-privatization of health care. I don't see anybody who fought for the medicare experience and the community clinic experience. I don't see Dr. Bob Murray. I don't see those physicians and those leading people in the community health service talking about the demerits of privatization.

And the member would say, well why would they be? This is a conference on privatization. That's exactly the point. They wouldn't be, because this Premier wants to continue the dialogue about the merits of privatization. This Premier wants to continue the merits of the very economic policy which has resulted in 60 people a day leaving the province of Saskatchewan, which has lost 50,000 since 1985, which has brought business to the point of bankruptcy, and now he wants to put health care on the table as well in 1990.

I say this government . . . I said had no vision, it's wrong. This government has a vision. It's a vision to privatize and to sell off, including our health care system, and I say, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan won't let them get away with it. We won't let them get away with it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So, Mr. Speaker, one does not have to be ideological.

An Hon. Member: — Well I heard that speech in '68.

Mr. Romanow: — The member says he heard that speech in 1968; he absolutely didn't hear the speech in 1968 unless he heard it from his pal, the late Premier Ross Thatcher who talked about privatization. But I'll tell you about the hon. member . . . But I tell the hon. member from Melville, he hears, but he does not listen.

So, Mr. Speaker, you don't have to be ideological. All you have to be is a common sense, pragmatic, reasonable person to say this budget and this government has stunk up the joint. Pure and simple. Eight years — we're in a mess. It stunk up the joint.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — You've given business a bad name. You've given efficiency a bad name. You've given conservatism a bad name.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — You know you could argue . . . I think I could mount a better argument about the principles of conservatism and the principles of liberalism than these people opposite can be . . . I mean, they have stunk up the joint. That's why they're sitting at the polls where they're sitting, where they're running third behind the Liberal

Party probably. They know that.

An Hon. Member: — You wish.

Mr. Romanow: — I wish! Well I mean, look, there's one easy way to solve this. Call the election. Just call the election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Just call the election, Mr. Speaker. And to the hon. member I will say, I wish, I wish. But I don't hear him saying that. I don't hear him saying that. So you see, Mr. Speaker, this is the question of being just good government and not vision which is at issue here.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, a special word about the question of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, just tell the member from Regina Albert South, just calm down, don't get your shirt in a knot-tail there. You will have your chance to defend your record in that nomination, in that battle in Regina South very quickly, I have no doubt about that, and we'll see how it works out.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a special word about agriculture in the few minutes remaining to me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — A special word about agriculture.

The Speaker: — Order, order. All members, all members.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, this government has, if I was to use the word that I wanted to use but can't because of parliamentary procedure, I would say, Mr. Speaker, the word that I have to use is this government has betrayed totally and confidentially the farmers in the province of . . .

The Speaker: — I'm going to ask the hon. member for Lloydminster to refrain from interfering with the Leader of the Opposition as he presents his remarks.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but I actually don't mind the interjections of the minister from Lloydminster. In fact, if I could hear them I think it might provoke a few other comments from me, but he needs to be a little bit louder sometimes. But I do want to say this, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for protecting and giving me the chance to speak.

This government has betrayed the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, make no mistake about it. I don't think I know of any government in the history of this province which has used the word "commitment" in a Speech from the Throne in saying that they had a commitment for Ottawa's assistance for financial help to the farmers this year; to use the word commitment and then was not able to deliver. They use the word commitment two, three weeks before the failed federal-provincial talks and they're not able to deliver.

Now, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me?

An Hon. Member: — What have you delivered?

Mr. Romanow: — Now the member says, what have we delivered. I want to tell the hon. member opposite that when we were in power we did not have a thousand farmers a year going bankrupt as you have under your administration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I'll tell you something . . . And I'll tell something else to the hon. member from Lloydminster: we may not have won the battles with Ottawa, but we didn't go down to Ottawa and sing the Hallelujah Chorus as those people do opposite there either.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — We went down to Ottawa and we fought for the farmers and for the business people. We won and we lost, but we stood up for the province of Saskatchewan. We weren't buried so deep in the hip-pocket of the government opposite that it couldn't stand up for the ordinary farmers in the province of Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, we have three . . . Mr. Speaker, we have three ministers of Agriculture, maybe I should say three associate ministers of Agriculture: first of all there's the Premier, and he's the Associate Minister of Agriculture to the Premier; then we've got the associate minister over there from — what's his constituency?

An Hon. Member: — Morse.

Mr. Romanow: — Morse. Then we've got another associate minister over there from Kelsey-Tisdale — three ministers. Do we have any legislative secretaries? Is there a Legislative Secretary in Agriculture? Who is that? Legislative Secretary person there. There he is, the Legislative Secretary. Four of them — they have laboured and they have produced a mouse, Mr. Speaker, for the farmers of Saskatchewan in their time of need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier says he's going back down to Ottawa with a consensus to fight for Ottawa. What in the world does that mean? What hope do we have that he's got to get something more this time around, that he wasn't able to get around one week ago or two weeks ago. What's the timetable? When is the meeting going to take place? Is Mazankowski coming here or is the Premier going back again to Ottawa? What are the arguments that are going to be advanced? Why should Ottawa take seriously a man and a government that has been content for the entire eight years to be buried so deep in the hip-pocket of the Prime Minister, that it can't see daylight? What in the world is it that makes these people think that the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan should get some hope?

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a betrayal. But this is a

repeat of 1986 — production loans in 1985, production loans in 1990, then you try to fight to get a billion dollars out there in 1986, and you hope that you can, by confrontation and division, sneak by one more election victory this time around. That's what this strategy is all amounting to. And of course all under the guise of consensus, except if some farmers union member says something that the Premier doesn't like, and the consensus goes like that. Except if I say something that the member from Lloydminster doesn't like, he blows up by yelling from his seat.

We are all of a sudden a consensus, except he doesn't like what I say about agriculture, doesn't like it at all. He cannot stand the criticism. I . . . Yes, I've been talking agriculture. The member opposite refuses to listen because he simply just keeps on bellowing, Mr. Speaker. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that it's about time that the people of the province of Saskatchewan established . . .

An Hon. Member: — . . . (inaudible) . . . SGEU

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Lloydminster frankly . . . I mean I hate to say this but his conduct is a disgrace sitting from where he is in his chair yelling . . . a disgrace.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it's about time that we got a policy based on income stabilization; long-term on debt restructuring; on land transfer, intergenerational land transfer; on the policy of the Crow benefit and where it's to be paid, get that finalized for sure, to make sure it goes to the railways, get a whole host of agricultural policies which these people have promised since 1985 and they have not delivered.

It's time for a vision. This government does not have a vision. This budget has no vision. And nowhere is the hurt and the suffering more felt than in rural Saskatchewan, to which I say this government must bear the full and total and complete responsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, let me close my remarks by trying to tie together all of these points that I'm making — environment, education, Consensus Saskatchewan, East Berlin and the wall of Berlin, the question of good government and waste and mismanagement — by saying at the heart of this whole problem is that this is a government without a vision which matches the vision of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our people are pragmatic. Our people are innovative. Our people are hard-working. They are co-operative and community-minded. They've had to be, in order to overcome the elements of distance and climate and small population and insensitive Tory governments and Liberal governments in Ottawa. And we've devised a great system here in the past, and these people have tried to turn this history of compassion and opportunity and security upside-down.

Their vision has been through privatization and free trade

and deregulation, and through incompetence and an eschewing of government. That's why the sloppiness in government: they don't believe in government as an instrument for the benefit of the people as a whole. They've turned these values upside-down.

Eight years of massive destruction, rampant in the ideas of Saskatchewan, are like a bull in a china shop of ideas of this province, smashing the proposals, smashing the institutions that we built up, privatizing the SaskEnergys, privatizing the SGIs (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). They have destroyed what was once the great province; this province can once again be. And it's time now for a new political party to build that future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2130)

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'd like to bring to the hon. attention that according to rule 14(3):

On the fifth of the said days, at thirty minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and, after allowing twenty minutes for the mover of the Budget motion to exercise his right to close the debate, shall forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the main motion.

I now call on the Minister of Finance and the hon. member for Weyburn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start off my closing remarks by just talking briefly about my constituency, Mr. Speaker, and just to point out to all members of the Assembly — and I know some here met them — the fact that I had, during the throne speech events, the reading of the throne speech and for the dinner that night, I had several young people up from my constituency to take part in that day's events, and particularly with the multicultural flavour of the dinner that night. And these young people were from junior high and from high schools in Weyburn. They were James Desantis, Mr. Speaker, Karen Ganczar, Kevin Schwetz, Hussein Juma, Juli-anne McKenzie, Aaron Binns, and Leanne Cameron.

And I just wanted to bring this to the attention of the House, Mr. Speaker, because every time . . . And for a number of times now I've had young people come up from the constituency of Weyburn to be here for budget debate and/or the throne speech debate, some of those special occasions that we have in the legislature. And every time I have these young people here, I feel so encouraged and gratified about what the future of this province holds, in terms of the leadership that's coming up through the ranks of our schools, Mr. Speaker. And one just feels absolutely delighted to entertain these young people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The thrust of the budget that we

presented some few days ago, Mr. Speaker, I think can be best summed up with three words. It was reflective. It was reflective of the views of the people of Saskatchewan. It was responsive to those views, Mr. Speaker, and as well, it was a responsible budget. Just to reiterate the thrust of that budget, based on what we heard at some several meetings across the province with hundreds and hundreds of people out to them, our first approach was to cut back government spending.

And I know that word cut-back is a dirty word for the opposition, Mr. Speaker. But we've said to the people because they said to us, cut back on your spending; first and foremost, cut back on internal government spending. And that we did, Mr. Speaker, by cutting out nearly \$300 million of the next two years — \$300 million the taxpayer is saving.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And yes, Mr. Speaker, some of these are tough decisions, there's no question about that. Twenty-one departments' budgets cut or frozen, Mr. Speaker. Tough decisions, Mr. Speaker, but necessary decisions.

The second thrust of the budget, Mr. Speaker, was that we did not go on. We have not and will not be announcing a whole host of new programs and new spending, Mr. Speaker. As I said budget night, the economic times dictate otherwise. Our first and foremost approach is to cut spending, and our aim and our goal very much is to give taxpayers better value for their dollars, Mr. Speaker.

The third thrust, Mr. Speaker, on this budget was, after we cut back spending, and that we're not going to be into a host of new programs, is what then are our spending priorities? And our spending priorities in this budget are clear, Mr. Speaker: hungry children — \$740,000 in new money, to be shared with other jurisdictions out there, to help deal with the immediate needs of those hungry children; Education, Mr. Speaker, up 5.6 per cent; Health, Mr. Speaker, up nearly 10 per cent. And of course, Agriculture, over and above the \$525 million loan program, at the 4 or 5 or 6 per cent lower interest rate than farmers would pay at lending institutions for to help get the crop in; over and above that \$525 million spring seeding program, nearly \$400 million in expenditure savings and tax savings for our farmers across this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And, Mr. Speaker, to find the dollars to spend on these priority areas, Mr. Speaker, did we ask the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to ante up more tax dollars? The answer to that question is, Mr. Speaker, no; we did not. There were no tax increases in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We did not go to the taxpayers and say, ante up some more money, because what I heard clearly across the province, when it came to taxes, was that enough is enough. The people have no more to give, Mr. Speaker.

Well the end result is a deficit of \$363 million, a deficit that concerns us all. We'll be joining hands with the

Saskatchewan people using the same recipe leading up to this budget. We'll be using that same recipe to find that effective answer to stop this vicious circle of, on the one hand, spend more; on the other hand, lower the taxes, and thirdly lower the deficit, Mr. Speaker. We've got to find that effective plan to stop that vicious circle.

The other approach, Mr. Speaker, is to take the approach that the NDP have espoused — put our heads in the sand, say I see no evil, I hear no evil, I speak no evil. Because what we've heard alternately from the various members over the course of this last five days in debate, Mr. Speaker, is some of them got up and went on and on and on about how we shouldn't have had these awful cut-backs; how we should have spent more here and more there; new programs here and new programs there; this wasn't enough; that should have been more; spend, spend, spend. That's what we heard, Mr. Speaker, from the opposition, at least some of the members.

Now some of them took the other attack, that we should reduce the deficit; that the spending was too high, as we heard the Leader of the Opposition tonight say. On the one hand . . . I mean this was the classic case of voodoo economics.

On the one hand tonight the Leader of the Opposition stood in his place and chastised — and I don't know if the numbers are correct because I haven't had a chance to review them and I don't know what time frame he used — but he said, how can this government justify an 87 per cent increase in spending over the last so many years? And on the other hand we heard members time after time get up during this budget debate, and during question, period and say, but you're not spending enough in education or health or on business or on the environment or whatever other area, Mr. Speaker.

You can't have it both ways, I say to the Leader of the Opposition. You can't, on the one hand, have member after member get up and say, spend more, don't cut back, lower the taxes, lower the deficit. Mr. Speaker, you simply can't have it every way. That is the vicious circle. That is the dilemma. That is the challenge that we must face, and we will use the same recipe that formed this budget. We will go to the people to get an effective plan to deal with that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — One other thing, Mr. Speaker, that we heard in this debate. If you check the *Hansard* of the various members of the opposition — I've already talked about the incongruousness of some of the positions they've espoused. Some of the other words that we heard often, if you check *Hansard*, in terms of the remarks from the opposition members, Mr. Speaker, many times we heard the word GigaText, Cargill, Weyerhaeuser. And they weren't referred to, Mr. Speaker, in any kind of respectful, decent kind of way — for the most part, they were always referred to in a derogatory fashion.

But one word you see rarely in the record of *Hansard*, when you review the remarks of opposition members, is the T-word, taxpayer. You see, Mr. Speaker, the question becomes finally, with this budget: who speaks for the

taxpayer? Certainly the NDP do not speak for the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Speaker. They do not speak for the taxpayer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — So the question becomes: who speaks for the taxpayer and on behalf of the taxpayer? Who speaks for the children, Mr. Speaker? That becomes the essential question, and I say to the NDP, they may not support the taxpayer, they may not stand up behind the taxpayer, but this Premier and this government and this caucus, they stand behind the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker, and the taxpayer's spending priorities.

And I just want to close, Mr. Speaker, with some remarks that were not dissimilar, or in fact are very similar to what I said in my closing remarks on the budget a week ago Thursday night . . . or a week ago tonight. What I talked at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, about it being a time for education politics, not a time . . . a time for education policy, Mr. Speaker, not a time for education politics. And I talked about it's time for health care policy, not health care politics. And I said it's a time for agriculture policy, not agriculture politics. And I had hardly . . . I guess I had just barely sat down and got those words out, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition critic for Finance got up to make his reply, and part of his reply, Mr. Speaker, revolved around a criticism of the spring seeding program. And in his remarks on that night, on page 316 of *Hansard*, he said, and I quote:

The only thing announced tonight, Mr. Speaker, is a \$500 million loan program.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Premier, Mr. Speaker, one of the main problems which farms in this province and farmers in this province have is, they're carrying far more debt than they can manage. The last thing on earth Saskatchewan farmers need is another half billion dollars in debt, and that's what you've given them at a very high interest rate. Mr. Minister, Mr. Premier, that's a betrayal and a disaster for rural Saskatchewan.

I had barely sat down and within 10 minutes the opposition were saying the spring seeding program is a betrayal and a disaster because it's loans and there's loans at what they call high interest rates, which I disagree with, at ten and three-quarters per cent.

Why do I question that, Mr. Speaker? Because, Mr. Speaker, it was only two weeks earlier or a few days earlier that that same party and the Leader of the Opposition had written our Premier, February 26, 1990, where he had recommended to him what we thought was a well-intentioned effort on behalf of the NDP to help forge farm policy in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And one of his key points, point number two in the attachment to the letter to the Premier, was a spring seeding operating loan guarantee from the provincial government to help farm families get their crop in the ground. He went on to say:

Our proposal is that the provincial government

guarantee spring operating loans to farmers under the following conditions:

— that the loan be for basic spring seeding needs;

And what did we announce? A spring seeding loan for seed, fertilizer, chemical, repairs, fuels — the basics, Mr. Speaker.

(and) that both the lender and farmer certify to the satisfaction of the Agricultural Credit Corporation that a loan guarantee is required as collateral; and,

— because the government is guaranteeing the loan, that commercial lenders provide it at well below the prevailing interest rate.

Is it below the prevailing interest rate? It's ten and three-quarters. Is it going to be administered through the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan? You bet, Mr. Speaker. Now how can it be, Mr. Speaker, how can it be on February 26, 1990, that was a good policy, that was a major plank of the NDP agriculture, new agriculture farm policy? Now how can it be that on February 26 that's a good policy, and on March 29 that's a bad policy, Mr. Speaker?

I'll tell you what. Not only does this government and this Premier have a vision when it comes to ag policy, we don't change the vision every two weeks. We stick to it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, we welcome help in dealing with the farm problems. That's why I said these issues are too important. It's time for farm policy, not farm politics, and it wasn't 10 minutes later and we were into farm politics. I say, there is the betrayal of Saskatchewan farmers; there is the hypocrisy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — There is the hypocrisy. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think the NDP need a new symbol of the NDP Party, and the symbol I would recommend for them is that Roman god Janus, Mr. Speaker. Now for those of you who don't recall Roman mythology, Janus is the goddess that had two heads, one looking forward and one looking backward, Mr. Speaker. That's the NDP farm policy. This is our view today when we're talking to this crowd; this is the view tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, it's time to put that kind of politics aside; the issues are too serious. Let's move forward into the future, or I'll tell you what, that'll be the beginning of the end for them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It didn't stop there unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, for the very next day, after I said, because the issues are so important and so complex facing us today in Saskatchewan, I pleaded, if you like, with the opposition to let's put this policy aside — politics aside and develop policy. Well it wasn't only . . . less than 24 hours later when the member from Regina North East got up and in question period read this line. He said:

I want to read another quote from you in my new question. (This was in question period.) You say in this budget speech (and he quotes, he's listed as quoting me here):

... we joined hands with Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd. to develop a paper mill in Prince Albert, with Cargill (Ltd.) to build a fertilizer plant in Belle Plaine ...

And then he stopped, Mr. Speaker, stopped as if to suggest that that was the context and the sum of what I was trying to say there, when in fact the correct quote, if you take that paragraph, is:

... and we joined hands with Weyerhaeuser Canada to develop a paper mill in Prince Albert, with Cargill to build a fertilizer plant in Belle Plaine ... (and) with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Schreier Malting Company to expand the malt plant in Biggar.

(2145)

Now, Mr. Speaker, is this another example of playing silly politics, when every time the example is Cargill and Weyerhaeuser, and yet you leave out the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the Co-op for upgraders and the hundreds of other small-business men and women across this province, Mr. Speaker, who want to build and diversify our economy? It's the same old politics, Mr. Speaker, a selective distortion, if you like, of the facts — a selective distortion of the facts, Mr. Speaker.

Now I say to you tonight, Mr. Speaker, watching the evening news, the NDP are now faced with an even newer and greater dilemma when it comes to criticizing our economic development diversification policy. Because what happened tonight on the evening news, Mr. Speaker, is really a blow for the dilemma that NDP face, because tonight on the evening news what did we learn?

We learned that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is expanding. And I'm basing this on a story I saw on the CKCK news; I'm presuming it's accurate, Mr. Speaker. And it's a story about the Sask Wheat Pool, and just by way of context, I think all of us have seen the ads that the wheat pool has been running in the papers about their diversification initiatives. Story last year, I think it was, their purchase of Robin's Donuts to get into the food side of the agri-food business in a bigger way. I've talked about the malt plant at Biggar and the joint venture there with Schreier.

And now tonight on TV we hear that Sask Wheat Pool is expanding. They have purchased a majority of the Canadian assets of Elders Grain Company. The buy includes grain terminals in Moose Jaw, Winnipeg and three processing plants in North Dakota and one in Kindersley. And the pool says it's an opportunity for it to diversify. And I say congratulations to the members of the wheat pool under the leadership of Garf Stevenson and the very able leadership of their chief executive officer, Milt Fair, Mr. Speaker. And by way of background, I

would just add, my grandfather was a charter or a founding member — I'm not sure exactly what the term was used — of the founding member of the Readlyn co-op or Readlyn ... or the wheat pool in 1900 and whatever, Mr. Speaker. So I think our family has some sense of the wheat pool and its roots in this province.

But here is the dilemma for the NDP, Mr. Speaker. You see, they criticize Cargill and Weyerhaeuser. You know how those words drip off their mouths? Those "vertically integrated multinational companies." Well now with the purchase of these three processing plants in North Dakota — lo and behold! — the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is a vertically integrated multinational agri-food company and we're proud of it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I say to the NDP, what are they going to do? Everybody is prepared to face the new world, to diversify and expand our economy, except the NDP, Mr. Speaker. So I say to the Leader of the Opposition, and all of those people sitting over there, come with us. Join us as we march into the 21st century. Come with us.

Come with us as we forge a new blueprint for this province. Come with us as we implement agriculture policy, Mr. Speaker. Come with us as we implement community bonds, Mr. Speaker. Come with us as we continue educational reform, Mr. Speaker. Come with us as we implement the Murray commission, Mr. Speaker. Come with us as we implement a new and effective financial blueprint.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I say to them, come with us as we forge a new blueprint for this province. Come with us for our children's sake, if for no other reason, Mr. Speaker. I urge all members to support this budget vote, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

The division bells rang from 9:51 p.m. until 9:54 p.m.

The amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 23

Romanow	Atkinson
Prebble	Anguish
Rolfes	Goulet
Shillington	Hagel
Lingenfelter	Pringle
Tchorzewski	Lyons
Thompson	Calvert
Brockelbank	Lautermilch
Mitchell	Trew
Upshall	Smart
Kowalsky	Van Mulligen
Solomon	

Nays — 32

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

Muller	Gerich
Schmidt	Klein
McLeod	Pickering
Hodgins	Sauder
Smith	Toth
Lane	Petersen
Hepworth	Wolfe
Maxwell	McLaren
Hardy	Baker
Kopelchuk	Swan
Martens	Muirhead
Meiklejohn	Johnson
Martin	Gleim
Hopfner	Britton
Swenson	Gardner
Neudorf	Saxinger

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

The division bells rang from 9:57 p.m. until 9:58 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 32

Muller	Gerich
Schmidt	Klein
McLeod	Pickering
Hodgins	Sauder
Smith	Toth
Lane	Petersen
Hepworth	Wolfe
Maxwell	McLaren
Hardy	Baker
Kopelchuk	Swan
Martens	Muirhead
Meiklejohn	Johnson t
Martin	Gleim
Hopfner	Britton
Swenson	Gardner
Neudorf	Saxinger

Nays — 24

Romanow	Solomon
Prebble	Atkinson
Rolfes	Anguish
Shillington	Goulet
Lingenfelter	Hagel
Tchorzewski	Pringle
Thompson	Lyons
Brockelbank	Calvert
Mitchell	Lautermilch
Upshall	Trew
Simard	Smart
Kowalsky	Van Mulligen

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE