

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Martin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two groups today who I'd like to introduce. Let me first of all introduce the younger group, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery from St. Marguerite Bourgeys School in Regina in my constituency, 41 of them, Mr. Speaker, and they're grade 8 students. They're accompanied by two teachers, Gerald Small and Jerry Kot.

I will have an opportunity at 2:30 to have my picture taken with them and also to discuss their . . . whatever they see in this House in the next half hour or so they might want to talk about. They will have that opportunity as well, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members here to welcome the grade 8 students from St. Marguerite Bourgeys School in Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: — And, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery, in the Speaker's gallery, we have 32 government employees. Mr. Speaker, this is part of the process that was started last year or the year before, but we've had occasion to introduce members of the Public Service Commission on several occasions. It's part of the process where civil servants, the members of the Public Service Commission, have an opportunity to tour the Legislative Building and see how the activities work in the Legislative Building and be part of the question period, Mr. Speaker.

We have 32 employees. We have 10 from Highways and Transportation; three from Justice; eight from Human Resources, Labour and Employment; two from Rural Development; four from Agriculture and Food; and five for Finance.

I certainly hope that . . . You might even be able to hear something today if it's not quite as noisy as it is right now. I hope you enjoy this opportunity while you're here.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to please welcome the members of the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a young man who has come a long way to be here as our guest today. His name is Michael Magierowski. He is from the district of Luban, Poland. He is a veterinary student in Poland, has come to Canada, has lived in my constituency for six months now to study English, has lived with his elderly uncle. He will be going back to Poland on May 4.

Since he has been here, they have elected a democratic president, and when he gets back it won't be too long they'll be electing their first in 40 or 50 years, democratic assembly, as we have here in Saskatchewan.

He's here studying the legislature as my guest today, and I would like the members all to welcome this young man from Poland. He's in the west gallery and he's studying democracy.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to the Assembly through you, a group of Grade 6 and 7 students, 23 in all, seated in the Speaker's gallery, from the Kitchener School in the Elphinstone constituency. They're with us here today to watch question period. And with them is their teacher, Mr. Howard; chaperons Mr. Ell and Ms. Reiss.

I want all members to welcome them here today, and I hope they enjoy question period with us.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize in your gallery today the leader of the Liberal Party and also the Liberal candidate in my riding, Lynda Haverstock. And I wonder if members would join with me in welcoming Lynda Haverstock to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hospital Construction in Saskatoon

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister in past weeks hospitals in this province have announced a closure of almost 300 care beds and the laying off of almost 400 staff members.

Mr. Minister, you've spent millions on an expansion to St. Paul's Hospital, and you're spending millions on a new City Hospital, Mr. Minister. Now we see in fact with respect to the City Hospital, in the course of the construction you ordered a study which told you you weren't doing quite the right thing. And you didn't even follow the recommendations of the study in the end.

Mr. Minister, after spending millions on the building of new facilities in the province, you are closing beds and laying off staff. This is because of your mismanagement and incompetence, and it's costing taxpayers millions of dollars in lost jobs because you have no plan.

Mr. Minister, what's the good of building new facilities when they can't be used? What's the good of building a new floor at the City Hospital when you can't use it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, once again we see an example of the simplistic analysis of the NDP (New Democratic Party) on a very complex system, the health care system in the province, and in this specific case of this question, the health care system in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, for a long period of time, for a whole. . . or quite a long period of time, their administration earlier and the one prior to that, there was very little regeneration done to hospitals in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, there has been significant change taking place, and it is taking place at an accelerated rate, in the way in which health care is delivered. That's here and that's across Canada; that's everywhere in the western world.

Mr. Speaker, that significant change dictates that you need to have the latest in technology. You must have the best of facilities. We made the commitment to have both those things, the latest in technology and the best of facilities and the conversion to day surgery which is happening here and everywhere else in the country, and in the case of Saskatoon was not happening as quickly as it was elsewhere in the country. All of those things, Mr. Speaker, are factors. And, Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member to say that there are portions of the new City Hospital that will not be utilized at the present time is, quite frankly, not as accurate as what she thinks.

Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no, just one more point, Mr. Speaker. The City Hospital, the new City Hospital, is planned as any planning of any major facility like that should be, and that's looking well out into the future. Who would plan a facility of that magnitude without looking well out into the future?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, your approach is simplistic. Your answer is to throw money at a project and when you go wrong to cap a floor in a hospital. Even Dr. Bob Murray says that you have no plan, Mr. Minister, with respect to closing hospital beds in Saskatoon.

Now I want to draw your attention to page 136 of your budget where we see your government spent 116 million on health care capital costs last year, and a further \$79 million is budgeted just this year. Compared to fiscal year '89-90, last year represents an increase of 81 per cent and this year represents an increase of 23 per cent.

Now while it might be good politics for you, Mr. Minister, in an election year to promise to build new hospitals and nursing homes all over the province, it does not make good economic sense when you haven't the money to properly operate the existing facilities. Mr. Minister, why are you putting political needs of the PC Party ahead of the health-care needs of the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member . . . and once again I repeat this because it is absolutely the right way to characterize the criticism, from that side of the House, of the way in which the health care system works, a very simplistic analysis.

Mr. Speaker, I absolutely reject any suggestion by that member or anyone else that construction or regeneration of St. Paul's Hospital, the regeneration that went on at the

University Hospital, the regeneration here in Regina at the General Hospital, regeneration programs that have gone on at the Pasqua Hospital in Regina . . . she says they were politically expedient. I say they were needed, and needed for an awful long time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — There were some times when resource revenues were high. Those were needed. And that group, that member and her ilk over there did not do anything about it.

Mr. Speaker, talking about political, in this city very close to where we are right now, the Wascana Rehab Centre, which was an initiative of our government, was built by our government, not for political needs, Mr. Speaker, for the needs of . . . for the people who use the facility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before we go to the next question and answer, I ask the members on both sides of the House to be cognizant of the rule of excessively long questions and answers. It's something that the House really doesn't like, as is evidenced here today, and I'd like members to recognize that fact.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Allow the hon. member to rise to put her question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, you are building and promising to build facilities throughout the province when you are not prepared to put operating funds to keep the present facilities open. That's our criticism . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the hon. member is having a difficult time. Many members are interrupting her, and I'm sure that everybody would like to hear the question.

Ms. Simard: — And with respect to Wascana Rehab, Mr. Minister, I understand there are beds closing there as well.

Now, Mr. Minister, my question to you is: your payments in Health to SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) increased by 24 per cent this year . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order, order. Now I don't like interrupting; however, we have now reached another stage and I hear some unparliamentary language. I think we should just contain ourselves and allow the hon. member to put her question. This is the third time, I believe, I've had to interrupt. And let us allow her to put the question now.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, how can you justify paying 24 per cent more rent for buildings that you are not prepared to staff properly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, in this health-care system, very large system, very expensive system — \$1.6 billion in this population of a million — there are many aspects to that system. One of the aspects is the capital facilities within which the system operates. That's on the institutional side.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said in an earlier answer, there was a significant need, given the change that was coming, at the way in which health care is delivered — the change coming at us in terms of the way medical services are delivered — more and more day surgery, more and more high-technology equipment needed, and the facilities to house that equipment.

That's the case. That was the case at St. Paul's Hospital. That's the case for the need for a new City Hospital. The hon. member did not say there's no need for City Hospital. They were very silent. They certainly did not build any new City Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the capital construction is one aspect of a very large and complex system. Mr. Speaker, any place in this province where construction is going on, and in the rural parts of the province which the member refers to from time to time, is addressing another major change that's taking place. And that is the need for long-term care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Cuts to Spending on Highways

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Mr. Minister, for years now your government has been cutting back on highway services, particularly construction and maintenance. This year you've gone a step farther with the total elimination of a \$10 million highway rehabilitation program and overall cuts of \$18 million in highway capital expenditures.

Mr. Minister, not everyone in Saskatchewan can get around by executive air. Mr. Minister, how do you justify this neglect of our highways and roads in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's improper of the member opposite to say that there's been a neglect of the highway system in the province of Saskatchewan. If you take a look at the type of highway system that we have, it's more than a quarter of all the roads in Canada — in Saskatchewan. With one-twenty-fifth of the population to pay for their maintenance and upkeep, sir, I think the Department of Highways has done an excellent job in these tough economic times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, relieve yourself of the responsibility of relying on my comments; let me give you the comments of the Saskatchewan road builders association. The Saskatchewan road builders association

says that these cut-backs are going to result in the loss of more than 2,800 jobs, mostly in rural areas.

Given everything we're seeing today, Mr. Minister, it's safe to say that the predictions found in your cabinet document which was released yesterday, in terms of increased unemployment in the province, are going to come true. How in the world do you justify this kind of job loss right across the province, at the same time preaching the need for decentralization and moving jobs outside of Regina? How do you justify taking jobs out of rural Saskatchewan while claiming to be moving jobs there?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the members opposite know that the Department of Highways has had a 7 per cent reduction in its budget. The capital construction budget is down. The maintenance budget will be maintained at very close to its previous levels. And obviously, as I've said before, there may not be a whole lot of new highways in this province but there will be a whole lot of miles of old highways in very, very good condition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Minister, it may be a case of your spending more and getting less for it. When you stand here with a straight face and say that the maintenance is being kept up on highways in Saskatchewan, it causes me to laugh.

Mr. Minister, the claims of the road builders association are not new to your government, not new. They put the same claims in a letter with a position paper which they sent to you on March 18 and I have the letter here, Mr. Minister.

Were you so ineffective, Mr. Minister, that you couldn't get your cabinet colleagues to pay attention to what the road builders are saying, let alone what I'm saying, or did you just decide to ignore the concerns of the road builders and ignore 2,800 jobs being lost in rural Saskatchewan?

And finally, Mr. Minister, I want to know whether you will give me a response that you gave to the road builders for their letter of March 19.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite refers to reductions in budgets, we had a special program that was in place, a three-year program that sunsetted this year at \$10 million. A \$30 million program was not reinstated this year. We are in some very difficult economic times and some difficult choices had to be made.

The highway system in the province . . .

The Speaker: — Order order, order. The Hon. Minister of Highways is answering the question. We have one or two gentlemen who seem to want to answer it, however, the minister from Kelvington-Wadena is answering the question. Will you allow him to do that?

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — The highway system in the province of Saskatchewan is no laughing matter, so don't laugh about it, sir. If you're looking at the type of system we have, I've already pointed out to you that we have more roads in Saskatchewan than any other jurisdiction in Canada, a quarter of all the roads in Canada.

We are also facing some fairly difficult choices when it comes to the federal government. We have an efficiencies paper that's just been put forward that promotes the abandonment of railroads. If railroads are going to be abandoned on a regular basis, we are going to see even greater and greater demand put upon our highways and we're calling upon the federal government to come through with some money to offset that type of a situation.

Canada is the only developed country that does not have a federally funded highway system. The United States has, we don't. It doesn't make any sense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Minister mentions, Mr. Speaker, that there's a sunset program in Highways. And I suspect, Mr. Speaker, there's a sunset program with regard to the electoral success of this party opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — And they're coming quickly to that sunset, Mr. Speaker.

The second part of my question was not answered by the minister and that is: will he give to me or table in the House the answer that he gave to the road builders of Saskatchewan for the March 19 letter they sent him, with a copy that went to the Premier and the Minister of Finance?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, I have met with the construction association. I have met a number of people in that association and in that industry. That industry brought to me their concerns about the highway budget. Obviously we've had a 7 per cent reduction. But, Mr. Speaker, it is in keeping with our theme of fiscal management. We have got some very, very hard choices. Where would you like us to spend the money? Health and education?

An Hon. Member: — Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Agriculture. The things that people hold near and dear in this province.

Mr. Speaker, highways are an important part. We have had a 7 per cent reduction in capital expenditures. We have had a 7 per cent reduction. The maintenance of our highways will continue to be as good as it has always been. And I might remind you, Mr. Speaker, that many of the highways that we're trying to keep up were old grid roads that had a little bit of cold mix put on top of them by that membership opposite when they were government,

as election ploys.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Job Cuts in Public Service Commission

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Labour and Employment. Mr. Minister, I have in my hand a partial list of the jobs that your government cut yesterday. Of the 221 positions identified in this list, Mr. Minister, 158 are located outside of Regina, 63 located in Regina. And you say that your government intends to move government jobs out of Regina, but on top of the teachers and nurses that we've already heard about, Mr. Minister, you just cut 158 jobs that are out there right now.

And so I ask you, Mr. Minister, are you going to let the people of small town Saskatchewan know about this hypocrisy of your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for the question. First of all, you have to understand that as this government is dealing with the economic measures, we're dealing with it in whatever way we have to. And as those measures come up, and by the time the bumping rights occur and all the rest of it, we don't have any idea where the vacancies will indeed end up.

And they may laugh about that, because that's what they care about people. They don't; we do. We do care a lot about people and we do care about the people of Regina. And as a matter of fact, he's the last one to talk about decentralization. The decentralization will stabilize the balance of the province for us in Regina so that Regina can do what it's best suited to.

I went to a luncheon at noon and here's Ipsco, probably one of the best corporate citizens in my city, with an expansion that created another 70 jobs in this city, in my home town, Mr. Speaker. And they bring up questions like that, that are not relative at all to what the problem is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, another question to the Minister of Labour and Employment. Mr. Minister, I'm sure that you can appreciate that for anyone to lose their job is a personal traumatic experience. If there was any saving grace at all in your government's cuts, Mr. Minister, if there was any saving grace at all, at least half of the jobs that were cut from Regina were vacant now.

But of those 158 jobs that you cut outside of Regina, almost every one of them is currently a position being filled, being done by a real person with a family, Mr. Minister. You seem to have a little difficulty answering my first question, Mr. Minister. Will you please explain this reality to people in small town Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, the

people in small town Saskatchewan will understand my answer a whole lot better than what he's trying to say. We don't know what's going to happen when those jobs are dropped.

And by the same token, he can't have it both ways. He can't claim on one hand that we're saving jobs in Regina and we're transferring them out to rural Saskatchewan. I mean it just doesn't logically work. So I don't know what they expect. They know nothing about business, so as a result how would they ever know anything how it applies to the managing of a business, including the employees.

And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is a great place to live in. And if I was an employee that had an opportunity to be transferred to any one of our great towns in this province, I would have a look at it for quality of life and for the rest of it.

And it makes absolutely no sense to pursue this line of questioning when all they come up with is the same old rhetoric that every time we try to do something positive with our budget, they bring up the GigaText and the this and the this. And if you added it all up it doesn't add up to what the problem is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when the minister stands in his place, I think the closest he comes to honesty in his answer is when he says that he doesn't know what they're doing.

Let me direct my question, Mr. Speaker — in the absence of any reasonable response from the Minister of Labour and Employment — let me direct my next question to the Deputy Premier.

Now, Mr. Deputy Premier, I note . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for bringing the government members to order.

The Speaker: — Order. From time to time I attempt to bring both sides to order, and I just ask you to continue with your question.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's understandable why the government is sensitive on this matter.

Well, Mr. Deputy Premier, it seems that in this extensive government down-sizing exercise that you're going through, you took care to protect your own political staff, Mr. Deputy Premier. When we look at the cuts from Executive Council, Mr. Deputy Premier, how many cut? One — one cut from Executive Council. Was it a political, a high-paid political advisor that was cut from Executive Council, Deputy Premier? No, it was a clerical position and vacant at that — and vacant at that.

And so I ask you, Mr. Deputy Premier, is this your version of fair? Mr. Deputy Premier, is this how you share the burden? Mr. Deputy Premier, will you tell the people of Saskatchewan, is this your idea of "Fair Share"?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member from Moose Jaw, who will make reference to which departments the various reductions in the public service have come from . . . and they were announced as a result of the budget. And as other members in this question period have said in their answers and were referring directly to the difficult economic times of this whole province, that everyone is involved in and must be involved in.

As it relates to that member from Moose Jaw asking the question, as he did to my colleague earlier and then this one, as it relates to the number of employees, where they work, his caring for employees . . . and he represents the city of Moose Jaw that is a direct beneficiary of a tremendous economic development project in the Saferco plant near the city of Moose Jaw. That member's party is against it at every turn throughout this province, vehemently against it every place they go in the province.

And he has the gall to sit there in their midst and oppose the city of Moose Jaw that he purports to represent in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. The government members clearly are a little sensitive, clearly a little sensitive on this issue. The Deputy Premier is perhaps a little more skilled at obfuscating the issue than the Minister of Labour and Employment, but I come back to my question, Mr. Deputy Premier.

You are the government member responsible for Fair Share Saskatchewan. I pointed out that of all the cuts . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — . . . of all the cuts that your government made in your budget, 221 cuts, that only one of those cuts came from your political offices, Mr. Deputy Premier, only one. And so will you please explain to the public servants of Saskatchewan, will you please explain to the people of Saskatchewan, will you please explain to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister, if this is your idea of fair share. Will you answer that question, Mr. Deputy Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, fair share does aptly describe a decentralization program throughout this province. It's a good description for a program that will move people throughout the province and services closer to the people who pay the taxes in this province. That's an apt name.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wants my description of fair share. I'll give him one that he should understand very clearly. When the Water Corporation moved to Moose Jaw, that was an example of fair share for the taxpayers of

Moose Jaw, fair share for the taxpayers of Moose Jaw. When a Water Corporation . . . And it's been well received in the city of Moose Jaw from everything that I've been led to believe and everything I understand.

So, Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member once again puts himself on the opposite side of an issue from where his citizens and his city is . . . is always an amazement to me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Are we ready?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Report of the Northern Economic Development Task Force

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform you that the report of the northern economic development task force was presented to the Premier in Prince Albert this morning by task force chairman, Joan Duncan, the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Maple Creek, and task force members: Jim Durocher, president of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan; Louis Bear, the mayor of Sandy Bay; Mel Hegland, the mayor of La Ronge; and Lawrence Yew, administrator of the northern village of Pinehouse.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to table this report before the Legislative Assembly. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the many Northerners who participated in community meetings and contributed their views, suggestions, and vision of the North as a key to the economic future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the task force for its efforts and commitment to bringing the views of Northerners to government. The members of the task force believe the recommendations contained in the report are bold and innovative and clearly reflect the views and aspirations of Northerners. They have recommended new mechanisms and structures which would allow Northerners to play an integral role in the economic development of the North.

The recommendations recognize the interdependence of human resource development and economic development. They recognize the need for partnerships of people, Northerners, governments, and the private sector. They recognize that Northerners must have a strong voice in the decisions affecting their lives, their families, their communities, the North, and the province as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, our government will be reviewing this report at the earliest possible opportunity. While it is still too early to provide a complete response, I can say that this morning in Prince Albert the Premier indicated that he supports in principle many of the recommendations in the report.

Mr. Speaker, this report represents a consensus of Saskatchewan people and of northern Saskatchewan for

northern Saskatchewan. It's a blueprint for the North. It's a non-partisan report and an action plan for the North. And it represents the hope of the North for the North.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be carefully reviewing this plan and we will be proceeding with some of the recommendations in the near future. Also, Mr. Speaker, the task force will be recalled in a year's time to evaluate our progress and make additional recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — I just received a copy of the report, Mr. Speaker. In response to the minister I would say that when he says, number one, this is non-partisan and non-political, I would say that's absolute nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — When I first ran as a MLA back in 1985, the same thing was happening just prior to an election. They had set up a Northern Development Advisory Council which was to look at the economic development of northern Saskatchewan and provide hope and opportunity, is what they said — exactly the same words he used today.

So this type of deception cannot go unnoticed, basically because the same thing happened after '82 with the Dutchak report. What all the North ever gets is reports and reports from this government. What we have had is nine years of inaction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — What we have had is nine years of jobs being cut back in the mines. You did not even live up to the legal agreements in regards to the mines in hiring people in northern Saskatchewan. And that's a shameful record of your government.

When you look at the fact that you can subsidize liquor, you can subsidize whisky, you'll subsidize wine, but you will not subsidize food for the children of northern Saskatchewan — that is shameful.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — The minister laughs about it. He doesn't care. He doesn't care about what happened in the North. How he said that there was many good ideas from the North back in 1982, '83, '84, '85, '86, '87, '88, '89 and '90. But now the government says they're going to listen, for the first time. But I will tell you, the people of northern Saskatchewan will not be fooled.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — The people in northern Saskatchewan will not be fooled because this is exactly the same type of promise that they had with the Northern Development Advisory Council. Louis Bear also sat in at that council. He's also running for the Progressive Conservative Party in this election.

You said it was non-partisan. I would like to explain that quite clearly. So when you look at the historical record and you say it is non-partisan, then remember that the people in northern Saskatchewan are going to look at this report and say, hey, are we going to believe this government? They will say no. Because the real quest for northern Saskatchewan will be a new NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order. The member for Moose Jaw North, will the members come to order. I think you've had your . . . let's carry on for the next item of business, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDERS

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.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to take part in this budget debate, that was the budget that was presented here on April 22, a budget of a government whose time has run out, a government that has no mandate and no mandate to govern this province — a phoney budget full of incredible promises, cooked forecasts, and unbelievable claims, Mr. Speaker. It is a crowning jewel of a decade of a government management of betrayal, a government that has taken this province to over \$5 billion in debt.

Mr. Speaker, in 1982 when the Conservative government took over the province of Saskatchewan, they inherited a nest-egg of \$139 million that was in the budget. And now they have taken that in eight and a half, nine years, and they have worked it up to over \$5 billion in debt. Mr. Speaker, I say that this government has no mandate to govern and they should call an election as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — One thing that did happen when that budget was presented the other night, it guaranteed that there will be no rush for Conservatives to seek nominations in this province. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's been very few nominations held on the Conservative side, and I know that there are many, many members who are sitting over there who, if they have been nominated, they are rethinking their position very seriously because they know exactly what's going to happen come the next election.

The Minister of Finance said that there's no single answer to Saskatchewan's problems now. He just threw up his hands and he said, there's really no single answer. Well I say to you, Mr. Speaker, there is a single answer, and I say that to the members opposite: you just call an election

and we'll solve the problems of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Mr. Thompson: — Then they talk about Fair Share Saskatchewan. After nine years, Mr. Speaker, of firings and moving offices out of small town Saskatchewan, now they talk about fair share and want to move offices back into Saskatchewan, into small town Saskatchewan, out of the cities.

Well I just want to comment on northern Saskatchewan. And I want to indicate to you what has taken place in northern Saskatchewan as far as fair share. And what my constituents are telling me and what I'm passing on to the government is: yes, we would like fair share in northern Saskatchewan. What we would like to have is the offices put back into northern Saskatchewan that have been taken out of northern Saskatchewan by the government opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to give you a few examples of some of the offices that have been moved out, and I really don't call this Fair Share Saskatchewan at all. We most certainly don't have any fairness in it.

And where are the offices being moved from northern Saskatchewan? Well the resource office, the head office which was in northern Saskatchewan, that was moved farther south to Meadow Lake. Social Services, they had the supervisor and the head office was up in northern Saskatchewan. That was moved out and also moved to Meadow Lake.

The fisheries branch, that was another head office that was up in northern Saskatchewan, and that's where the head office of fisheries should be, Mr. Speaker. That was also moved out, and where was that moved? That was also moved to Meadow Lake.

Then they took the Economic Development branch office, an office that was set up there to create economic development and get northern Saskatchewan moving again — and I will speak a little later on in my speech about the report that was just tabled here by the Minister of Health — the Economic Development branch was also moved out. Mr. Speaker, that also was moved to Meadow Lake. And to add salt on the wound, it wasn't moved to a government building in Meadow Lake where individuals from the North could at least go and find it, but they moved it into the plumbing shop in Meadow Lake, owned by one Ron Young, who is . . . his wife I believe is the president of the member from Meadow Lake's executive.

And they call that Fair Share Saskatchewan. I say that's not fair share Saskatchewan. And all northern Saskatchewan is asking for is some fairness, and we're most certainly not getting it. And you can just take a look at the offices that have been moved out, and that's just the ones that have been moved to Meadow Lake.

And let me tell you, when that next election is called, you will see a big change in the constituency of Meadow Lake. There will be a different member, I can assure you

of that.

One can go down to other communities. Go into Rosetown. I was into Rosetown about three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, and you just go through that community and look at the houses that are for sale. Houses every street, three and four houses, in the community of Rosetown. You go downtown and talk to the business community and it actually looks like Rosetown has come to the end. There's no movement; the houses are not being sold. They've been up for sale for a number of years now and they just can't sell them. Businesses are going broke. And that is happening all over Saskatchewan, not just in Rosetown, but let me tell you, Rosetown is a good example of what is taking place in rural Saskatchewan.

And the minister got up, on his budget, and he never said one word about northern Saskatchewan, a region of this province that has been so neglected under this Conservative government, so neglected that it's just unreal, the unemployment rate and the poverty that we have in northern Saskatchewan. And there was not one word in that budget — not one word.

Then they go around Saskatchewan and they have Consensus Saskatchewan, spend millions of dollars on Consensus Saskatchewan. And they had two members from northern Saskatchewan who sat on that board — a member from Pinehouse, Gary Tinker, and the mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Belanger, Buckley Belanger.

So what do they do? That task force reports. They had the information from the Northerners; they had the advice from the two people that were sitting on it. So they decided in their wisdom that they were going to have another task force. This one they were going to call it a northern task force. And as my colleague from Cumberland ably put it, that task force was weighed heavily to the government opposite. The Conservative candidate sits on it, the mayor of La Ronge. I think you could check that out and you'll see that there's some Conservative linkage there.

Let me tell you, that is a farce. And when they had two members who sat on there, a mayor and another individual from Pinehouse who sat on Consensus Saskatchewan and they totally ignored the input that they put on it . . . so they had to set up another one. A complete farce.

And the individuals in northern Saskatchewan indicated it was a complete farce. They know what was taking place. After nine years they're going around with another task force to find out what the citizens of northern Saskatchewan want.

In the first place we have 60-some MLAs in here who should be telling the government what the problems are all over this province. We have two MLAs, myself and the member from Cumberland, and we have continually brought up the problems and we continually write letters to this government to try and solve the problems. We don't need another task force, or we don't need any more reports in northern Saskatchewan. What we really need is some fairness in northern Saskatchewan and some action, Mr. Speaker.

And he talks about the conditions . . . the province is going to diversify and it's going to prosper under a Tory government. Well it most certainly has not prospered. And there's been no diversification. Really what's taken place is we have a tremendous out-migration of the young men and women in this province who are going to Alberta and British Columbia and other parts of Canada to get work. That's where they're going. And they're continually going out of this province to look for work, because there's absolutely no conditions here that will warrant anyone wanting to stay in this province. And there's absolutely no fairness in what is taking place.

But I indicated that the citizens of northern Saskatchewan and the rest of this province have come upon tough times. But not everybody has come upon tough times in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Let's take a look at the president of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Chuck Childers. He makes over, with all his perks and everything, he makes over \$700,000 a year. That's his wages. But, Mr. Speaker, there's no money for a sewer and water project in the community of St. George's Hill.

The total for the top officials, the top five officials in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, \$1.6 million. That's just for the top officials in one corporation. Yet there's no sewer and water for communities like Michel village and Stony Rapids, small communities in northern Saskatchewan that do not even have sewer and water to this date, Mr. Speaker. So that group of people, they're not getting their fair share, but let me tell you, Mr. Childers is getting his fair share.

There's other winners — I said the losers were the Simpsons of Saskatchewan — but there's other winners. There's Cargill, approximately \$400 million of the taxpayers' money going into Cargill, but no money for sewer and water at Stony Rapids, at Poplar Point, in La Loche, no money for that sewer and water system . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that's right; that's right. There are people in this province who are prospering, but they are not the people of Saskatchewan. They're the Cargills and the Chuck Childers as I've indicted. Absolutely no fairness, Mr. Speaker.

There's other winners, Mr. Speaker. I want to touch on some of the other winners. Millar Western in Meadow Lake, \$130 million to set up a pulp mill in Meadow Lake — taxpayers' money.

I want to touch on the big one, Weyerhaeuser in Prince Albert. They're another winner, from the United States. What did Weyerhaeuser get from the citizens of Saskatchewan? Well they got eight million acres of the prime forest land. They got a saw mill in Big River. They got a chemical plant in Saskatoon, and not 1 cent, not 1 cent . . . I want to quote from the document dated December 7, 1990, Mr. Speaker:

To date, Weyerhaeuser has not paid to the province any of the principle on the original \$236 million owing on the purchase of the pulp mill.

Not 1 cent of the \$236 million. Since 1986, the Weyerhaeuser corporation has used the resources of our province and has not paid 1 cent back, not 1 cent.

And now we see our Highways' budget being cut by 10 per cent. No programs for northern Saskatchewan. Jobs are being lost. Young men and women are migrating out of this province. Yes, these are the big winners, but the citizens of Saskatchewan are the big losers. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no fairness in that — absolutely no fairness.

And I think that you're going to see that when the election rolls around in the next short while, the citizens of this province will speak and they will speak very loudly. And you are going to see, Mr. Speaker, another 1934 all over again.

This Conservative government is far worse than the Anderson government was between 1929 and '34. Far, far more vicious on the individuals of this province. One just has to take a look at what they've done to Saskatchewan and to the civil servants and to the families in this province. They've literally destroyed them. Far, far worse. Absolutely no fairness.

So Weyerhaeuser is another one of the big winners. They've done quite well and they're still doing quite well. It's just a continual attack on the citizens of Saskatchewan. And it started in 1982, Mr. Speaker. It started with the highways workers; it started with the privatization of the coal-mines and the drag-lines down by Manalta Coal, the friends of the Tories.

The dental nurses, 400 and some dental nurses, dental therapists and dental assistants from all over Saskatchewan literally destroyed in one stroke of a pen by a Conservative government — an uncompassionate Conservative government — that believes in destroying the fabric that keeps this province together and that's our families — literally destroyed them.

And now they've announced another 300-and-some civil servants' jobs that are going to be cut, and the destruction of another large group of Saskatchewan families that are going to be destroyed. You see them every day. You see them on TV last night — individuals who are being interviewed and went to work, never thought that they were going to lose their job. And there there's no job.

But yet you have money for the Cargills and you have money for the Weyerhaeusers and the Chuck Childers and the Peter Pocklington. Your priorities of the Conservative government of Saskatchewan are completely screwed up, Mr. Speaker, completely screwed up.

You don't believe in the families of Saskatchewan. What you believe in is your big corporate friends, and let me tell you it's not your big corporate friends that are going to get you elected in the next election.

It's going to be the citizens of this province who are going to get you thrown out of office, and you are going to get thrown out like no Conservative government has ever been thrown out before.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, nobody deserves to be thrown out more than the Conservative government across the way. They literally . . . they destroy it . . . they deserve it.

What we have faced in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is a human disaster. We have a human disaster out in Saskatchewan. This is a government that do not get out there and take a look at what's happening. They're not going out and talking to the citizens of this province. They hide, and I don't blame them for hiding. I don't blame them for hiding.

You just have to go into any place and when you talk about taxes, the way that the tax burden that has been put on the citizens of our province, tax burdens like the PST, the provincial sales tax. And I'll have a lot more to say on that, Mr. Speaker, when we start debating Bill 61. I intend to take a lot of time on that Bill to discuss what that's doing to Saskatchewan.

But in closing, Mr. Speaker, I talked about what's really happening in Saskatchewan today, this human disaster that's out there, and I ask the members opposite to get on with it. Let's have an election. You don't have the mandate to govern this province. You all know that full well.

Surely your constituents are telling you the same thing that they're telling us. We know that, because we go into your ridings. So I say, get out there and call that election and give us some fairness — bring some fairness back to the province and to the families.

The Minister talked about, he talked in glowing terms, about the blocks that he was building for a solid Saskatchewan. Well that's not true, Mr. Speaker. Those blocks that the Conservative governments have been putting up for years are made out of sawdust. They're collapsing. They're just totally collapsing along with the economy of this province. And there's nothing more that you can say.

(1500)

When you look at the financial situation that we're in and the tax burden that's been put on the families of this province, it's a human disaster out there and it has to be turned around. It certainly will never be turned around by a Conservative government. It was never done the only other time that they were in between 1929 and 1934. That was a disaster, but this is a far greater disaster. We're so far in debt, they've just got everyone . . . everyone's just getting ready to move out.

And many, many individuals in this province will tell you, if a Conservative government ever got re-elected again, it would be just mass movement to other provinces. They will just have to get out. There are a lot of individuals, Mr. Speaker, who are still waiting and they still have hope that this election will bring a new government and a breath of fresh air to this province.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, through you and to the Conservative members over there . . . and many of them who I suspect many, many more of them are going to announce in the next short while, Mr. Speaker, that they will not be seeking re-election for the Conservative Party.

There are many rumours out there that there will be many more of them that will not run. And I know some of them personally who are thinking, well I don't really think I should seek re-election. And I know that the Premier's having a pretty rough time convincing members that they should run one more time for the Conservative Party.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will have a lot more to say when we get on to Bill 61 as to what the taxes have done. And I will cover education at that time, Mr. Minister, and I will have a lot more to say.

But in closing, Mr. Speaker, I just say to the Conservative government over there: let's get on with it; let's have an election; let's get things straightened out here. And I most certainly, in all good conscience, I can't support this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I firstly want to express my pleasure and certainly my appreciation at the privilege of being able to participate in this budget speech.

Before I begin my remarks I would first of all, since this is my first opportunity to do so, sir, also express my pleasure and congratulations at your election as the first elected Speaker of this House. I think it expresses well the feelings of all the members of this House and their confidence in your ability to guide us through our deliberations. And, Mr. Speaker, I might add that having been in the position of presiding officer myself from time to time, I can certainly understand the stress and perhaps some of the problems that occur. So certainly my best wishes to you in your new post, sir.

I also want to congratulate, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance on his fine document. This blueprint for the future of Saskatchewan, a blueprint, I believe, in his budget that certainly reflects the wishes and the directions that the citizens of Saskatchewan would want this government to go.

I believe furthermore, Mr. Speaker, that it also reflects the government's commitment to this province. It is, Mr. Speaker, a genuine plan that outlines our various policies and our vision for the future, which I might add by the same token, Mr. Speaker, it by contrast reflects on the sad state of affairs and the members opposite, their lack of plan, their lack of policy.

Mr. Speaker, to reinforce my remarks all I have to do is take a brief look at my own constituency, the constituency of Rosthern. And I believe what has happened in the constituency of Rosthern does truly reflect the priorities of this government. And let me just take a few moments, Mr. Speaker, to elaborate upon what I'm trying to say here.

The priorities as such, paramount, I would suggest to you, is the protection of rural Saskatchewan, to protect the way of life in this province — the way of life as we have known it and as we cherish it and as we look forward to the maintenance of that kind of way of life in the future. I know that in my own constituency I have held a number of meetings, meetings dealing with the security and the longevity of rural Saskatchewan and indeed all of Saskatchewan as we know it.

And in the numbers of farm safety net meetings that I've had in my area, the meetings that I chaired, and not only those meetings, Mr. Speaker, but indeed throughout the province, the many, many meetings that I went to . . . And certainly, Mr. Speaker, in your own constituency where I was very pleased to meet with literally thousands of folks, farmers, who were expressing the concern for their future, for their Saskatchewan, for their rural way of life. And I was very, very pleased that I could be part of meeting with these people and determining a direction in which we want to go.

And everywhere we went we found that the population of the towns where these meetings were held, swelled, doubled, and sometimes even tripled in numbers as farmers came out in mass numbers to find out more about what we were going to be doing for them, in conjunction with them, in response to the farm organization, s in the various meetings that led up to the drafting of this future and this blueprint for rural Saskatchewan.

So I realize that the plan itself is not perfect, that the plan itself is perhaps not the final word. It may be but one more plank in a platform for rural survival. I know that all members of the House would agree with me when I say that if we could have the three lines of defence that are normally talked about . . . we have the first line of defence, and all of us would prefer if this society of ours, this economic infrastructure in Saskatchewan and indeed all the world, could be operating on market forces. That's what we would like to do. We're good producers; we're competitive. We can make it in this world, thank you.

But when you get into a world scene where you have this insanity of subsidies, governments paying out more in subsidies than the value of the product itself, it augurs very, very poorly for the province of Saskatchewan because we are a resource-based province. And particularly, whether we like it or not, in spite of the amount of diversification that we have, in a sense we are still hewers of wood and drawers of water. And we have to get to a point as far away from that as possible, but presently we are primarily an agriculturally based economy. And as goes the economy of agriculture, so goes the economy of the province: Regina, Saskatoon. That is an inescapable fact.

But having said that, the first line of defence has broken down, so we need that second line of defence, of course, where our GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs come in. And then having said all of that, I also must recognize at the same time that there's a necessity of a third line of defence. And of course that is an issue that is very much open for debate and still open for conjecture and still open for more work because certainly the third line of

defence is far from perfect and there has to be more. More has to be done.

But that was my brief introduction into some of the aspects that I want to talk about the constituency of Rosthern. I know that in my constituency we have a number of diversification incentives in the form of community bonds, the most recently of which was created in the town of Rosthern as such. We want to diversify. The folks in my constituency want to diversify to remove that dependence upon that one great method that we have in Saskatchewan of earning a living, and that is agriculture. So the people of my constituency realize that strengthening farming is extremely important on a diversification basis.

Now the towns and villages and even hamlets, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency want to diversify. And they are able to do such through the forum of community bonds, through the forum of RDCs (rural development corporations), SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) loans and so on and so forth. And I'm pleased that several businesses in my constituency have been able to access those kinds of support services and have done very well.

And it's because of this government's diversification commitment that a number of my areas in my constituency have been able to do something that you wouldn't expect in Saskatchewan — just shows the entrepreneurialship within Saskatchewan people and their innovativeness.

For example, in the town of Waldheim, fish processing plant, a fish breeding plant, Arctic Char, all of these kinds of fish — a tremendous and innovative experience. Or a wild meat abattoir that is located in Langham. Or an auto body shop that was recently set up in Rosthern.

So our government's diversification programs have helped, Mr. Speaker, my constituents build a future, build a future for their family and a future for their neighbours.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore, Martensville is soon to be home of another new school. A four and a half million dollar school is going to be built in Martensville — a commitment to education. We need that. Martensville, by the way, Mr. Speaker, is the fastest growing town in Saskatchewan. There's no doubt about it — a dynamic group of people who are determined to make it in this world. And I think Martensville certainly has a very, very bright future in store for it.

But like I was saying, our government is committed to education and we will continue to provide Saskatchewan residents with the best educational institutions in this country.

Now in addition to the best educational institutions in this province, I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that we also have, in spite of what we heard this afternoon in question period, the best health-care system in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — And again, Mr. Speaker, I believe

that this is reflected in my own constituency. I'll just go over a few of the things that have happened over the last number of years.

We have had, for example, the nursing home in Rosthern has received, over \$1 million toward the building of a new wing. Waldheim's Menno Home received almost half a million dollars to upgrade their structure. Dalmeny's home for the aged received just over half a million dollars. Langham's home received almost a quarter of a million dollars, as did the Warman Altenheim.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commitment to health in my constituency. That is a commitment that was a condemnation of the NDP government previous, that put this now infamous moratorium on nursing homes where in the last six years of their mandate not one nursing home was built. They did build a liquor board store, by the way, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency, but no nursing home beds whatsoever.

That, Mr. Speaker, in Rosthern constituency alone is the commitment of this government to health care. And I have not even talked about the \$2 million per year that automatically on an annualized basis is funnelled into the town of Rosthern into the Rosthern Union Hospital.

But one more thing, Mr. Speaker, that our government has priorities in certain areas. But that does not mean that we're zeroing in on those priorities only at the neglect of other areas. We do not ignore other areas. For instance, I was very pleased that the critic for the Department of Highways this afternoon asked, I think, the first question to the Minister of Highways this session. And it had to do with a lack of money being spent on highways and the upgrading of highways and the support, the infrastructure on highways.

Very interesting to note that on Monday I introduced to the Assembly five residents that had just come in from my constituency to witness the presentation of the budget. You know, unsolicited, one of the comments that they made was, you know, we just about fell asleep from Saskatoon to Regina, driving on that wonderful highway between Saskatoon and Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — And I notice that the Minister of Highways cannot help but smile at that because I think that is a real commendation to the efforts of the minister with, as is recognized, a very constrained budget.

But in my constituency alone, Mr. Speaker, in 1990 there was spent over \$7 million. I almost blush when I say that, I suppose, but I'm very, very pleased, as are my constituents, at the amount of reconstruction, new construction that is going on in my constituency. And certainly the members of my constituency appreciate that.

Now, I think that we could go on, Mr. Speaker, talking about other areas such as that, but I want to get now into my department of Social Services. I'll speak a little bit about what's happened over the time in my constituency.

I have been very pleased to very recently announce that Rosthern, the town of Rosthern, is going to be receiving a group home along with those that have been established in past times in the towns of Waldheim and Hepburn and the village of Hague.

(1515)

And, Mr. Speaker, I say that I think, to emphasize that decentralization is not a new word. It's not something that has come into vogue over the very recent past. This decentralization process, perhaps better called de-institutionalization, is something that we've been embarking on for a long time.

In 1985-86 we embarked upon the closing of the North Park institute for the mentally and physically disabled in Prince Albert, and the members opposite did their best to make sure that this would not happen. I don't know what their motivation was in opposing this particular move. But I am so convinced as I go from community to community and look at the group homes and look, not at the homes but the individuals in those group homes . . . and how this move out of an institutionalized setting into small town rural Saskatchewan where we could bring the folks home, where we could bring those people back into their rural constituencies, their rural places where they had perhaps spent a greater portion of their lives in amongst friends, in amongst neighbours, and taste the quality of life that is there for them to have in small town rural Saskatchewan.

And this is something that I'm so convinced has been the right move, that it is a process that has been continuing and will continue, not only the process of decentralization but also the process of more independent living. Because I'm convinced, Mr. Speaker, that all of us have a potential that is very rarely fully developed, fully realized. And the so-called normal people, even someone like — and I know that some members opposite would question that, but I consider myself to be a reasonably normal person, and I have to admit that — but even having said that, Mr. Speaker, I know and I would be one of the first ones to admit that I haven't attained the potential that was within me.

But so much more important for the people, the disadvantaged people in this world, that have been cooped up in an institution and even though their potential was not what the normal people's was, I believe sincerely that we must do what we can in order for them to achieve the closest to their normalization process as possible.

So I wanted to make that point, Mr. Speaker. I want to spend a short period of time on Social Services and the services that we have been able to provide with admittedly limited resources.

We in the department will be spending more money in priority areas. For example, almost 200 million of our \$378.9 million budget is earmarked for social assistance. We will continue to provide a comprehensive social safety net.

Now I hesitated to say safety net because I have an inherent abhorrence of that term. I know the opposition like that term, but I do not like the term safety net because a safety net conjures up for me in my mind, what a net is all about. And a net is something that catches, but it holds and snares. And as the member from the North that just spoke, from Athabasca, knows that if you keep something in a net long enough it will be dead in a very short period of time.

So while I use and admittedly I use the term safety net because that's the in vogue thing to do, I prefer terminologies such as springboard, or maybe even catapult if you really want to be dramatic. But it is my conviction that welfare reform and the infrastructure in place to keep people who are inadvertently, most times through no fault of their own, put in a dependency role, I, Mr. Speaker, do not want to keep them dependent upon government. I want to give them a springboard where they can get back into self-sufficiency so that once more they can become productive members of society.

So this year, in tune with that, Mr. Speaker — and I hear some of the opposition members starting to chirp, because this is something that they are somewhat sensitive about — this year, Mr. Speaker, we will be providing over 6,000 training and employment opportunities for social assistance recipients.

I know that I was very pleased in the city of Saskatoon about six weeks ago to open up employment centres within the Department of Social Services offices, both in Saskatoon and in Regina, and subsequently in other towns and other cities in our province. Why? Because having retrained, having given these folks the training necessary to be competitive on the work-force, they are still very often incapable of accessing jobs. Very often, it's for a variety of reasons. We won't go into those kinds of reasons, but very often we were told, it's because the right recipient has not gotten into touch with the right employer.

And so we are now not duplicating services done by Canada Manpower, but because we understand our clients, because we have worked with them, we are in a position to get into contact with employers.

And at these openings, we had all kinds of people there who were in support of our program — business men who wanted to help us. And I thought it was just a very, very positive step in order for the people to realize, as I said before, their fullest potential.

Now another priority with me is infant care. We hear a lot of talk about day care, we hear a lot of talk about child care. And as significant as they are, infant care to me, Mr. Speaker, is a priority.

But we have these young girls, young teen-age girls, now finding themselves to be mothers. If they are not going to have a support system in place where they will be able to access education, have that big fundamental building block to work on, if they don't get their education, what future do they have in this life? And that is why I have been so very pleased over the last little while to be able to set up infant child care in schools in Saskatoon and

Regina, and of course just very, very recently, now in Prince Albert as well.

Support services, Mr. Speaker, to children and families is being enhanced. Half a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, will be added to in-home family support services targeted at keeping children with their own families. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, eliminating family violence, reducing it to the lowest common denominator remains a concern and a priority for me and for this government.

Funding for this important area has more than doubled since 1981. Is that enough, is that enough? Well I don't think it is. What would be enough? I am pleased to state, at the same time though, that in '88-89 we were able to put in 30 additional staff to help in the program delivery areas. Last year we put in five. This year, I am pleased to announce that we will be putting in 12 positions to strengthen our child protection services.

And contrary, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition said on Monday night in his somewhat ill-conceived rebuttal to the budget speech, funding to the transition houses has not been decreased, Mr. Speaker. It has not been decreased.

It reminds me of an article of the *Star-Phoenix* which I would like to quote, but because of the severity of the condemnation of the *Star-Phoenix* quote on what the member from Riversdale and Leader of the Opposition had said, it is unparliamentary for me, Mr. Speaker, to even quote the headline in the *Star-Phoenix*. And this, I think, is a condemnation of the way in which you take facts and figures and whirl them around with gay abandon, with never any thought about the seriousness and the serious repercussions that will result when you use words that loosely.

So transition houses, as Minister of Social Services, I am telling you that funding is remaining intact.

Furthermore, foster-parents are important in Saskatchewan. Foster-parents are important, an integral part of our whole system against violence. And we are at the present time, sad to say, Mr. Speaker, we are right now in charge . . . I am in charge, I have 1,800 wards under my care. And I don't think that is a situation that any member of this House would like to see. But that's the reality of it, Mr. Speaker, that is the harsh reality. The government spending for foster homes is up 10 per cent — 10 per cent increase for foster home care, Mr. Speaker. That's part of our whole process to fight violence.

The opposition loves to accuse this government of mismanagement, of overspending on advertising. And you know where the member from Saskatoon — I forget which constituency she is from; that might give you an idea . . .

An Hon. Member: — Nutana.

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you. My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana made a news release last week. It was interesting to note that I first heard about that news release from a reporter from CKOM in Saskatoon who interviewed me and said, what's your reaction to what this

member from Nutana is saying? But do you know where this interview took place? It took place right in CKOM. Why? Well what was I doing in CKOM? I'll tell you what I was doing in CKOM. I was spending taxpayers' money. On what? On advertising. I was spending Saskatchewan taxpayers' money on advertising.

An Hon. Member: — What kind of advertising?

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — The kind of advertising I was doing was in conjunction with that same organization that the Leader of the Opposition accused this government of cutting funding on, which was false.

I was saying that we have, through the Provincial Association of Transition Houses in conjunction with Colleen Croft, the provincial co-ordinator, we were going out . . . and I, as minister, was first of all proclaiming the week of April 29 to May 5 as Battered Women's Awareness Week. At the request of PATHS (Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan), I said, as Minister of Social Services, hey, that sounds good. That's exactly in keeping with our philosophy of spreading the message to the people of Saskatchewan that violence is wrong — that violence against women, violence against children, violence against elderly people is wrong, and it will not be tolerated.

And this is the message that I'm giving to the people of Saskatchewan as minister in charge of this Department of Social Services. It is wrong. And we must tell the people that, and this is in conjunction with exactly those folks who wanted that to happen.

As was another case of advertising. I spent more taxpayers' money on advertising, Mr. Speaker, when we were advertising this desperate need that we have for more foster homes, for foster homes to take care of kids — kids from broken families, kids at risk. These are the kinds of situations that we have to make people aware of. So I was out advertising for more parents who have that desire and that need to do something, to do something for the underprivileged children, and we are getting good response from that, Mr. Speaker. I would be the first one to say, boy I wish we didn't have to do this kind of advertising, but the reality of it is there is need there. And unless something happens within the human spirit where we start to treat each other with respect and dignity, that need is going to continue to be there. That need is going to continue to be there, Mr. Speaker.

So I am pleased to confirm that foster care rates will increase by 10 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, furthermore, support to the community at large will continue through funding of non-government organizations and the delivery of community-based services. I am pleased that we were able to maintain funding for the 1991-92 level. In total we will provide 51.7 million for these important services. Mr. Speaker, through prudent fiscal management and

repriorization within my department, Saskatchewan's social safety net will remain intact for our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent the last few moments talking about my department, talking about pride in my department. And I think I would be remiss if I did not publicly acknowledge the exceptional job that the folks in my department are doing through very, very difficult times. I'm first to recognize, Mr. Deputy Speaker — welcome to the Chair — I'm the first one to recognize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the limited resources that the people in my department have to work with. There could always be more money. Perhaps we could say there should be more money. They deserve, these people, the congratulations and the respect of every member of this Assembly. Social Services department staff, Mr. Speaker, certainly should be recognized and committed publicly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct some of my comments to other areas and issues that have been brought forward by my critic, the member from Saskatoon University, and other members of the opposition party.

As I mentioned earlier, the Department of Social Services in this province has had to provide more with less. We've had to provide more services with less money. And I think that we've done extremely well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My department, in this last fiscal budget, has been reduced in total spending. It's one of the departments that took a cut. I'm very, very pleased to say that the cut was as nominal as it was — less than 1 per cent. But when you take it with Rural Development, some of these others that have had 7, 8, 9, 10 per cent reduction, I guess putting it in perspective, it'll be done fairly well. We've done very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You must remember, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Social Services and the portfolio of Social Services does deal with people. Each and every instance when my department spends money is for the benefit of an individual or a group. Our money is not spent on objects. Our money is spent on people. Indeed the Department of Social Services is an extremely people-ized department, a highly pressurized department, I might add, a department that works with a lot of stress, lot of strain on people's emotions.

I won't get into some of the emotional experiences that we have to deal with, but certainly it is very, very stressful on all the people, and I think that they are the ones that are doing an extremely good job. They're reaching right into the homes, into the hearts of people. And I think it's extremely important because of this that we treat the people with respect, with care, with concern, and with honesty.

And that, Mr. Speaker, brings me to the respect, the care, the concern, the honesty that I believe is lacking at times from members opposite. I don't want my following comments to be construed as being . . . imputing any dishonourable objectives on anyone, but I do believe that the policies and whatever drives these policies of members opposite is subject to suspect.

And as I have indicated earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

many services, even in the light of these limited resources, are indeed limited. The people of Saskatchewan understand that. They understand . . . I firmly believe that the people of Saskatchewan understand why we must tighten our purse strings. But at times I am convinced that members opposite do not see it that way, that they do not understand that fundamental need that we are in right now.

And, Mr. Speaker, since my appointment in this job of Minister of Social Services which occurred 18, 19 months ago, a year and a half ago or a little bit more, I have been tracking comments from the member opposite, my critic — comments that he has put on public record. I have been doing so because I take all individual ideas and suggestions and so on that come forth very, very seriously.

And until recently, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to carefully examine the ideas of my critic, to take what was good, because ideas coming from opposite members should have something good within them. And I think it would be folly for me not to look at them, investigate them, and see what we can learn from them, because I am willing to listen, I am willing to learn. That's part of the process.

But as the months went by, my critic's list became quite extensive. I had the commitments costed out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I had the commitments costed out, but not totalled for a long period of time. Each commitment was costed out and we left it at that. Then when I began to get the impression this is getting to be fairly extensive, long, what happened then? Because, Mr. Speaker, when I took a look at the list, I realized that this was a list now that did not . . . could not, could not be taken seriously.

I'm going to take a few minutes now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to read out this list that I've been carefully monitoring as time goes on because I think the people of Saskatchewan, I think the taxpayers of this province have a right to know. But not just the taxpayers of this province necessarily, but those unfortunate people, less fortunate people who are relying on government programs and government funding to see exactly where they are going to be going in the future.

And I would suggest that my critic across the way, and certainly the Leader of the Opposition, should maybe be sharpening their pencils now, and they can perhaps keep track with me as I go through this long litany of events and promises.

I should also mention before I get on with the list that all of the comments that I am going to be making, all of the comments, all of the promises are documented. These are public documents. They are going to be such things as the poverty study that the NDP caucus made. They are going to be from such things as CFQC interviews, the *Star-Phoenix* interviews, *Hansard* itself. STV, my colleague says; he must have seen that program on Sunday evening. I'll say something about that in a little while.

So this, Mr. Speaker, is my critic's list of commitments. Now for simplicity's sake, I will read an abbreviated version of them, although there is certainly documented

evidence in addition to that. And I should also say that the figures that I am going to be reading off are not figures that were taken out from thin air. These are figures that, once the commitment was made, the commitment was simply handed over to department officials and said, what is this going to cost? What is this going to cost?

These are not my figures, Mr. Speaker. These are the figures of the Department of Social Services, professional people whose integrity is on the line. And if the members opposite want to question these figures, they of course are quite welcome to do so.

Item 1, item 1, Mr. Speaker: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member opposite, my critic, says, total fabrication. So, here we go with the government counselling services for Indian and Metis foster children, \$1,183,200.

Item 2, new programs for local authority over Indian and Metis child and family services, \$1.6641 million.

Item 3, amend The Family (and Community) Services Act to allow Indian and Metis to establish child-care agencies. It's a foggy one in a sense to try to pin that down, but the department has come up with a figure somewhere in between 20 and \$25 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me just pause for a moment in the list to make a couple of observations. The first is that these programs regarding our aboriginal peoples, the proper approach in my opinion is to press the federal government to uphold their obligation. Don't put it over to the provincial government and say the provincial government should be supplying these services to these folks. I submit my position, this government's position is — and the Indians, I might add, the Indians' position is that an Indian is an Indian no matter where he lives, be it on a reserve, be it in Regina, or be it out on a farm — the responsibility still rests inherently, historically, and constitutionally with the federal government. That is my stand, Mr. Deputy Speaker — not that we are the ones that are going to be responsible for them.

And I am confident, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that just as it was John Diefenbaker, a Tory, who first gave our Indian citizens the right to vote, it will be this Tory government that will succeed in giving them their birthright.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second point is that in each of the promises on this list, there is some merit in the goals of the specific idea. I don't want it being construed here that I am opposed to the objectives of these particular issues that are raised, but I think what we have to do is stop looking at each one in isolation from the other. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this becomes a package, this is a package deal and everything has to be taken into consideration.

I will grant you one thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If we were now experiencing the economic conditions that those folks had when they were government in the super '70s, then perhaps we would be in a position economically to be able to do and to keep all of these promises that members opposite have been making.

But I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the taxpayers of this province, that we don't have that luxury, that we do not have that luxury at this time. That is why we must prioritize.

So, Mr. Speaker, to continue on: item 4, school and breakfast lunch program, \$31.6 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Right there, \$31.6 million.

Item 5, increase Saskatchewan assistance plan rate to poor families. Another \$6.1 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Item 6, more low-income housing, more low-income housing, \$1.56 million.

Item 7, more family counselling and therapy services, \$660,000.

Item 8, assist underprivileged youth, and through the context of his remarks, cost \$4.25 million.

Item 9, a family violence network, \$4.036 million.

Item 10, improved child care, \$14.4 million.

Programs on physical and sexual abuse of children, \$246,400.

Item 12, adopt the practice of the United Nations convention on the rights of the child, Mr. Speaker. Because of the variety, because of the breadth of the convention, this one we didn't know how to put a figure on it. It certainly going to run into the millions and the tens of millions of dollars. The expenses there, we don't know what to do with that one so we are not going to add that as part of the accumulated total later on, but certainly millions of dollars worth there.

Item 13, guaranteed income and universal pensions; dramatic, dramatic commitment of \$360 million, Mr. Speaker, annually, not a one-shot deal, annually.

Item 14, the commitment to eliminate family poverty, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$22 million, \$22 million. I know that there has been a time when someone greater than Peter said that the poor will always be with us. We have to recognize that while the poor will be with us, we must maintain an infrastructure that is going to be as supportive as possible.

(1545)

We hear much from the opposition across the way about how they would eliminate poverty, and so we could probably cast our vision a little bit to the east where we have the NDP in Ontario. Let's take a look at the situation in Ontario. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we used to be able to say that the reason why we had high interest rates in Saskatchewan was to fight the inflation in Ontario. And so we had to combat inflation by having interest rates so we wouldn't spend as much.

But, Mr. Speaker, have you noticed what has happened to the interest rates lately? The interest rates in Saskatchewan are going down. Why? They're going

down because Ontario is no longer having inflation. They've got deflation. They've got stagnation. I wonder why. Does this have anything to do with Bob Rae, Bob White, and the NDP in Ontario? Or is that just coincidence, Mr. Speaker? Or is it also just coincidence that the food banks in Ontario are doubling in size, increasing dramatically in size, as the demand in Ontario under the NDP of Bob White is now reaping the benefits of having such a government. I pose that as a . . .

An Hon. Member: — Nobody believes that.

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — The member says nobody believes that. I pose that as a hypothesis for thinking people to think about. That's what I'm saying. That's what I'm saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, item 15, as we go on through this litany, child counsellors at all shelters, \$308,000.

Item 16, create a government guardian for children, \$250,000. My own personal belief, but I have nothing to substantiate it, is that this is too low. Alberta put in for a little while a children's guardian. They quit that. That cost them \$1 million to set up. We're quoting \$250,000.

Item 17, government day care for middle-income earners, day care for middle-income earners. A commitment made by the member opposite — \$7.6 million.

Reinstitute the northern food transportation subsidy which the hon. member from Cumberland mentioned a little while ago — \$250,000. More money for the disabled, including a \$150 a month increase in the monthly allowance — \$14.6 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Item 20, stop deducting Canada Pension Plan benefits from social assistance cheques and bring disabled people up to the poverty line, whatever that is — and I think we'll have a discussion about that later on in estimates — but \$46 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$46 million.

Item 21, increase social assistance payments for the disabled, \$5 million. That's annualized, that's incremental, that's ongoing — \$5 million per year.

Item 22, stop deducting disability benefits under the Canada Pension Plan from the social assistance cheques, \$1.6 million.

An Hon. Member: — This is a very boring speech.

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Item 23 . . . The members say it's a boring speech. I'll assure you the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are watching and listening and grimacing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Item 22, \$1.6 million.

Item 23, boost social assistance payments by 20 per cent — \$39 million. Mr. Speaker, these are documented.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you may notice a pattern emerging

with some of these categories of promises. For example, when it came to social assistance payments, commitments of the members opposite seem to be somewhat disjointed. And yes I agree, disjointed, because what do we have?

We have the Leader of the Opposition, when asked about the deficit, the accumulated deficit — what are you going to do — He said originally, we're going to eliminate it. Who's going to pay for it? he was asked. In Harris he says, not the farmers. In Moose Jaw the Leader of the Opposition says, not the workers. In Saskatoon the Leader of the Opposition says, not the business men. In Regina the Leader of the Opposition says, well why should anybody pay? Aw shucks, we'll find the money somewhere. Those were his exact words — we'll find the money somewhere.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not good enough. I wonder sometimes, Mr. Speaker, if that is intentionally done to confuse the people, to confuse the people. But the greatest condemnation, Mr. Speaker, I would say is not that. But the condemnation of that party over there is that the group in society that they are trying to confuse, the group that they are trying to confuse is not the North Saskatoon Business Association. The group that they're trying to confuse is not the farmers in Harris. This is not the government employees that they are manipulating. The group that is being confused is the poorest, the most needy, the most vulnerable group in our society, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I say shame on the opposition — I say shame on the opposition for doing this.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, item 24, the commitment was made to bring in a winter works program, a winter works program. That's open-ended. How do you cost something like that out? Is it going to be 3 million, 5 million, 10 million; what was in mind? We don't have enough information on that to be more specific in the costing.

What about item 25 where it says, increase the family income plan benefits, \$800,000.

Item 26, reinstate transportation allowances, \$6 million.

Lift the cap on utility rates for social assistance recipients, \$2.1 million.

Item 28, a policy brought in by the NDP opposite themselves — stop deducting family allowances from social assistance payments, \$9.2 million.

Item 29, provide the handicapped live-in home-makers. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is \$292 million to do that, \$292 million. Not difficult to cost that one out. Independence . . .

An Hon. Member: — Don't you agree with the direction?

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Oh you see, the member opposite said, don't you agree with the direction? Our support of apartment living programs, I would say to you, are a clear indication that we support the direction. I put a caveat on all my remarks here before by saying that individually I have no objection to these kinds of things. That's not my

objection.

My objection is that if you're going to do it *en masse* that it becomes incredible that these are the types of promises that are out there. That is my objection. I have no objection to independent living if we could afford it but during the fiscal responsibilities that we have to maintain, it is certainly not a credible route to take.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation here where the total is \$904 million annualized, \$904 million. That's a billion dollars. That's a billion dollars if you add in those that we couldn't put a finger on that we haven't added in. We have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a billion dollar man within the legislature here in Saskatchewan, the billion dollar man. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is totally inappropriate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that list is lengthy, but I'm still not finished. I'm still not finished. It's not a comprehensive list, this billion dollar list. Many items could not be costed, or the details were not sufficient to make an accurate even a guesstimate on the cost.

It's hard to keep up with members opposite. It's hard to keep up with the member opposite as well, as we've mentioned at the beginning of my remarks here. Even as late as last Sunday on STV *Viewpoint*, a commitment was made for \$1.3 million leading to the violence issue. And again I have no objection to that. I agree with the hon. member. That's not the point. I'm not questioning his motivation in terms of trying to help people. He's an honourable man. But what I am questioning, what I am questioning is the format and the endless streams of promises. That is what I am dismayed about. The false expectations, the false expectations that are being implanted into the hearts and into the souls of the unfortunate people in this province.

The member from University has literally promised every special interest group in this province that yes, help is forthcoming; yes, it will be there. Now that is the problem that I am having, because you are creating false hope. I submit it's false hope because I say to the member, he knows full well, as do I, that it is not possible to do those things that you have committed yourself over in the last 18 months.

I don't know what you've done before because quite frankly I wasn't paying attention to the Department of Social Services because it was not my specific responsibility. But since then . . . And this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is only since I have become Minister of Social Services.

So I ask the hon. members across the way, I ask the member from Saskatoon Mayfair, where is the money going to come from, from this policy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Fairview. I'm sorry; I apologize to the member. I appreciate he has been listening very attentively during my remarks. But I ask him and other members from his caucus, who are you going to tax? Where are you going to get the money from?

Well I guess it depends on what time of day and what place or what time of the week, where you are at any one

particular time as to what the answer is going to be. But I do not believe for one moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my hon. critic is going to be able to live up to his promise. It will never happen. They won't spend the money. Cannot be. And I think that is one of the differences between that side and this side where we will not raise false expectations.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I guess we could also say that I am not quite sure whether all this extra money is really the ultimate answer. What is the ultimate answer I believe is in raising the expectations in the public so that the public can get up on its hind feet and say no to many of these problems, many of these critical situations that are developing in our society — if society will get up and say no. Obviously, ultimately that is the answer.

Sometimes I am tempted to say that my hon. critic there has chosen the wrong profession. He might have been better off as a fireman. Firemen put out hot spots. We've got a lot of hot spots here, and I can envision him running to that bottomless well, pulling up buckets full and buckets full of water . . . of money and pouring it on to the hot spots as if buckets full of money were going to be the ultimate solution. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that that is not necessarily so. Money is important; yes, of course it is. It helps, but it never solves the complete problem.

The opposition is not alone in thinking that money is the answer. I would admit that. I believe governments themselves of all stripes have often thought of themselves as problems being solved that way. But unfortunately we are faced with the reality of having too many problems and too little money. And the absolutely . . . in my opinion, the irresponsible thing would be to pretend to the disabled, to pretend to the poor, to single mothers, to children in crisis, that tomorrow all things will be solved under an NDP government if we could find a billion dollars, a billion dollars extra, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that ain't so.

(1600)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope that the promises that I have recited are scrutinized by the people of Saskatchewan, are scrutinized by the general public, the taxpayers of this province. Perhaps those who were promised money — and I would make this suggestion very, very seriously — perhaps those groups that I have alluded to who were promised money, who were promised more funding, I would humbly suggest to them that they confront the members opposite for details, details not on only where the money is to come from but and why the members opposite feel the need to try and purchase those votes on an empty purse, on those empty purse, why they think that the needy in our society can be a special target for political manipulation.

I challenge, I challenge the members opposite to tell this House whether or not they stand behind their word. I have said on a number of occasions, these issues that I have brought forth this afternoon are all documented. They are statements that have been made publicly and to various interest groups.

I hope that the public will go to those members, that

member in particular who has made those promises. I hope these people will go to the leader and we will find out what their position is on how they are going to pay for this package — for this package, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not just disembodied isolated incidents here and there. We must address this as a package because essentially it was committed as a package.

And I am sure that the people of Saskatchewan will be more than interested in these details. How are you intending to keep these promises? Are you going to keep all of them? some of them? all of them completely? only partially? And if not, if not, if one of these groups that has been led to believe that if they vote NDP, that manna will fall upon them, then I say to you, which are those groups?

Stand up and tell these groups, sorry, we made a mistake. We didn't realize the fiscal problems that this province is really having. No, we will not be able to deliver. Yes, we may, three, four, five years hence. Yes, you may get half of it.

Tell us. What is your plan? What is your policy? How much of this are you going to be able to deliver? The people out there have the right, they have a right to expect you to stand up and answer, answer for these promises.

And if you are going to say yes, we will deliver all of these things, then you tell me, how are you going to raise the money? The taxpayer of the province wants to know, how are you going to come up with \$1 billion extra? I think that it's incumbent upon you folks out there. Lay it on the line. Tell us your plan. Give us your policies. Let the taxpayer decide.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk today about the budget that has been presented to this House. I want to talk in particular about the deficit that has been accumulated over the last 9 years in the last 10 budgets. And I want to talk about that because everybody in Saskatchewan is talking about it. Because finally the people of this province have come to understand the kind of mess that this government has gotten us in over nine years of mismanagement and maladministration and waste in the governing of this province.

Everywhere we go, everywhere we go in this province, people of all political stripe ask us: how will you clean up the mess? What can anyone do? Is it too late to do anything about the problem? And this is the kind of question that we get in Yorkton and in Shaunavon and in Regina and in Melfort and in Lloydminster and in Wilkie, just to name a few. And there are members who are represented on the opposite sides of this House. These are questions which are being raised in Tory ridings by people of all political stripe.

Even the government seems finally to have realized . . . to have woken up and realized that there is a problem. And we heard the Minister of Finance the other night try to address this problem in about the most pathetic terms that could be imagined.

How did we get there? First of all, what is the problem? The problem, as I said, is this \$5 billion deficit. And it becomes a budgetary problem because if you look in the *Estimates* book that was tabled by the minister, at page 55 you see, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to pay interest, interest on the operating debts in this province of \$500 million in this fiscal year — \$500 million.

Now how did we get there? And I want the Minister of Social Services to pay particular attention to this. I want him to take out a pencil, as he advised us to do, and to make a list, as he advised us to do, so that he can understand how his party, his government got us into this unholy mess.

First of all, in global terms — and this is very important, Mr. Speaker — in the nine years that the party . . . that the people opposite have governed this province, we have seen an increase of revenues coming into the provincial treasury in the order of a 69 per cent increase. In 1982, the last year in which the NDP formed the government in this province, revenues coming into the government totalled 2.6 million. In this year, under this budget, the estimate is that the revenue will be \$4.5 billion. Now that's an increase, according to my arithmetic, of 69 per cent.

Now if you ask the members opposite — and their constituents are doing this all the time — how come we got into this position, the answers that they'll give are the following, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture is down, potash is down, the price of uranium is down, the oil revenues aren't what they used to be. All kinds of reasons, everybody's fault except their own. But these figures show, Mr. Speaker, that over the course of nine years their revenues have increased by almost 70 per cent, and that's not bad.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — That's not bad. A government who can't budget within those numbers and make it come out even and make it come out balanced is a government that doesn't deserve the opportunity to govern the affairs of a province like this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — The problem, Mr. Speaker, and I'll go through this in some detail, the problem is that during this same nine-year period the expenditures, the expenditures of this government — and I want the Minister of Social Services to hear this very clearly — the expenditures have increased by almost 90 per cent — 90 per cent. In a decade where the cost of living, the inflation rate, was relatively low — relative to the 1970s for example — they were not able to control expenditures at all. We saw a 90 per cent increase in the amount of money the government is spending, and it is that difference between expenditures and revenue that accounts for this disgraceful \$5 billion deficit.

Now I want to place on the public record, and I want the Minister of Social Services to get out his pencil and note these figures carefully, just what went wrong, how long it took to go wrong, and the extent to which it did go wrong.

Let's start first of all as a basis for comparison, the last year of the Blakeney NDP government, the year ending in the spring of 1982. And at that time, as we've often said in this House and elsewhere, there was a budgetary surplus of \$139 million.

Now there was the April 1982 election and the Conservatives, this government, was elected. And in their first year of operations, Mr. Speaker, in their first year of operations, with a buoyant economy, with large revenues in every sector, with agriculture doing well, with potash doing well, with uranium doing well, with oil doing well, our friends opposite managed to convert a \$139 million surplus into a \$227 million deficit. Now that's some management.

That happened, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, because of the Premier's belief, stated in public in New York City, that you could mismanage the affairs of this economy and still run a surplus. Well they mismanaged the affairs of this province and they didn't run a surplus at all. They ran the largest deficit that we had ever incurred in the history of this province in 1983.

1984 came along, Mr. Speaker, and they did even better. I should say they did even worse, worse. The deficit in that year was \$331 million. Then come 1985 and they did even worse. The deficit then was \$380 million. And then came 1986, and they did much worse. The deficit in that year was \$578.8 million.

Now these are astonishing year-over-year figures. It shows a government that never could grasp the reigns of administration in this province in any sensible way.

Operating at a time when revenues were on a strong up-curve, when practically every sector of this province was doing well, but unable to control themselves, unable to control their spending habits, unable to avoid the temptation and the urge to fatten the trough, to fatten the trough at which so many of their friends have fed over the past nine years, in 1986 this government incurred a deficit, as I say, of \$578 million.

Now you would think that it just couldn't get any worse than that, wouldn't you, Mr. Speaker? It just couldn't possibly get any worse than that. It did. It did. The fall of 1986 was an election period. And going into that election period we saw an orgy of spending in this province for no purpose, for no legitimate purpose at all, the likes of which we have never seen before, the likes of which no province on a per capita basis has ever seen in this country before, the likes of which we will never see again. We saw a budgetary deficit of \$1.232 billion. Absolutely astounding.

In a year in which the economy was in relatively good shape compared to now, in a year in which there was no particular urgent crisis to respond to, this government opposite managed to overspend by \$1.2 billion.

And the minister of Finance, the then minister of Finance, now Minister of Justice, just a few short weeks before that election campaign said on public television in this province, said on public television that that deficit could

not exceed \$500 million — \$500 million.

A few weeks after the election he went on that same television station and admitted that the deficit was in fact \$1.2 billion . . . a few months later. I said weeks, I meant months — \$1.2 billion.

Now where were the tight purse strings at that time, Mr. Minister? The minister opposite talked about the need to tighten our purse strings. Where were the people opposite when those purse strings were loose? Man, the purse strings were ripped open and thrown away. Where were the purse string tightenners at the time that the government was overspending by \$1.2 billion in 1987?

Now they caught a lot of flak for that. Members of this House will recall the flak they caught from it when this legislature took its place, when these members took their place after the election in 1986 and these figures became public. And you think, Mr. Speaker, that the government would have learned its lesson by that time, that you have to get a hold of the finances of this province. Did they? Indeed they didn't, Mr. Speaker.

(1615)

In 1988 again the deficit was over half a billion dollars. In 1989 the deficit was \$324 million. In 1990, \$377 million. And just to complete the list, in 1991 it appears that the deficit will be about \$358 million, and in 1992 if you can believe anything in this budget presented by the Minister of Finance, the deficit will be another whopping \$265 million.

And when he says that he has a plan to balance the books of this province within three years, there isn't anybody, anybody in this province outside of the members sitting on that side of the House — if indeed they believe it — who believes that that's the case. There isn't anybody who believes that this minister and this government can balance the books at all, leave alone within three years. And these numbers are eloquent testimony to that fact.

Year after year when the economy of this province has been in good shape, these incompetents have incurred deficits of increasingly high amounts. Year after year and over the course of their administration, revenues have increased as I said, Mr. Speaker, by almost 70 per cent, 70 per cent. And they haven't even been able to come close; not in any year have they been able to come close to living within those numbers.

Well that is a ridiculous situation. The minister spoke of choices. The minister spoke of difficult choices that this government had to make. Well where were the choices in 1983 when we ran the largest deficit ever incurred up to that time, of over \$200 million. Where were the hard choices at that time? Where was the government that knew so little and were so hopelessly incompetent running the affairs of this province that it will allow ourself to get started down that slippery slope of budgetary deficits and then to compound it a year later by increasing that deficit by about another 50 per cent, to 331 million.

I won't go over all those figures, Mr. Speaker, but I make

the point, and I make it with all the vigour of which I am capable, these figures are a damnation of this government. These figures show in such an eloquent way that are beyond reputation that this government has been incompetent and wasteful and bad managers from the very beginning.

Operating without a plan, operating without any vision, operating totally oblivious to the future of this province, totally oblivious to the lives that our children are going to lead and our grandchildren are going to lead. And I want to turn to that now, Mr. Speaker.

Before I do, let me go back to a remark that the Minister of Social Services made about purchasing votes. He went through that phoney exercise of pretending to cost out what he said were promises from this side of the House, a totally outrageous list of valuations that he put upon them. And he suggested that that was buying votes.

Well what does he say to the deficit in 1987 of \$1.2 billion? What was the purpose of those expenditures, Mr. Member from Shellbrook? Why was that money being spent? Is there anybody in Saskatchewan who believes that that wasn't to buy votes? Is there anybody in Saskatchewan who thinks that that deficit wasn't run up just to ensure the reflection of this government? Even the minister . . . The members opposite are smiling. Be careful, says the member from Wilkie. I tell the member from Wilkie that these figures are known by the people of this province and are known by the people in his constituency, and he is going to have to account for them. He is going to have to account.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Now what does it mean? I said it meant, Mr. Speaker, as is said clearly in the *Estimates*, it is a budgetary expense of \$500 million in interest in this year alone; \$500 million that just flies right out of this province to the people who loaned us the money — the New York banks, the eastern banks, the financial institutions who made available the money to go into this \$5 billion deficit in the first place. And now we're shovelling out the interest to the tune of \$500 million in this year alone.

The first thing I want to say about that, and I want to say this particularly to the member from Wilkie, is that this is a new expense, new in the sense that prior to 1982 this was an unknown item. We never did have an item "Interest on Public Debt — Government Share", which is shown on page 55 of the *Estimates*. And that's because this province didn't have a deficit. This province was always able to live within its means, always until these guys came along, Mr. Speaker, and showed us new heights of incompetence never before thought possible in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now I throw around a figure like \$500 million, and it is just so hard for people to understand what that means, just how much money that is, so I want to try and put it into some kind of perspective.

That \$500 million figure is the third largest expense item in this budget behind only Health and Education; then comes interest on the public debt. And it's a strong third

-- it's a strong third. You have to go back another \$130 million to find the Department of Social Services, which is fourth. So the interest is a strong third.

We are going to spend in this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, twice as much, more than twice as much on interest as we are going to spend on agriculture in total — more than twice as much as we spend on agriculture. We're going to spend more in this year, in this coming year on interest . . . We're going to spend one and a half times more on interest than we pay out in the whole Saskatchewan Assistance Plan.

We're going to pay eight times as much on interest as we spend in Economic Diversification and Trade. Diversification, supposedly one of the programs that this government is pressing so hard and which they speak about in this House, and I agree these are things that should be pressed and pressed hard. But they're going to spend eight times more on interest than they spend on economic diversification.

Get this, Mr. Speaker. They're going to spend 48 times more on interest than they spend on the Department of the Environment — 48 times more. They're going to spend 114 times more on interest than they're going to spend on the protection of the environment. That one thing, just keeping the water clean and keeping pollutants from escaping into the environment, it's going to spend 114 times more on interest than they spend on that.

They're going to spend five times more on interest than they've spent on their entire highways program. They're going to spend seven times more on interest than they spend on their entire rural development program. They're going to spend 93 times more on interest than they spend on Indian and Metis Affairs.

I want to just say a word about the Saskatchewan Research Council. The work of the Saskatchewan Research Council is recognized by every member of this House as being extremely important. And we would all like to enrich that program and encourage them in this time of rapid technological change to do more and more research. We're going to spend 83 times more this year on interest than we're going to spend on the Saskatchewan Research Council.

And we're going to spend 455 times more on interest than we spend on our parks — on our parks.

Aren't those astonishing numbers, Mr. Speaker? And don't they give some perspective to the huge burden that we in Saskatchewan are carrying — this huge burden of a half billion dollars this year in interest on account of their waste and their mismanagement and their inability to administer this province properly over the past nine years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Another way of looking at the same idea, Mr. Speaker, is to ask yourself what we in Saskatchewan could do with this \$500 million that is being wasted by having to pay interest on the public debt. That's over a million dollars a day in interest, Mr. Speaker. According

to my math, it's \$1.37 million a day. And we pay it every day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Think what we could do. Well first of all the budget would be balanced. We know that. First of all we would have had a balanced budget this year and we wouldn't be looking at yet another deficit.

But just think, Mr. Speaker, if you had that \$500 million and you're able to keep it here at home rather than sending it off to Toronto and New York, think of what you could do with health care. You could actually furnish those hospitals that are being built, and where wings are not being opened because there is not enough funding. You wouldn't have to be laying off nurses at a time when health care is in trouble, is in dire trouble in Saskatchewan. You wouldn't have to be laying people off and ruining lives. You wouldn't have to be cutting back when the need for health care continues to increase.

Think of what you could do with the highway system. The minister stood up in question period today and complained about the fact that he's had to take a 7 per cent cut. We all drive over the roads of this province; we know the kind of condition they're in. They're worse than they've been since some time back in the Depression. They're the worst I've ever seen.

Think of what we could do with any part of that \$500 million. We could pump another 100 million into the highways project and still have \$400 million left to play with.

We could eliminate food banks. The Minister of Social Services says he agrees with the policy to eliminate food banks. He'd be able to do it if his friends opposite had been able to manage the financial affairs of this province in a sensible, decent way.

We could support agriculture in an effective way, giving farmers a program that would actually help them rather than having to buy into this GRIP/NISA lottery that they're in. We could actually give them a program that we could afford and that they could afford, and that would actually keep them on the farm. And we could do it without having to tax, without having to tax through the provincial sales tax, the people in this province. We could do this.

And I'm going to explain it again for the Minister of Transportation from Kelvington so that he'll understand it. This is made necessary because you guys have managed over nine years to accumulate a deficit of \$5 billion in our operating account. And as a result of that, you have an item in your *Estimates* for interest on that \$5 billion, of \$500 million. And if we had that money home in Saskatchewan rather than sending it off to New York and Toronto and the other money capitals of the world, we could do these things, and we wouldn't be sitting in this legislature worrying about how we're going to respond to this urgent public need or that public need.

We wouldn't be sitting here cutting back on people and on organizations that need funding, that need money, that need to be able to deliver essential services to the public. We wouldn't be having this debate. And it's your fault and you're going to have to answer for it. You're

going to have to answer for it to the people of this province.

I could go on. I could go on to talk about what we could do with education, what we could do in support of small business and in support of trade, the kind of child care program we could have with just a few days of that interest being saved.

The minister spoke of transition houses. Think of the kind of transition house network that we could build in this province with only two weeks of interest, two weeks of interest.

We're hobbled by this deficit. You're hobbled by it. That's obvious by the budget that you've presented to this House and by the cut-backs that you've been forced to make. Mr. Speaker, they're hobbled by this budget and succeeding governments will be hobbled by it. We will be years and years in this province struggling to overcome the problem that the government opposite has created. We'll be years trying to pay off that deficit and get Saskatchewan back on its feet so that its finances are on a sound footing.

And that will be the legacy of this government. When people speak of this Conservative government between the years of 1982 and 1991, it is the deficit that will be its defining feature. It is the deficit that will be the way in which historians describe it. And what a record that is.

How proud the members opposite must feel, Mr. Speaker, how proud they must feel that this is the legacy that they have left for Saskatchewan, that this is the way in which people will define that administration, that this is the way historians will remember them, that this is what school children will be taught 20, 30, 40 years from now when they remember back to government in the 1980s in Saskatchewan — a shameful, shameful record.

(1630)

Now why did it happen, Mr. Speaker? Why did it happen? I have said it happened because of incompetence. I have said it happened because of incompetence and mismanagement and waste and all those words. They just weren't up to the job, Mr. Speaker. They took over a province filled with riches. They governed during a time when the revenues of this province increased by 70 per cent over nine years and they just weren't up to the job. That's one way of looking at it.

If they don't like that, Mr. Speaker, if they don't like that characterization, there is another one. And the other one is much less kind. The other one is much less kind. But you can think of it this way. If you were part of a very, very right-wing party, and if you were in a province where the opposition party is a progressive party — the NDP in this case, prepared to utilize the instrumentalities of the government in a variety of ways to promote the well-being of people — and if you really hated . . . if your ideology, Mr. Speaker, was that you really hated this kind of a government and this kind of an active approach by government to the problems of people, and if you preferred to let big business call the shot and to let the market rule us, to let the people with the money have the

say, if you wanted to really damage the ability of government to operate in this province, then what they have done is exactly what you would do.

You would run up a huge deficit. You would cripple the administration of this government with interest charges, and in this year alone, of \$500 million. You would create a situation where it becomes exceedingly difficult for a government to respond to the real needs of the people of this province. This government isn't doing it in this budget. They've stopped pretending they're doing it and they've created a situation where for a long time to come governments are going to have enormous problems just coping with the problem that they have left to us.

Now I hope that the Minister of Social Services was keeping a careful list with his pencil as I went through that, Mr. Speaker, because he came along and just ignored all of that history, ignored the fact that the purse-strings weren't tightened for nine years. Nobody tightened the purse-strings. And yet he stands before us in a rather, if I may use the term, sanctimonious tone of voice today and told us that it was now time for us to tighten the purse-strings.

My question to him is: where in the world was he during all these years of wild spending when this huge deficit was being accumulated? When it was being run up, where was he? Where were the purse-strings? Where were the people who should tighten the purse-strings? And yet he had the gall to stand before us in this House today and attach some phoney numbers, some phoney numbers to things that he reads in the newspaper and things that he says are being said on TV. And he has the sanctimony to just forget entirely about the fact that that government opposite is the author of the difficult financial situation in this province.

That's the problem. The problem isn't government revenues. I repeat again — government revenues have increased by almost 70 per cent in the last nine years and the government that can't operate within those kind of numbers is a government that doesn't deserve to be a government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been listening carefully to the member opposite and I really have a hard time following his lines. He said that we've run up a huge deficit because of waste and mismanagement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — He accuses us, Mr. Speaker, of spending money on things that didn't need to be done like hospitals, nursing homes. He says we're guilty, Mr. Speaker. He says we're guilty of building new nursing homes . . . And if the member from Humboldt wants to call me a liar, stand in his place and do so. Don't do it from your seat.

And he said I'm guilty of building new nursing homes and we did. And he said . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm going to have to intervene at this point. I'm going to have to ask the member from Humboldt to rise and apologize for calling the hon. member and other members liars.

Mr. Upshall: — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry for the fact that I called the members opposite liars.

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a number of things that we've been accused of in speeches from members opposite. Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what they are accusing us of doing — building nursing homes, building hospitals, providing programs for farmers and home owners when they were most needed — at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we can go back and take a look at their record.

Now, Mr. Speaker, 1978 we had a moratorium on nursing homes — a moratorium on nursing homes. And they say that the member for Kelvington-Wadena has been part of a government that's spent money foolishly. Well before I became the member for Kelvington-Wadena, I'll tell you about foolish spending.

We've got liquor board stores that were built. And it's an old theme, Mr. Speaker, but I'll go back to it because it's the truth. We have three liquor board stores built in my constituency that are the legacy of the NDP. That's what was there. They are still there — wonderful buildings, half a million dollars apiece. That made sense. At the same time people like my grandfather didn't have a nursing home bed to go to.

Mr. Speaker, I really, really, really urge members opposite to examine their comments about the record of this government. Take a look at what you're saying. Can you believe it yourself? Mr. Speaker, I plan to refer back from time to time to a little bit of past history. But all you have to do is take a look at our record from 1982 until the present day and you'll see where we spent money.

Health care budgets, health care, Mr. Speaker. We've kept the best health care system in Canada. This year we're over \$1.6 billion in health care. Mr. Speaker, do you call that waste and mismanagement? The member for Humboldt says yes. Well, Mr. Speaker, he has just condemned every hospital board and nursing home board in rural Saskatchewan because those are the people . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. I began the previous day and I'm going to continue it from this point onwards. I'm going to ask hon. members not to name . . . refer to other hon. members in the House whether they're making comment from their seat or not. I think this becomes not decorous for a member. All members do it, and I think we should stop that practice.

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not refer to members when they make comments in the future.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, members opposite have made those types of comments. And they've said that that is waste and mismanagement. At the local board levels, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of

Health doesn't come out and say, well you, Mr. Citizen or Mrs. Citizen, are going to have this much amount of money spent upon you. In this particular town we are only going to have so many people go to the hospital and that's it.

No, the budgets are set on a global basis. The hospital board, on the same formula that's been there for years, puts forward their budgetary requirements, their utilization, all the rest of it, and money is appropriated from the provincial government, given to them to spend. Local autonomy, local decision making, and some members opposite call it waste and mismanagement.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has called upon our partners in this type of an arrangement to also practise fiscal restraint and responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, it's not easy being a government in these economic times. It's very difficult. And the choices that we've had to make are very difficult. But they have to be made, Mr. Speaker. They have to be made. You have to take and follow a course of fiscal responsibility. When you're doing it at the provincial government level, you should also be asking our partners in this program to also watch their spending.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know it's very difficult when you are at the local level because you are subject to very close scrutiny by your neighbours and your friends. But, Mr. Speaker, when you accept the responsibility of sitting on a board, you have to be prepared to make those decisions. And I ask hospital boards, nursing home boards, even though the decisions may be difficult, to try to practise fiscal restraint. We don't need duplication of administrative facilities. We do need people working on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, governments the world over, especially in Canada, Mr. Speaker, today are faced with some tough fiscal decisions. And we've had to make them.

The Department of Highways, Mr. Speaker, has had a 7 per cent reduction in its budget. But, Mr. Speaker, we have been very, very circumspect and very careful in our management of the dollars that have been allocated to our department over the years and have spent them in a wise and prudent manner.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to positions, we have practised a policy through attrition of reducing administrative numbers, Mr. Speaker. We have practised that carefully, slowly, and the Department of Highways continues to do an excellent job. Yes, we are down in positions but, Mr. Speaker, that is what I call fiscal responsibility — reasonable, a careful move towards an end goal.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess we could say that what I'm telling you today, and I'll go back to again, is the fact that I'm guilty. I'm guilty of being in a government that cares. I'm guilty of building nursing homes. I am. We have an integrated care facility in Rose Valley, one of the first in the province, Mr. Speaker, combining the benefits of having a hospital and a nursing home combined. It makes eminent sense. One administrator, one administrative

staff, excellent facility for a small community. And people who have lived there all their lives can continue to live in their community when they are no longer able to care for themselves. That was not the case, Mr. Speaker, before we became government.

And I'll use my family, I mentioned it earlier, my grandmother, my grandfather, married 65 years. My grandfather became unable to care for himself and my grandmother was unable to look after him. The nearest nursing home bed was Melfort, 80-some miles away. And once a week till that man passed away, my grandmother had to beg someone or get one of her children or pay someone to take her to go and visit the man that she'd slept with for 65 years, shared the same bed, 65 years, Mr. Speaker. She had to . . . Once a week she could make it up to visit him.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a pretty sad thing to watch, and that was one of the reasons why I got into politics, because I don't like that. If we were in such posh times during the '70s and early '80s, oil prices were high, grain prices were high, potash prices were high. Why were you building liquor board stores instead of building nursing homes? Why? Why were you doing that? Why were the NDP doing that? It did not make sense.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my small community appreciated the fact that we have an integrated care facility. The people in Wadena appreciated the fact that they have a new nursing home, a 46-bed new nursing home, an enriched housing type of facility in the old one.

Take a look at the town of Foam Lake. We have an enriched housing unit there as well as an addition to the nursing home. All after 1982.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you in my riding we haven't built any more government liquor stores. Yes, there have been two franchises, private franchises let out since 1982, and they are done on a private basis. The government didn't have to lay out a half a million or a million dollars there in my riding. We have put our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker, where it is very, very important.

(1645)

Rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, education is very important as well. So let's see what happened there. Well education funding has gone up. Education funding has gone up in the province, Mr. Speaker. We have built new schools, Mr. Speaker.

For years the town of Wadena asked and begged for a new elementary school. For years. The old school was built in the late '40s, I believe, and it had fallen into some disrepair. And it didn't matter what they did, they weren't going to be able to fix it up. And for years they'd asked for a new one, all during that NDP administration when the Kelvington-Wadena constituency had an NDP member who was a cabinet minister. As a matter of fact, I think he held a half dozen portfolios before they finally shuffled him off to the something-or-other. I'm not sure what it was.

But they had an NDP member, a sitting member, and they

couldn't provide a new elementary school for Wadena. Long on rhetoric, short on action — that was the legacy of the NDP. They talk a good line. They talk in platitudes, Mr. Speaker. We have to care for our children. Our children are the future, Mr. Speaker. We have to look after our seniors. They commiserate. They walk around. They shake hands. They . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, you've seen them doing it. You've seen them doing it.

Talk is cheap. But put your money up. If we had such a vibrant economy as they were telling us, if the family of Crown corporations was such a great thing, if government ownership was so wonderful and we were doing so well in the '70s, why were none of these things done by members of the opposition when they were government?

Well, Mr. Speaker, they did other things too that were kind of interesting. Well the members opposite claim that we have a deficit. Well we have a deficit. But I've just outlined some of the reasons for that deficit and I'm going to continue, Mr. Speaker, talking about why, why we have a deficit and what we have to do about it in the future.

But let's take a look at some of the things that the NDP did. They were decrying our tax initiatives, our broadening of the tax base, saying taxes are terrible, taxes are awful. Well in 1972 the NDP imposed the inheritance tax and the gift tax — death taxes, Mr. Speaker. Put in simple terms --death taxes, you died, they took it. Widows and orphans, they took the money that belonged to people who had worked for it and when a loved one passed on, they were waiting there like the vultures they are and took it. A death tax, can you believe it? And that was in 1972, Mr. Speaker. That was in 1972. They were a new government with new ideas and they sure had them — death taxes.

Well is this their plan that they're going to bring back Mr. Speaker? I haven't heard much about it so I've got to assume that they may go back to their old plans. I imagine they're going to bring in the death tax.

Well taxes. What else did the NDP do in the form of taxes? Well they raised the income tax from 34 per cent to 37 per cent of the basic federal rate. They jacked it again in 1973. In 1976 the Saskatchewan surtax was imposed. Now, Mr. Speaker, 1977 personal income tax went from 40 to 58.8 per cent. And they complain about us taxing.

And when they were doing these tax increases, Mr. Speaker, did they build nursing homes? No, they bought farm land. They bought potash mines. They nationalized. Didn't create any new jobs. Didn't create any services for people, those same people that they seem to care about, that they talk like they care about, Mr. Speaker. And they turn to this government and they say, the Conservatives are bad managers because they've spent money on the requirements of the people of the province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I kind of lose it there some place. They were supposed to be the party that was caring, they're supposed to be the party that looks after the downtrodden, the elderly, the disadvantaged. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't see that in any of the things that I've just talked about. All I can see is that they were mad with

power and didn't know what to do with it.

Now if you want to take a look at their position on taxes, well, there are a number of things that we've heard in the recent past about taxation. And perhaps I could give you a couple of quotes on the NDP position on taxes, and I quote from the *Highway 40 Courier*, October 11, 1990, page 11: Romanow confirms NDP would increase taxes. A direct quote. Well, interesting.

The North Saskatoon Business Association, March 7, 1990, Roy Romanow speaking notes: I'll only mention, but you'll know why I'll mention it, why I'll only mention it and not say any more about it, is of course additional revenue by way of taxes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, members opposite, members opposite again from their seats are making comments about what I'm telling you, but it's . . . I'm quoting it, I'm quoting it. I'm quoting it, direct quotes.

Now death taxes, increased income taxes, and then in 1990, 1991, they're saying, well obviously they'd have to increase taxes should they ever form government. And, Mr. Speaker, when we bring in tax reform, spread the tax base out, make it fairer, provide input tax credits for small business — again another group that members opposite have been claiming to represent for some time — they say it's not right. They say it's not fair. They say it isn't proper. They tell us that we're not doing it the right way. Well, Mr. Speaker, in the nine years I've been here all I've ever heard the NDP talk about is, me too and a little bit more. I'd have done it differently. The Saferco plant is a good thing, but I'd have cut a different deal. The upgrader at Regina, well I'd have cut a better deal. Weyerhaeuser, well it's not such a bad thing, I guess, but I'd have cut a different deal. Those are the comments I hear.

And members opposite don't have to take my word for it. Check the papers. Check the comments of the Leader of the Opposite and members opposite saying that the Saferco plant is a bad thing, and the members for Moose Jaw stand up and are quoted in the press saying, well it's a pretty good thing for the area. Yes, right, right, yes, it's a good thing for the area.

North Battleford, North Battleford, the bacon plant — members opposite said it was a terrible thing. Providing jobs, Mr. Speaker, was a terrible thing because of the person or persons involved with the company that we were dealing with. Well, Mr. Speaker, a couple of hundred jobs seems reasonable. And the member for North Battleford thought it was a great idea too; only he'd have cut the deal with somebody different. Well, Mr. Speaker, if that's the best they can do, I'm not too sure that I can believe them.

And when you talk about believing, Mr. Speaker, and you talk about debt and you talk about fiscal mismanagement, well, Mr. Speaker, debt of any kind, debt of any kind is still debt. Now whether you have debt is hidden somewhere in an accounting process or it shows up up-front, it's still debt.

Now the NDP like to say that they left office with money in the provincial treasury. Figures from the Department of

Finance show something just a little different. *Public Accounts* 1982, family of Crown corporations still had 3.038 billion worth of debt, and they admitted it. They said, oh yes, yes that's right; that's debt. That's debt; it's there.

Now if you take a look at some of the other areas of fiscal mismanagement that the NDP entered into: Nabu, Cablecom, Agra Industries, Rogers Lumber, fibre form, Shane Industries, Mossbank food and noodle plant. You know, so on and so forth. That adds up to a couple of million dollars there; pardon me, a couple of billion dollars there, Mr. Speaker.

And they talk about GigaText. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a case of the pot calling the kettle black. I suppose every government is going to go out and have a venture or two that doesn't work. But they don't talk about the ventures that this government has been involved in in partnership with industry that have succeeded, that are providing new jobs, innovative jobs, new technology. Millar Western pulp mill, Meadow Lake, brand-new technology, Mr. Speaker, environmentally sound, the most up-to-date mill of its kind in the world. And members opposite say, oh it's a bad deal. They shouldn't have done it that way. They'd have done it differently. They didn't want to do it that way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more you can say about it except we've entered into agreements with companies, with organizations, with workers, with the people who work in many of these companies to provide new jobs, stability for the province, and a bigger and better tax base.

We've had a decline in the agricultural economy. Nobody's going to deny that, Mr. Speaker. We've had a decline in the agricultural economy. You take a look at the grain prices that we're facing right now, you take a look at why we're facing those grain prices, you take a look at the 40 per cent of all the jobs in Saskatchewan being tied to agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and you'll know what I'm talking about. When agriculture has a downturn, the province has a downturn.

The former premier, Mr. Blakeney, was once asked about the province and what its strengths were. And he said, well it was oil and it was potash and it was grain. And they said, well those are all kind of resource based, you know. What would happen if all of them ended up very low priced at the same time? And Mr. Blakeney replied, well that was highly unlikely that that would ever happen, but if it did, it would then be Saskatchewan's nightmare.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that happen. We've seen oil prices rock-bottom, grain prices rock-bottom, potash prices rock-bottom. And then on top of that, Mr. Speaker, we saw a drought tossed in to further complicate the issue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the numbers closely, you will see that we have had some out-migration from the province of Saskatchewan. And it's been due to the fact that we have a downturn in agriculture because many, many jobs, as I've pointed out, are tied to agriculture. But if you look at the real number, Mr. Speaker, from when

we took office in 1982 until today, you'll find that we still have a greater number of people in this province than when we took office. Now, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan, being resource based, will go through some cycles. It will. It always has. In 1973 when I completed my education at Kelsey as an ag machinery technologist, I had to leave the province to get a job. Now in 1973, let me see, who was government? I believe it was the NDP. I believe it was the NDP.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had to leave the province to get a job. I went to British Columbia. And when I got to British Columbia — I'm working in a coal-mine in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker — 9 out of the 10 people in my crew were from Saskatchewan and the 10th guy was from Newfoundland. And that was under an NDP administration in Saskatchewan — the land of milk and honey. Under the NDP the world was going to be wonderful, everything was going to be just fine, it was going to be great. Well, Mr. Speaker, it didn't quite work out that way.

I came home farming in 1976. I had an opportunity to buy my uncle's farm. I had to bid against the land bank. I had to bid against the land bank. Yes, I won the bid. I won the bid temporarily. But, Mr. Speaker, those types of things were government, government competing directly with an individual, competing directly with an individual for land. The treasury of the province of Saskatchewan put up against what I, as a young mechanic, could find for resources to make a down payment on that land.

Mr. Speaker, it boggles the imagination, but I gave it a try. I gave it a try, and I won the bid and I bought the farm. And I'm still farming. But I know one thing for sure, Mr. Speaker, during the last seven or eight years, if it hadn't been for the commitment of this government there would be a whole lot more of us farmers who wouldn't be farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It being 5 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.