

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member from Saskatoon Westmount, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you, to the members of the legislature, Mr. Russ Gibb, who is sitting in your gallery.

Mr. Gibb served in the Saskatoon light infantry from 1940 to 1945. He worked in the post office as a letter carrier from 1946 to 1978. He joined the Corps of Commissioners and has served from 1979 and is still serving. He's also been a member of the militia for 22 years. He's been 51 years in uniform. Please welcome Mr. Gibb to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me this morning to introduce to you and other members of the Assembly, a group of 15 Grade 11 students. They're in your gallery, sir. They are accompanied this morning by teacher and chaperon, Mr. Jim Olesen. And these students, Mr. Speaker, are going to be participating in an interchange on Canadian studies in Fredericton the first week in May.

They're from all over the province, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to be discussing a series of very important issues in so far as Saskatchewan and Canada are concerned. I have no doubt that these young people will be very good ambassadors for the province of Saskatchewan. They come highly recommended from their schools and their school divisions, and I would ask all members in the Assembly to welcome this group this morning and also to wish them a very enjoyable and worthwhile trip to Fredericton in the next couple of weeks.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Saxinger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, grade 11 and 12 students sitting in your gallery. They are here from the St. Isidore School, St. Isidore de Bellevue. They are accompanied by their teachers Andrea Gareau and Yvette Gaudet. I would like to welcome them. I look forward meeting with them at 11 o'clock, and I hope they enjoy their session, the question period, and I wish them a good trip back home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Government Leadership

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, thank you finally, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Premier, the people of this province have suffered from your waste and your mismanagement, from your incompetence and your arrogance and your government's patronage and corruption — nine years of suffering as of today, Mr. Premier.

In nine years you've taken a surplus of \$139 million and you've turned it into a deficit of \$5 billion. In nine years you've taken a surplus of \$139 million and you've turned it into a deficit of \$5 billion, the highest per capita debt in Canada. For nine years you've had to make choices, and for nine years you've made choices to betray the people of Saskatchewan, and I ask you, Mr. Premier, how in the world can you call that leadership?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to respond to the hon. member today, and I particularly want to thank the members of the legislature that did acknowledge that it was nine years ago that on April 26 that the Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan was elected by the people in a full democratic . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — And again, Mr. Speaker, they were re-elected in 1986 by the people based on the fact that we did have a plan. And we do have a plan to help agriculture, to maintain rural Saskatchewan, to diversify the communities, to watch the processing and manufacturing, Mr. Speaker. And even despite grasshoppers or \$2 wheat or drought or very difficult conditions, Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to be there for people, to protect them against high interest rates when the opposition didn't. We abandoned the packages that said the government should own your land like land bank. We went into the people and listened, Mr. Speaker, and we opened our hearts to the people. We opened our hearts, and we said we'll be there for you in good times and in bad times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — So today it is particularly pleasing for me, Mr. Speaker, to be able to stand in this legislature and say we'll be there again with GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account), interest-rate protection, diversification, and the good things that the people of Saskatchewan want from this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — A new question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you can blame grasshoppers and everything else, but the people of Saskatchewan blame you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Instead of providing the leadership that we've needed, you have provided excuses for every one of your government's failures. You blame sick people looking for a hospital bed. You blame seniors and accuse them of abusing drugs. You have blamed the weather and you've blamed students looking for a chance to get an education. It seems, Mr. Premier, that everyone is responsible but you.

The question, Mr. Premier, is as follows. Leadership is defined not by a person's successes; leadership is defined by how a person deals with difficulties. And for nine years you have failed to deal with the difficult choices. For nine years. Mr. Premier, nine years ago leadership in Saskatchewan died. Whose fault but yours can that be?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said, the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, nine years ago, Mr. Speaker . . . the people of Saskatchewan faced 21 per cent interest rates, years of an NDP (New Democratic Party) administration, and they said, Mr. Speaker, the NDP won't listen.

It's just like this legislature, Mr. Speaker. They didn't listen then and they don't listen now. They can ask a question and they can talk and they can yip at their heels, at anybody's heels, but will they deliver, Mr. Speaker? Where's their plan?

In 1982 we said, Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be with the people; we'll protect your mortgages against 21 per cent interest rates. They didn't do that. We were elected — nine years ago today.

In 1986 we said we'd do the same, Mr. Speaker. We would protect your farms and your villages, we would diversify the economy, we would build paper mills and upgraders and diversify this great province of Saskatchewan. And they elected us again, Mr. Speaker. The NDP didn't understand.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I'll say in 1991 this administration will be re-elected because we have a plan for the people, by the people, and for the people . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Taxation Increases

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, one can understand the Premier wanting to dwell on the past; his future is a great deal more bleak.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — My question, Mr. Speaker, was to the Minister of Finance. However since the Premier's been congratulated by his caucus, perhaps it's appropriate that he answer.

Mr. Premier, nine years ago the public voted for a party which promised lower taxes and a leaner, more efficient government. What in fact they got . . . they did not get a sales tax which was eliminated; they got a higher sales

tax. You promised to reduce income tax by 10 points; in fact you've increased it grotesquely. You promised to eliminate gas tax; it's now back on at 46 cents.

Mr. Premier, the public are seething with anger over the taxes. How do you expect them to react when you've delivered the exact opposite of what you promised?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the people get to choose in democracy, and they've chosen us twice now, in '82 and '86. And they will choose us again if we earn their respect, Mr. Speaker.

And if you go across the province of Saskatchewan and you ask them — whether it's the city of Regina, people of Prince Albert, people of The Battlefords, or rural towns and villages — they will say, I want to see stability; I want to see diversification; I want to see a plan for the future. There's more to government than just complaining, Mr. Speaker.

I listened to people in Prince Albert the other day, talking about the NDP candidate in the Shellbrook-Torch River constituency. And I think his name is Langford. These people would know him. He admitted, Mr. Speaker, he admitted to the farmers and the neighbours in his community that the NDP don't have an agriculture policy because, frankly, their leader wouldn't understand an agriculture policy if they brought it over to their caucus meeting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Langford admitted that, Mr. Speaker. They don't have a diversification policy, Mr. Speaker, if you will. They don't have a diversification policy. They don't have an energy policy, an oil policy, a pulp and paper policy, an agriculture policy. Their candidates don't know it. Their leader knows it, Mr. Speaker. That's why he's falling like a rock, the longer this campaign goes on without . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farm Debt Restructuring

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to . . .

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

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I note the best defence is an offence, and that's what the government opposite are trying to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to our famous Minister of Agriculture, the Premier. Mr. Minister, for nine years now you and your federal counterparts have failed to produce a debt-restructuring program for farm families in this province. Again in your budget you have mentioned nothing about debt restructuring.

My question, Mr. Minister, is this: how is it that for some people like yourself debt restructuring in a land flip is very simple, but for thousands and thousands of other Saskatchewan farm families debt restructuring means being forced off the land?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I'll go anywhere across this province, Mr. Speaker, with that member from Humboldt and talk about agriculture and talk about interest rate protection and talk about the kinds of things that are significant to the people of Saskatchewan in agriculture.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it may be difficult for the members of the gallery to hear me but it isn't difficult for the members of the public watching this on television to hear the response that I'm giving.

So I will continue, Mr. Speaker, to say to that member: in 1982 when interest rates were 21 per cent, farmers cried out all over the place, would you help me. Would the NDP administration help me. They asked, Mr. Speaker. You know it's a fact; I know it's a fact.

And, Mr. Speaker, do you know what happened? The members that were representing Humboldt, the members that were representing Shaunavon were defeated in their ridings, Mr. Speaker, and they had to run to the cities of Regina to get elected because they didn't have an agricultural policy. And those two members that are sitting over there today, Mr. Speaker, are the best testimony, they're the best testimony to no NDP agricultural policy that you could have in history. They got kicked out of their rural ridings. They run into the middle of the city and they say, yes, we have the answers.

The reason that there's a debt and there's a problem in agriculture goes back to 1979, 1980, 1981 — 21 per cent interest rates. The NDP did nothing about it. They lost their ridings, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to lose every riding in the province that is linked to rural Saskatchewan again, Mr. Speaker.

Funding for Health Care

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier, who has obviously got his fair share in Saskatchewan whereas other farmers are being forced off the land. Mr. Premier, your government's record of health care for nine years has been one of cut-backs, bed closures, waiting-lists, deterrent fees, fired health-care workers, and specialists leaving this province in numbers.

One of the worst excesses was the decision in 1987 to end the school-based children's dental plan. In 1986 you paid 10.2 million in personal services to provide this program with more than 400 practitioners. This year you are paying 10.3 million for a program that delivers considerably less in service. There's no justification for what you did in 1987, but shallow ideology.

For nine years you have let your right-wing political ideology interfere with your duty to deliver health-care services. Now what gave you the right to treat

Saskatchewan people in that manner, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, about all the NDP administration and the NDP people have left now in their so-called bag of tricks is the old medicare tactics. That's it. They don't have an agriculture plan, they don't have a diversification plan, they don't have a management plan, but they have the NDP scare tactics that they tried in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and they'll try again.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan for health care at all. In fact the member that just spoke, Mr. Speaker, admitted on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio, News 12:05, it says and I quote, and I can't say the member's name, but she said . . . here it says, WestScan Media Services, Louise Simard: there's no plan as it sits now. That's the NDP health . . . (inaudible) . . . There's no plan as it sits. Well they don't even have a plan for health care, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — We doubled expenditures on health care. We brought in the new health card. We . . . (inaudible) . . . data services. We're expanding nursing home capacity by almost 2,000 spaces, Mr. Speaker. We have dentists' offices opening all across Saskatchewan. And the NDP, going into the 1991 campaign, says: there is no plan as it sits now. That speaks for itself. That speaks volumes, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Job Creation for Young People

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Premier.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Order, order. Order. I know it's Friday morning and there are reasons why perhaps hon. members have extra enthusiasm this morning. The member from Regina Lakeview, if I may have your attention. I would like to ask hon. members to restrain themselves. I really don't think hollering and talking all the way through when the Speaker is on his feet is an appropriate way for members to behave. I've given you ample opportunity to settle down, and I'm asking you to do so again.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the future of any province, including ours, is our young people. And over the last six years in the province of Saskatchewan we've seen a net loss of over 80,000 people from our province, more than three-quarters of them under the age of 35, Mr. Premier.

For the period of 1981 to 1990, Saskatchewan had the distinction in our nation of having the worst job-creation record for the decade in the nation — an increase of only 5.6 per cent in the number of jobs held in total. Jobs for young people in that same period, Mr. Premier, for people aged 15 to 24 dropped from 109,000 to 79,000 in the same period.

And I ask you, Mr. Premier, I ask you to explain on this your ninth anniversary, how do you explain your dismal nine-year record of failing to provide jobs and opportunities for the young people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will be interested in the truth — that there are more people in the province of Saskatchewan now, than we were elected in 1982. And the population is 30,000, 40,000 bigger than it was. The hon. member won't acknowledge that, but that's the case. Under very difficult circumstances, we've increased the population.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, when we move towards diversifying the economy, whether it's in Moose Jaw or whether it's in Prince Albert or whether it's in Regina, the NDP members stand up and they say all over the province, I'm against the new fertilizer project. Now I would like the members from Moose Jaw, if they have the courage and they are honest about diversification and jobs for young people, to stand in their place, Mr. Speaker, and say we support the fertilizer plant, the Saferco plant, next to Moose Jaw.

Do you think they'd do that, Mr. Speaker? No, their leader, their leader will condemn that plant all across the province. When he's in P.A. he says that fertilizer plant's no good; when they're in Estevan they say that fertilizer plant's no good. When that member from Moose Jaw North stands up and says, well I'd like to see diversification, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, will he stand in his place today and support the processing of natural gas, and the fertilizer production to this province and for the community of Moose Jaw. Will he do that, Mr. Speaker? Isn't that a fair question?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Funding for Education

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I too have a question to the Premier whose land deals are well-known to the people of this province. I want to talk about their nine-year record in education. They've had money for Cargill Grain; they've had money for their political hacks; they've had money for Weyerhaeuser; they've had money for all kinds of out-of-province corporations, but they haven't had any money for our universities, they haven't had any money for our schools, and they haven't had any money for our technical schools.

Now we have a situation where we have enrolment quotas at our universities; we've laid off hundreds of technical staff at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology); we have lost thousands of student placements at our technical schools, and we have a record of school closures in rural Saskatchewan and teacher lay-offs.

I want the Premier of Saskatchewan to explain money for Weyerhaeuser but no money for the young people of our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, isn't it interesting, the member for Moose Jaw stands up and he talks about population and he says, and to be fair to him, he says, well it's about the same as . . . (inaudible) . . . I will say, Mr. Speaker, that after the nine years the population is only up 30 or 40,000 people.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I'll say to the member opposite, during that time, difficult economic times, modest increase in population, we have virtually doubled the budget in health care and doubled the budget in education, Mr. Speaker.

And you can take inflation; you can take all the factors you want. This administration has put money into health and money into education like no administration in the past, Mr. Speaker.

A new College of Agriculture — \$90 million, Mr. Speaker. And I don't believe that it would have happened without this administration. And I say that with great respect to the members opposite . . . (inaudible) . . . And that's almost \$100 million . . . (inaudible) . . . a 50 per cent increase in enrolment, a new SIAST college in Prince Albert. Now that's investment in education.

They're against the paper mill in Prince Albert, they're against the fertilizer plant, they're against the upgraders. And when we double the expenditures in health and education in difficult times, they say, Mr. Speaker, that we don't have a plan. Well, Mr. Speaker, they are so void of a plan that they're going to remain in opposition, Mr. Speaker, maybe for the rest of your entire life, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Privatization

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question too is to the Premier. And Mr. Premier, when you took over and became Premier . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order. The member for Rosthern, order.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question too is to the Premier. And when you became Premier, you said to the people that privatization would be the saviour of the economy of the province. Mr. Premier, you promised that the debt would go down, that taxes would go down, and more people would be employed.

Well after nine years of privatization we've seen record high taxes — \$14 billion in debt. Mr. Premier, could you answer the question that people are asking all over the province. Where in the world did all the money go, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, they're coming out . . . the hon. members . . . (inaudible) . . . that the NDP administration had a hidden deficit, Mr. Speaker, of billions of dollars. And you know the student . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just saying that the opposition will be interested to know is that it's been well documented, as we did in 1982, the hidden deficit of the NDP administration — not only because of the debt in the Crown corporations and the \$90,000 a day that it lost in PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) and the huge amount of money it spent on land bank, buying farmers' land and saying it was going to save them — but the debt in the Crowns and the money they borrowed to buy the potash to take it over, not build any new ones. All of that plus the combination of debts were there, Mr. Speaker, literally in the billions and billions of dollars.

Now the hon. member says, well what have you done with respect to privatization? I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, by taking and replacing that old debt with people's investment, we now have Saskoil and a brand-new building downtown. There are 600 employees and one of the finest companies you'll find in the energy business any place in North America — Saskoil. Mr. Speaker, I was there with the mayor of Regina, opening up the brand-new building, and the people there said, that's the finest that we have seen in the energy business in the province of Saskatchewan. That's privatization. You take the potash industry, you can take the pulp and paper mill, Mr. Speaker, and I could go on with the fertilizer plant and many, many more, Mr. Speaker — exactly the thing to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Investment Decisions

Mr. Koenker: — To the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier . . .

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

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Premier, for nine years you've made wingy investments in operations like GigaText, Joytec, Supercart, M.A.S. Medical. You've said Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you can afford to mismanage the province and still break even.

When, Mr. Premier, when are Saskatchewan taxpayers going to see you recover their money from these bad public investments?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows . . . and particularly those members, Mr. Speaker, that were centralized to Regina because they lost their rural ridings. We'll call them the centralized Regina members because they lost in Humboldt and they lost in Shaunavon.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker, when they talk in this legislature, when Allan Blakeney talked in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, and he would come up and say,

well isn't it just terrible that we'd offer opportunities to invest here in the province of Saskatchewan, like you could actually buy shares in Saskoil . . . We'll come to find out, Mr. Speaker, Allan Blakeney had shares in Saskoil. Now imagine the NDP leader standing here in the House arguing against it in his caucus, clapping away like this, saying that you shouldn't do any of that, and the member from The Battlefords and the centralized members talking about being big privatized stuff, Mr. Speaker. What does it tell you about it? They have no plan. And the key is, Mr. Speaker, the absolute key is the hypocrisy of campaigning against investing in the resources of Saskatchewan, being against it in public and then going out, Mr. Speaker, and admitting they own shares in the same company. That tells you about the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order, order. Ladies and gentlemen, let us move on to the next order of business.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Day of Commemoration

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Sunday, April 28, Saskatchewan workers will observe a day of mourning for colleagues who have been injured or have lost their lives. And government flags throughout the province will be flown at half-mast today, tomorrow, and Sunday.

As Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Mr. Speaker, I am committed to improving the health and safety of working men and women in our province. To this end, our government has implemented as many changes as possible with existing legislation to address the concerns that were expressed by Saskatchewan citizens during public meetings held by the Occupational Health and Safety Council.

I will be bringing forward amendments that The Occupational Health and Safety Act will address to change what we could not implement without legislative authority.

As huge fines that may or not be ordered by the courts are not the only solution, the planned amendments will also recognize the importance of occupational health and safety committees and the need for employers and workers to co-operate and working together reduce accidents and injuries in the work place.

In its report, the council recommended that enforcement of The Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations be increased. The number of inspections conducted by the occupational health and safety branch of my department have been increased significantly. And while it is making a difference and statistics show a steady decline in the number of work-place fatalities and serious injuries over the past six years, we recognize that there is more to be done and are deeply committed to even more improvement.

Mr. Speaker, because deterrents alone are not the total

solution, I am committed to worker education and employer enforcement. The education and training of both workers and employers can further reduce work-place injuries. Our government created a new unit in the occupational health and safety branch with a mandate to expand occupational health and safety training in the province to both workers and employers.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, one of my sons suffered a serious occupational injury. My wife and I know firsthand what parents, family, and loved ones experience through this type of event. And as the minister responsible, Mr. Speaker, I and this government have supported and will continue to support health and safety initiatives which protect Saskatchewan workers.

We must take all reasonable action that will assist in prevention. There can be no argument that one accident or one fatality that can be avoided would be an outstanding benefit for all of us. As our weekend of worship begins, let us all pray for continued improvement in the safety of our work place.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In responding to the minister's statement related to April 28 being the day of mourning, I'd like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by thanking the minister for providing me a copy of his remarks prior to question period today.

Mr. Speaker, it's worthy of note that here in Saskatchewan we became the first jurisdiction in all of Canada to put recognition of the day of mourning, April 28 into statute and for our leadership in the nation I am proud of the actions of this Legislative Assembly. It's worthy of note as well that we still are the only province that has put this into statute although the Government of Canada has now passed similar legislation this year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, every year more than a thousand Canadian workers are killed on the job, and in the past decade here in Saskatchewan nearly 400 working men and women have died on the job, not including agricultural workers who are not included in those statistics. Thousands more are permanently disabled in Canada each year and hundreds of thousands are injured.

Today in Canada and in Saskatchewan workers still die from cancer and lung disease and other ailments caused by exposure to toxic substances at their work places. April 28 of each year is a day of mourning for these victims of work place accidents and disease. It's a day that has been chosen, Mr. Speaker, because of its significance in history. On April 28, 1914, the first workers' compensation program was introduced in our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that the backbone of our society is not our politicians, it's not our financiers, but it's the working men and women of our province and of our country.

April 28 is a day to remember the supreme sacrifice that they have been forced to make in order to earn a living. It is a day for us here in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to determine that at the very least, as the minister said in his remarks, and as the Occupational Health and Safety Council recommended, at the very least we will see that

Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety Act is enforced — is enforced — in the interest of health and safety of the working men and women of Saskatchewan. It is a day to rededicate ourselves to the goal of better occupational health and safety standards, to making all Saskatchewan and Canadian work places safer for the working men and women of our province and our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize and appreciate that the minister has directed that the flags of the buildings owned by the province will be flown at half-mast, not just on April 28 this year, but over the weekend including today, tomorrow, and Sunday.

And I would conclude, Mr. Speaker, by asking that this Assembly do what we did last year when we stood to commemorate the day of mourning, that the members of the Assembly observe a moment of silence in recognition of the day of mourning for workers killed and injured on the job.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Before orders of the day, with leave I would like to express condolences to the passing of Richard Hatfield.

Leave granted.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to express my personal condolences, and I'm sure those of the members of the legislature, and I certainly will ask this House to join me in mourning the death of a fellow parliamentarian, the Hon. Richard Hatfield of New Brunswick.

Mr. Hatfield passed away at the age of 60 after a long and valiant struggle. His death will be mourned by the people of his native province of New Brunswick and by all Canadians.

First elected to the New Brunswick legislature in 1961, Richard Hatfield served his province for more than a quarter of a century. But his service extended far beyond provincial boundaries when he recognized a threat to the unity of Canada. His untiring efforts to preserve the unity will long be remembered by all Canadians.

We all owe him a great debt because of his sincere belief in the nation, and, Mr. Speaker, I could say from my own personal experience in having attended many first ministers' conferences with Richard Hatfield, he was a powerful defender of minorities and he spoke on their behalf eloquently from his province and from the national capital or from wherever he happened to be. He was a great supporter of the country, and when in fact it looked like we were in pretty serious difficulty, he would work tirelessly to bring all the provinces and indeed his desire, the territories, into the Canadian constitution.

Same time, I believe that you can recall that he spoke with intensity about the fact that the native people, the Indian people, Metis people of this country, deserve the kind of recognition that is entitled to people who were here first, who are here now, and will be here for a long time. And he spoke on their behalf on many occasions, and he'd

often make them his first priority.

But, Mr. Speaker, we lament his passing. And I can only say, as somebody who has been involved in public life for a much shorter time than Richard Hatfield, he will not be forgotten. We have tipped our hat to some great men and women, those that have spoken for their province and for their people. And today I just tip my hat to one of Canada's longest reigning premiers, one of our indeed distinguished parliamentarians. And I will certainly say to his family and to his friends, the people of Saskatchewan will not forget him.

The Speaker: — Why is the minister on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Gerich: — Could I have leave, or with leave, to introduce some guests, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — The hon. member for Regina Elphinstone I believe would like to also speak to the Premier's . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join with the government in extending condolences to the family of Mr. Hatfield. Mr. Hatfield, whom I met back in 1979, I believe it was, a new politician on my first CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) conference to Fredericton and Moncton and St. Andrew's by the sea, and I believe my friend from Meadow Lake was along on that trip . . . And we met Mr. Hatfield, and I think we all were impressed by what a pleasant person he was in being involved with the group. And I think, to say the least, he had a very pleasant way of approaching life and was a very colourful politician in Canada.

But on the more serious side, Mr. Hatfield obviously played a big role in the period leading up to 1982 in terms of the constitutional debate; was involved with Mr. Blakeney, our premier of the time — not always agreeing, I can assure you. But I think Mr. Hatfield had the ability to cross the cultural lines between English and French that I think many of us wished we could in a way that Mr. Hatfield was able to.

I want to say, as well, that even in defeat, Mr. Hatfield brought something to politics that I think all of us can take a look at. Obviously he had the ability and the opportunity to — and I suppose the temptation — of moving from the premier's chair to an appointment at the federal level or to some other position.

Mr. Hatfield turned down those kind of overtures and approaches, and I think sets an example for other politicians who leave politics, returning to private life and, I think, picking up a private life that I think many of us from time to time envy Mr. Hatfield. And I would want to join with the Premier in extending condolences and also extending a copy of the motion words here to the family of Mr. Hatfield.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Gerich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and to the members of the legislature, in your west gallery I'd

like to introduce Ian Eaton and two members of the Battle River Band: Tim Hees and Al Vickaryous. They're one of Saskatchewan's most prominent and talented country-and-western bands. They're our own home-grown talent. They are presently on CMT (Country Music Television) channel, a country music channel on cablevision with their hit single and video. They are in Regina this weekend for the country music awards, which is on Sunday night at the Centre of the Arts. I'd like to ask members of the legislature to welcome our guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce some guests as well.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleague from Redberry in welcoming Ian Eaton and his band. I take great pride in the fact that Ian actually lives in my constituency, and I've had the opportunity over the last numbers of months to listen to Ian and his band on a number of occasions, and I must admit that he is a favourite country singer of mine.

And it's getting to the point now, Mr. Speaker, that when people ask me where do I live, well I just simply say, well I'm Ian Eaton's neighbour. And that settles that. So I take great pleasure in welcoming them as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1045)

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to briefly add my welcome to the legislature to Ian Eaton and his band and his family and friends that aren't here but are here in spirit. I will say in terms of my family, my daughter Camille dances particularly often when she hears Ian Eaton's music. And, in fact, she has entertained us at home and entertained people across the province and in many different town halls as a result of the kind of enthusiasm that he brought to rural Saskatchewan. But he's made a big difference to the province and he's made a big difference to my family, and I welcome him here to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When we adjourned last evening I was talking

about the programs that have been developed by this government in the province during the last nine years in the area of education and laying out some of the highlights and some of the excellent achievements that have been made during that period of time.

I had also, Mr. Speaker, indicated the very strong commitment that this government has to education, and in this present year we'll be spending over 900 millions of dollars in the education of some 275,000 students. So indeed, education is a priority of this government, Mr. Speaker, and will continue on into the future.

I had also, during my address, discussed some of the changes that are taking place in the K to 12 system with regard to the core curriculum — how we are preparing our students for the 21st century by bringing in changes and ways in which they are going to be able to better adapt and to cope with the changes and the challenges of the 21st century.

With regard to any of these changes that are taking place, Mr. Speaker, we realize the importance of very close collaboration with all of those groups who are involved in the education of our children. When I speak of the collaboration, I am referring, of course, to the discussions, the consultation that must go on and must continue with the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association, the teachers' federation, the directors of education, and also, Mr. Speaker, with the parents.

I know that during this past year that we have sent out different news-letters to parents, indicating to them some of the things that are happening in the schools. And I get many, many letters back from parents suggesting that we need to do much more of this, that we need to continue to increase the communication with parents in letting them know what's happening in our schools.

I also indicated, Mr. Speaker, that we do have a very definite plan for the future. We know that our young people are facing a changing world. We have to ensure that they're going to be prepared for that.

I also indicated some of the concerns that we have today with the fact that some of our enrolments have declined to the point where school boards have found it necessary to either close schools or to down-size schools, and that's a difficult decision for a school board to make. And I do point out that that is the authority, the legal authority, legal right of school boards to make those decisions as to where those students attend school.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I indicated the many different changes that are taking place with SIAST and also with our regional colleges, the effort that this government has made to assure much greater access in rural Saskatchewan for individuals who want to continue with their education. And we do have today, Mr. Speaker, as you would well know, many individuals who have been out of school for some time but now wish to return to school and upgrade their courses, upgrade their skills so that they can in many cases improve on their job possibilities and promotions.

We also looked at the universities and all of the

expenditures that this government has made on the university campuses during the last nine years. And the one that our Premier was talking about this morning as well, the new College of Agriculture building which will be opening this year. As well we've had several other major projects on our campuses during the last nine years.

And something I would suggest, Mr. Speaker — that the NDP were very, very lax during the good years of the 1970s when our economy was very, very buoyant. There was much more money available, and the need was there, Mr. Speaker, but the opposition, the present NDP who were in power at that time did absolutely nothing about it, Mr. Speaker. That's part of the reason why we have quotas today is because there's no place for these students to go to classes if they were able to get into university.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have made tremendous strides ahead in our post-secondary education in this province, and we will continue to do that.

I was also discussing, Mr. Speaker, the programs that we have had in literacy over the last few years, and that has been supported by IBM and the PALS (Principles of the Alphabet Literacy System) program, and those initiatives will all continue, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize that we do have a problem of illiteracy in Saskatchewan, although I think we can take pride in the fact that the province of Saskatchewan has one of the highest literacy rates in the whole country. And we're continuing to work on that and we will continue to work on it in the future. We've had excellent co-operation and support from all of the post-secondary institutions, libraries, school boards. And that support will be there in the future as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now one other area that I want to address this morning is the whole area of northern education. And I must say that I was somewhat disappointed when I listened to the member from Cumberland in some of his remarks yesterday, but also the member from Athabasca, that there wasn't one word mentioned about the tremendous progress that has been made with education in northern Saskatchewan. This has resulted, Mr. Speaker, from the northern education task force report, which was put together by people in the North. Programs that have been suggested by people in the North, because they understand the needs of the North better than anyone else.

Mr. Speaker, we have begun to implement many of those recommendations of that report. I think the member from Cumberland was suggesting that so many reports and studies have been done in the past, and they just sit on a shelf. Well, Mr. Speaker, that may have been the case, I'm sure, maybe back in the 1970s when they were in government. They were doing reports and I'm sure a lot of them are just gathering dust. But the northern education task force report is very active. Many of the recommendations have already been implemented and others are in the process of being implemented, Mr. Speaker.

We've got a lot of things happening in the area of the K to 12, and that we recognize that the needs of children in the North are somewhat different in that we have to have more materials available that get into different types of cultures. The people in the North are involved in that particular design of the program, Mr. Speaker.

We also understand full well the fact that we have to ensure that our students in the North, as in other parts of Saskatchewan, stay in school until they have completed their grade 12, so we've acted on recommendations with student retention. We've also acted on other programs, re-entry programs where we do have people coming back and completing their high school. Some people, Mr. Speaker, who have been out of school for 15 or 20 years, coming back and getting their grade 12 diploma. We know as well that we've got student awards programs which are designed to keep students in school much longer. We've developed the native school counsellor program. Again, recommendations from this northern education task force report.

And I think the key to the success of all of these programs that I talk about, whether they're at the K to 12 level or the post-secondary level, is to do with the community involvement that we have had.

I've had the opportunity to visit schools and programs in the North, and I must say that I'm very, very impressed with the high quality of education that children and adults are receiving in northern Saskatchewan. I think that there are many things happening there that we can learn from and that we should be looking at implementing here in southern Saskatchewan.

We have to be sure that the curriculum that's being designed is sensitive to the needs of Northerners. When we look at the post-secondary area, we know that through SIAST and Northlands College . . . that there is an awful lot being done to meet the needs of the adult population. I attended recently the official opening of Northlands College and I can assure you that that's a college that has facilities and programs which are second to none in this province. NORTEP (northern teacher education program) continues to train teachers and many of them taking up positions in northern Saskatchewan.

And something else that I mentioned last night, Mr. Speaker, was the impact of the Saskatchewan Communications Network. This is now being used in some areas of northern Saskatchewan, and I have no doubt that it will be used in many other areas in the years ahead.

We also look at the joint ventures that are taking place between SIAST, the Department of Education, and the mining companies. We recognize that the mining industry today in northern Saskatchewan — a very, very viable industry . . . and we are concerned about the fact that more Northerners have jobs with those mining companies.

Since 1982 some 850 Northerners have been trained for the mining industry. And not too long ago I signed an agreement with mining companies that now will be providing training for another 170 Northerners which

will bring the number up over 1,000.

And the future looks very bright in this area as well, Mr. Speaker, in that in the next five years it's estimated that another thousand jobs are going to be available in the mining industry, and we must do all that we can to ensure that Northerners are trained for these positions. So we're very appreciative of the co-operation that we're getting from the mining companies.

I think that the one concern that many Northerners would have today is comments that are being made by some members of the opposition with regard to the uranium industry, when we know full well that some of them over there would very much like to see the uranium industry shut down altogether. Well, Mr. Speaker, if that should ever happen, we can see that it would be devastating for the Northerners up in the mining area.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think from this you can see that education is a priority in Saskatchewan, right from one end of the province to the other — \$903 million in funding for this year, second only to spending in health care.

Now this of course, Mr. Speaker, has meant that our Minister of Finance and the government has had to look at getting funds from new sources. And this has resulted in the harmonization with the GST (goods and services tax) and the provincial sales tax now being applied in some new areas that it wasn't applied before.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased that the Minister of Finance listened to my requests and is providing one and a half million dollars in special funding to cover the cost of the provincial sales tax as it would apply on reading materials and textbook purchases made by educational institutions and libraries. So I'm very appreciative, as I know school boards and libraries are all across this province, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a clear plan for the future, not only in education, but for the overall future of our province. The members opposite haven't presented their plan for Saskatchewan. And as we've heard this morning again, we know that some of the candidates out in the field fully agree with the government that the opposition has no plans. We heard, not too long ago, about one of their hopefuls in Saskatoon making the comment that she hoped that the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale, would make up his mind on what their policies were going to be so that she could get on with her campaigning.

So this is coming from within their own party, Mr. Speaker. Well we haven't heard anything about the plans of the NDP, and how's the Leader of the Opposition going to pay for this \$8 billion budget? I think we heard that outlined quite clearly last night — \$8 billion, that's what they want to spend over there.

Well good questions, Mr. Speaker, but very, very difficult getting the answers. No policy positions from the members opposite whatsoever. Well, Mr. Speaker, this government does have a long-term plan that will help to diversify our economy, create jobs and generate growth

with economic stability.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, as well, how the Leader of the Opposition seems to have a special interest in health and education, but at the same time he hasn't given any indication what that plan would be nor in fact how he would pay for it. We have heard it indicated that they would get more money for education by taxing the oil companies, and I think that we've all seen in the past what this government did with regard to the taxing of oil companies; it chased them all out of the province. So, Mr. Speaker, if that's their solution to getting more funding for education, it's not a very good one.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize is the fact that we can always use more money. And we listened to the member from Westmount the other day, talking to the Minister of Highways and complaining about the fact there wasn't more money for highways. And I have a fair amount of respect for that member, Mr. Speaker, because he happens to be one of my constituents, and I'm really concerned that I might not get his vote in the next election, but I'm really working on him.

Sure we could all use more money. But I think that just throwing money at some of these problems, money that we don't have, is not the solution. We need to be innovative. We need to have creative ideas and solutions that will address the challenges, not only for today but also for into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I think all of us would very much like then for the Leader of the Opposition to lay out his plan for education and for health care in the 1990s.

I want to turn now briefly, Mr. Speaker, to the status of women. In my short term as Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I've gained a great deal of appreciation of the diversity issues that are of interest to women and affect women.

I must say I'm also proud of the accomplishments of our government in addressing these issues. Just a few weeks ago members of cabinet met with representatives of major women's groups in the province, and we had a good opportunity to discuss some of the concerns that they have, some of the issues that still remain, and ones that we will be addressing in the years ahead.

We've been involved in formal consultations with federal government on such things as family violence, and we've seen recent announcements by the federal government in this area in the last while. We've increased funding for shelters for battered women over the last few years. New shelters have been established. Three new crisis lines have been funded in smaller centres. And in 1990 child counsellor positions were funded in four shelters for the first time.

Another area that I think there's been a great deal of progress is to do with the maintenance enforcement office, Mr. Speaker, which assists spouses and children to collect maintenance payments. We've registered over 9,800 cases and enforced 3,300 reciprocal orders from other provinces during the last five years.

In March of this year, Mr. Speaker, a gender-equity policy was established by the Department of Education to promote the equitable participation of girls and women in the province's kindergarten to grade 12 system.

(1100)

By the end of 1990 over 50,000 Saskatchewan citizens had joined the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, and some 80 per cent of those members are women, Mr. Speaker, providing benefits for people who did not have that opportunity before this administration came into power.

The Child Care Act and regulations were proclaimed in December 1990, and this is the first Act in Saskatchewan specifically dealing with child-care services.

The Saskatchewan Women's Advisory Council continues to advise government on a wide range of issues concerning Saskatchewan women. The council introduced a brochure, *PARTNERS for the FUTURE*, which encourages women to be involved in decision-making processes of the province by becoming active on boards, councils, and commission. The Women's Secretariat integrates issues affecting women into government's planning and policy department, and it also provides public awareness of issues affecting women.

One of the areas that I think that we provided very good suggestions and input is through a news-letter being put out by the secretariat entitled *Focus*, sent to over 9,000 women and organizations. And in recent editions it has highlighted the family, science and technology, diversity of careers, and women in the community. This publication includes profiles of Saskatchewan women as well as information on programs and services.

The secretariat produced and distributed to all high schools an exciting and dynamic video, *Focus on your Future*. This multi-image production put together by Saskatchewan people right here in Saskatchewan encourages young people to start thinking about and planning for their careers. One of the secretariat's recent initiatives is the development of the *Saskatchewan Women's Directory*. This publication, in its final stages, answers the need for a comprehensive source of information about programs and services of interest to women.

These are just some of our government's many accomplishments over the last year as we work towards the full participation of women in all aspects of society.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to my own constituency of Saskatoon Mayfair in the city of Saskatoon. I wanted to talk about the continuing hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party and particularly the leader of the NDP, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale when he talks about his undying support for Saskatoon.

The NDP has tried to cultivate a reputation for concern and compassion, especially on urban issues. But let's look at the leader's own riding of Saskatoon Riversdale, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a good look at it. In over 20 years of representation, what has the hon. member done for his

own constituency? What has he done, Mr. Speaker?

I would urge anyone in Saskatchewan to tour Saskatoon Riversdale to see the results of the opposition leader's tenure for themselves. It's really not much of a legacy, Mr. Speaker. Let's look at his contribution to the city generally, and one must look very, very hard.

Mr. Speaker, the Sturdy Stone Building, the Sturdy Stone Building, Mr. Speaker. Is that it? Here is a career politician paid \$1 million in government salary and probably eligible for a pension in excess of a million dollars over the course of his career, and this is the best he can do, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a dismal record by anyone's standards. And I ask the people of Saskatoon, is this the kind of performance you expect from a million dollar man?

By contrast, Mr. Speaker, let's have a look at what this government and this Premier has been able to accomplish over the past nine years. How about Saskatchewan Place and its tremendous contribution to the quality of life we enjoy in Saskatoon? And that's in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's sporting events like the world hockey championships, the Memorial Cup, the Brier, the Scott Tournament of Hearts, Canadian figure skating championships, the Saskatchewan Storm, none of this would have been possible without Saskatchewan Place.

What about the trade shows and conventions that have come to Saskatoon as a result of Saskatchewan Place? What about the tremendous entertainment events that Saskatchewan Place has attracted? The economic activity this generates is worth millions of dollars to the local economy and is a great source of pride for the people of Saskatoon.

And what did the Leader of the Opposition do to enhance the quality of life in Saskatoon during his time in government, Mr. Speaker? I'll tell you what he did. He built the Sturdy Stone centre, Mr. Speaker, but he didn't build much else.

Let's look at the university. We've built a new \$17 million geology building, a new \$92 million College of Agriculture building, a new cancer clinic, an addition to the Royal University Hospital, a major expansion at Innovation Place, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

And let's look at health care. Along with the cancer clinic and the Royal University Hospital, we built a new City Hospital, a major addition to St. Paul's Hospital and the new Parkridge Centre. Mr. Speaker, health has been our number one spending priority in every year since we took office, and we have a health-care system that is rivalled by no one.

Again I ask, Mr. Speaker, what has the million dollar man from Saskatoon Riversdale done for his constituency or for the city? Well he built the Sturdy Stone centre. And that's all he built, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite had 10 years of government in the '70s, and what did they do for the people of Saskatoon? Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing. Ten years of some of the best economic times we have seen in Saskatchewan and they

didn't build a thing.

The Leader of the Opposition was too busy building the land bank and the family of Crown corporations to worry about his constituency. Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale talks a good game, but what has he actually done to earn the million dollars the taxpayers of this province have paid him? He built the Sturdy Stone centre, his lonely monument to a quarter-century on the government's payroll.

Mr. Speaker, our government has gone to bat for the people of Saskatoon time and time again. We built world class health and education facilities. We've helped to develop a thriving manufacturing sector in our city. We've helped to develop Innovation Place, one of the largest high-tech research parks in the world. And we've been dedicated to the area of research and development, Mr. Speaker. In fact since 1985, we've helped more than 50 companies and research institutions by providing \$76 million for over 500 research and development projects in the city of Saskatoon alone through the agriculture and development fund.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go on but I think the people of Saskatoon get the picture. It's not hard to see who really cares about Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying to all members of this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan that this budget sets out a specific, well-defined plan for development of our province in the 1990s — not like the NDP with no definite plan, Mr. Speaker. It is a plan that focuses on fiscal restraint and recovery by stabilizing and strengthening our economic base while emphasizing the maintenance of our world class health and education systems. It's a plan that challenges government to become more efficient and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I think that the member for Regina North West will have his opportunity to speak. The member for Regina North West, now I ask you, just settle down. I won't ask you to stand up and apologize, but I just ask you to settle down and allow the Minister of Education to proceed.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member from Regina was interrupting, so I'll just highlight again what this government's plan is.

Its focus is on fiscal restraint and recovery by stabilizing and strengthening our economic base while emphasizing the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've just asked the hon. member for Regina North West at least two times to refrain from interrupting. Now I'm going to ask you, sir, to rise and apologize for not heeding the instructions of the Chair.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, the plan that this government has put forward is one that's designed for the 1990s and for the 21st century. We want to ensure not only that our boys and girls are going to get the proper

education programs that they will need, but we also have to ensure that people going into our post-secondary institutions also receive the training and instruction that they're going to need to cope and adapt to the changes of the 21st century.

We also have to look at the economic situation, Mr. Speaker, because without a very vibrant economic system in this province, we will not have the money to put into health and education programs. We have a very, very clear plan, Mr. Speaker. We understand that the challenges facing government today are to be more efficient and frugal. We also have to challenge the Saskatchewan people to work together with government to build and to diversify. Mr. Speaker, we can only be successful if we meet the challenge of the global market-place head on.

We must be forward-looking and forward-thinking. We must believe in ourselves and in our ability to achieve the goals that we set for ourselves. The official opposition answers the call with long dark speeches of doom and gloom. Mr. Speaker, doom and gloom serves no positive purpose and achieves nothing of value. We must be aggressive in our efforts to expand Saskatchewan's industrial base. We cannot continue to depend on agriculture; we must diversify to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, when you see the plan that has been set out by this government very, very clearly, when we talk about community development bonds, when we talk about Fair Share Saskatchewan and the long-term safety net programs in the agricultural industry — Mr. Speaker, that forms the basis of economic recovery in our province.

As our rural communities and our agricultural base strengthen, the benefits will be felt by people in towns and cities all across this province. If we continue to diversify and look for new opportunities and access to international markets and to create new markets at home, the 1990s will be an exciting decade for Saskatchewan. The challenge of the decade is in front of us.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important ingredients in the recipe for success in Saskatchewan is education. Without educational excellence, success in today's world is not possible. Saskatchewan people have always understood this, and they always supported the goal of building and maintaining a world class education system in our province.

This budget builds on that goal, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members of the Assembly to support it. I certainly will not be voting for the amendment, but I will be supporting the motion on the budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education just asked all members of the House to support the budget, and I would comment that members opposite can scarcely even speak to the budget, their own creation.

As I listen to the defence of this budget or an explanation of the budget, I haven't heard it. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, in all frankness and honesty and to his credit,

that thus far, of all the speakers I've heard, the Minister of Education has dwelt more with the budget than virtually any previous speaker on that side. In fairness to him, he has devoted a reasonable amount of time to the budget and to the work of the government and hasn't dwelt on past history.

But again in his speech, Mr. Speaker, we saw what was symptomatic of the malaise that has set in with the present government these last number of years. The Minister of Education said about 15 minutes ago that he was going to talk about his constituency in Saskatoon. And then what did he do? He launched into an eight or nine minute diatribe about the Leader of the Opposition and the constituency of Riversdale in Saskatoon. And he didn't talk about his own constituency. And, Mr. Speaker, this is why people can't believe this government.

I mean, there we had it typified, or exemplified within the last few minutes. The minister says one thing, that he's going to talk about his own constituency and he goes on a diatribe about the Leader of the Opposition in the Riversdale constituency and makes no sense at all.

So I was a little bit disappointed in that. I was disappointed in the minister because he had been, as I said earlier, relatively speaking on the right track prior to that point. But again, it only exemplifies the malaise that they say one thing and they do the opposite on the other side of the speech.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to speak to the budget and the government's plan very deliberately or directly, and I'm going to be referring to that plan as it appeared in the *Leader-Post* and the *Star-Phoenix* and in numerous Saskatchewan newspapers, an advertisement that's put in there from the Department of Finance bearing the minister's name entitled "Saskatchewan's 1991-92 Budget: CHOICES: Preserving the Saskatchewan Way of Life".

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am certain that you've probably seen this particular advertisement as most people in Saskatchewan will have if they've read their newspapers. And it outlines a three-year, six-point plan. And to date I don't believe I've heard anyone on the opposite side talk about the six points in this plan.

(1115)

I want to talk about the six points. If they don't want to talk about the government's budget, I want to talk about it. I want to talk about their six-point plan, and I want to point out to people what this plan is really all about.

1. Fair Taxation.

There will be no tax increases for three years.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is an out-and-out, bald-faced, misleading distortion. It's a half-truth to say there will be no tax increases for three years because Saskatchewan people, with the implementation of the provincial GST, are going to see the single biggest tax increase in all of Saskatchewan's history, in all of Saskatchewan's history.

And I ask, Mr. Speaker, when they announced point number one in their plan — fair taxation, there'll be no tax increases for three years — who are they trying to fool? Who are they trying to fool? Saskatchewan people are being taxed to death. They're fleeing this province to do their shopping in North Dakota and in Alberta. There's hardly a soul in Saskatchewan that doesn't know that this isn't true — that there will be no tax increases. They know it only too well.

And this provincial GST announced in this budget is a disaster for this province. And fair taxation, Mr. Speaker, fair taxation is point number one. I want to point, Mr. Speaker, to the provincial budget that was tabled Monday night, the budget documents, the spending estimates. And I refer now to page number 8, where the government indicates that it will be receiving \$168 million more in sales tax in this next year because of this provincial GST. And they talk about fair taxation in their newspaper article about the budget. \$168 million is going to be taken out of the pockets of Saskatchewan people or consumers by means of this provincial GST.

Mr. Speaker, another way of putting it, that means for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan, the Minister of Finance has to pick up an extra \$168 per person to pay for this tax increase. And I talked to one of my constituents last weekend as I was going door to door on O'Neil Crescent in Saskatoon Sutherland constituency. Her name was Debbie, and she was a young waitress who told me that when the federal GST was implemented on January 1, she noticed a noticeable decline in her wages, although she had forgotten the details, the precise figures, it having been three months ago.

But she did talk about the implementation of the provincial GST that happened April 1, and said that her tips from patrons have fallen from \$70 a night to \$50 a night. And the simple fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that when people go to pay for their meal, when their bill is presented, she says more and more patrons of the restaurant are not leaving a tip. They're using the money that they would use for a tip to pay for the provincial GST.

And this is taking money out of a young woman's pocket who can scarcely afford it. This is her major source of income; as far as I know, her only source of income.

And it's going to take more and more money out of Saskatchewan people's pockets when they pay for children's clothes, not only restaurant meals, and utility bills and reading material and books, and it's really a tax on knowledge, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan people say consistently that they are being taxed to death and buried in debt. This is not a fair tax, Mr. Speaker. This isn't a tax that's based on ability to pay. This is an unfair tax and it's a regressive tax and this provincial GST is going to destroy the very social fabric of this province, the economic underpinnings of this province as it takes money out of circulation by way of people going to Minot to do their shopping or to Lethbridge or the black market, the underground economy, as people attempt to circumvent paying the provincial GST. It will drag the Saskatchewan economy down and drive consumer

spending out of the province and drive businesses into bankruptcy.

This provincial GST is unjustifiable, Mr. Speaker. I say it's unjustifiable, looking in the government's own spending estimates and their revenue estimates, when oil revenues are going to be going down by \$48 million.

Now how can that be, Mr. Speaker? How can this government give tax breaks to oil companies at the same time when it's going to implement the GST and pull \$168 million out of consumer pockets? It's unjustifiable.

Mr. Speaker, this provincial GST is also unnecessary. If this government would only get together its waste and eliminate it, its mismanagement — if that would come to an end, we wouldn't have to have a provincial GST.

This will do nothing to preserve the Saskatchewan way of life. I say the only way to preserve the Saskatchewan way of life is to make the choice to axe the tax, and that will come with a New Democratic government who will open the books and will get rid of the tax and will end the waste and the patronage and the mismanagement that has characterized this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Point number two in the government's budget, its choices, its preserving of the Saskatchewan way of life:

2. More Effective and Efficient Government

Controls on internal spending will be tightened. Restrictions will continue to apply to purchases, travel and hiring. Further streamlining within government departments will continue.

Mr. Speaker, more effective and efficient government. Now who would believe this promise from this government, Mr. Speaker, when this very newspaper ad cost the public \$54,000 for this ad and the hundred and one other placements that are coming across Saskatchewan newspapers?

This is a question of priorities, Mr. Speaker. This government isn't only spending \$54,000 to put these ads in the newspaper. When they say internal spending will be tightened, restrictions will continue on purchasing, this government has also made the choice in connection with this very budget to produce an auxiliary budget document called *CHOICES: Preserving the Saskatchewan Way of Life*. The same sort of song sheet. If this is the song sheet, the newspaper article, this is the hymnal from which it was taken.

And it goes on for 57 pages, printed in blue ink at a cost of \$160,000 to justify this government's choices — \$160,000.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have here \$160,000 spent on the hymn-book and \$54,000 spent on the song sheet, which is politically motivated. It's political propaganda. And if they're serious, as they say, on the song sheet, item number two, about more effective and efficient

government, you'd think they'd eliminate this kind of spending and save taxpayers a quarter of a million dollars.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Speaker, we are talking about priorities. We are talking about choices. We're talking about preserving the Saskatchewan way of life. And in this budget document, in the *Estimates*, we'll see, the public will know that you can't find the government's historic commitment of \$200,000 to the Toxicology Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan because it's been eliminated. \$200,000, Mr. Speaker, that has been there for the better part of the last decade — hasn't been increased, but it's always been there — to their credit, Mr. Speaker. Last year there was a one-shot, \$100,000 heaping of the measure for the toxicology centre, to the government's credit. This year, it's all gone.

The government has made choices about cutting the Toxicology Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, and I say it's an outrageous choice. At a time when environmental concerns are all the more important, that we don't fund the ability of the scientific community here in Saskatchewan to do toxicological work, I think we're in trouble.

And, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't only extend to that. The quarter of a million dollars that was spent on promulgating information about this budget in producing the choices, hymn-book and song sheet, that money could have been used to fund the toxicology centre at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan).

Another way of looking at it, even if people aren't concerned about toxicology research, is to look at the cut that was made to the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation. There we saw, Mr. Speaker, again a funding cut of \$200,000 for overseas relief and development work to help people like the Kurdish refugees or those people who are starving in Africa. And, Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak for the churches of Saskatchewan. I know that they do not like this choice. Where there is a quarter of a million dollars that can go to government advertising, but when it comes to dealing with hungry people, with people in dire need, the choice isn't made.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan all right. They're making choices. But it's the wrong plan and they're making the wrong choices, and they have the wrong priorities for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Now I want to get back to the song sheet in the newspaper.

3. Reasonable Wage Guidelines.

Guidelines to restrict public sector wage increases to four per cent were announced in January 1991. These restrictions, for both government agencies and Crown corporations, will be further restricted to two per cent commencing in October 1991

through to 1993.

Nothing but cheap talk, Mr. Speaker. This point number three, reasonable wage guide-lines, is nothing but cheap talk. I say, worse than that, it's an insult to the people of Saskatchewan when this government can't get its own House in order and eliminate some of the bloated cabinet and legislative secretaries. There are no reasonable wage guide-lines being imposed there. There's no fat being cut there.

In Executive Council, Mr. Speaker, in the Premier's office, while 221 civil servants across government departments are cut, how many cuts take place in Executive Council in the Premier's office? Only one, only one.

And is it a high-paid political advisor making 70 or 80 or \$90,000 dollars a year in the Premier's office, Mr. Speaker? No, it's not one of those. That position was a clerical position and it was vacant at that. And this government has the audacity and the gall to put in their song sheet in the newspapers and talk about reasonable wage guide-lines. This is scandalous. This is the stuff that scandal is made of, Mr. Speaker.

So I say that this budget and its talk of reasonable wage guide-lines is utterly unreasonable. And need I mention, Mr. Speaker, the wage guide-lines that are in place for Mr. Graham Taylor or Mr. Bob Andrew or Mr. Chuck Childers? I don't even need to give the details of that; the Saskatchewan people know the facts of the matter so well.

(1130)

A plan all right, Mr. Speaker. This government has a plan all right, a six-point plan, and point number three is reasonable wage guide-lines on the backs of working people. But when it comes to continued waste and patronage and mismanagement at the very heart and centre of the government itself, there is no restraint at all.

4. Achievable Deficit Targets.

The provincial government will eliminate the deficit and present a balanced budget by 1993-94.

What an outrageous, preposterous claim. This is absolutely goofy, from the government that has bankrupt this province and buried us in debt.

The interest, Mr. Speaker, on this provincial debt is the third largest single expenditure of the Government of Saskatchewan. And every day, the people of Saskatchewan, with their tax dollars, will pay one and a half million dollars in interest charges alone on this provincial debt and they'll have nothing to show for it.

Another day older and deeper in debt — buried in debt, buried in debt, Mr. Speaker, by this government. And it isn't as if it hasn't had an opportunity to do something about it. This is now the PC (Progressive Conservative) government's 10th straight budget; it's also the 10th successive deficit budget. That's why we're buried in debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it isn't as if we haven't had promises before. I mean, this point number four in their song sheet in the newspaper sounds pretty good. The provincial government will eliminate the deficit and present a balanced budget by '93-94. It sounds pretty good, Mr. Speaker.

In the 1986 provincial budget, the Finance minister, the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden promised them to achieve a balanced budget within five years. Yes, it was coming, he said. And that deficit forecast for that year was out by 217 per cent — no closer to balancing the budget than for the man on the moon to come down and eat soup here in Regina.

And they're back again, Mr. Speaker, they're back again. The Minister of Finance is back again this year with a budget promise because it's an election year, and it's an outrageous, unbelievable, fraudulent election promise that they will balance the budget. These are the people that have brought us 10 consecutive deficit budgets, Mr. Speaker.

This is the Premier, Mr. Speaker, who said Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you can afford to mismanage it and still break even. And this is the guy with that kind of attitude who is going to balance the budget by '93-94. That is an out and out insult to the intelligence of the people of Saskatchewan, and no one believes that for a minute.

This deficit will never go away with this present crew in office. They've had their chance, Mr. Speaker.

Point number five, Mr. Speaker, in this newspaper ad, "Preserving the Saskatchewan Way of Life: CHOICES". Yes, this government is preserving the way of life.

5. Realistic Operating Grants

Over one-third of all government spending goes to school boards, hospitals, special-care homes and post-secondary education institutions.

In February, 1991 it was announced that grants to these partners would be increased by 3.5 per cent in 1991-92. Operating grants to these partners will be limited to a maximum of 3.0 per cent growth in 1992-93 and 1993-94.

And that's preserving the Saskatchewan way of life? Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is destroying the Saskatchewan way of life. What this government is doing . . . It talks about realistic operating grants to its partners — it uses the word "partners" — in health and education, to nursing homes and hospitals and schools and the like.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's freezing funding to these partners and it's shovelling money at it to its pals like Weyerhaeuser and Cargill. Shovelling buckets of money to their friends. Their partners in health lose 400 jobs because funding is cut. Their partners in education lose 300 jobs. But when it comes to Cargill, they can get \$360 million worth of government grants and loan guarantees, no questions asked. No freeze going into effect there.

And are we any better off, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Are we any better off for having given this money and guaranteed this money to Cargill? No, we're worse off, Mr. Speaker, because this budget song sheet in the newspaper itself talks about limiting grants to hospitals and nursing homes and schools.

And to talk about Weyerhaeuser, the sweetheart deal that took place there — \$248 million with no money down, 30 years to pay, eight and a half per cent interest rates, and the province has to build 25 miles of roads and bridges in the northern forest area given to Weyerhaeuser, for 25 years. That's immoral, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's positively immoral, that taxpayers have to pay for roads for Weyerhaeuser when they haven't received a penny back on that sale of assets worth \$248 million — the Big River saw mill, the Prince Albert pulp mill, the Saskatoon chemical company, and the better part of our northern forests. And we still have to build roads for Weyerhaeuser at public expense.

And then his point number five talks about realistic operating grants. What an insult. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say a word about the impact on these cuts, this limiting of funding, on a couple institutions in my constituency. Sherbrooke nursing home — one of the largest nursing homes in the province, certainly in Saskatoon — because of this freezing of government funding that's going to preserve the Saskatchewan way of life, we're led to believe or we're told, has already cut a quarter of a million dollars from their '91-92 budget.

And this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has meant staff lay-offs, non-replacement of staff who are on sick leave, vacation and other sorts of absent leave, along with reductions in their supply cost, chiselling away there. The sum total of it means there are 10 less full-time equivalent staff at Sherbrooke nursing home.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this song sheet, the government's own plan for the province announced with the budget is for realistic operating grants. The people at Sherbrooke nursing home know it's not realistic. They're penalizing the operation of the home.

And to talk about another institution in my constituency, the University of Saskatchewan, where the tuition fees are going to increase and 70 jobs are going to be let go of — how, I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that going to preserve the Saskatchewan way of life? How can that possibly preserve the Saskatchewan way of life?

And just last weekend I was on the university campus and was told — this is just one example — of an 18-year veteran of the feed testing operation there in the University of Saskatchewan with his Ph.D. who is being let go; 18 years with a Ph.D. at the University of Saskatchewan doing feed testing and he's being let go.

I ask you how does that preserve the Saskatchewan way of life? How does that help agriculture in this province?

And talking about agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also have, at the University of Saskatchewan, an agricultural building, a monumental building that is sitting empty now because there's no money to operate it

— money that was promised, \$2 million that was promised, in a letter by the Premier, to the university administration but now will not be delivered because there are no realistic operating grants for Saskatchewan institution. There's chiseling on the part of the government and on the part of the Premier. There are broken promises, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the sixth and final point of this government's budget talks about:

6. Improved Federal-Provincial Relations:

Financial arrangements between the federal and provincial governments will be renewed to ensure the federal government maintains its commitment to health, education and agriculture.

Brave talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, brave, brave talk, about improved federal-provincial relations, improving the Saskatchewan ways of life. This is the biggest insult of all, that the Mulroney government is allowed to off-load its funding onto the backs of Saskatchewan taxpayer. And the Premier of this PC government provides only excuses, postures, and apologizes for everything from free trade to the GST and federal off-loading and can even send his deputy premier, Eric Berntson, to patronage heaven in the Senate in Ottawa, while he still, incidentally, is chairperson of the PC re-election committee here in Saskatchewan, at the same time that he's been sent to Ottawa to see that they ram through the GST in the Senate.

And the federal commitments to health and education and agriculture in the form of established program funding and transfer of money from the federal government — that's dropping like flies. There are cuts as a result in health — to the Saskatchewan hearing aid plan — in this budget. There are cuts to the SAIL plan, Saskatchewan aids to independent living, in this budget. There are cuts for health research, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In this budget there are increases in costs for prescription drugs. Ten million dollars will be taken out of Saskatchewan taxpayers' pockets this year as the provincial government off-loads, gets in on the action and off-loads the cost of the prescription drug program on Saskatchewan families.

Hospitals are closing beds in Yorkton and Moose Jaw and Regina and Saskatoon. Almost 300 beds, 400 staff laid off.

And in education the educational development fund is cut by 50 per cent, seven and a quarter million dollars less. Student aid is cut by \$5.2 million and there's a lame attempt to justify it by the Minister of Education who comes from Saskatoon and knows the facts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Chronic underfunding, chronic underfunding for primary education and secondary education and post-secondary education; and local school boards having to close schools and cut staff and programs. There's not a person in Saskatchewan who doesn't know that that's taking place because it's taking

place across the province, Mr. Minister of Education.

And the provincial government is pulling back from funding. It's learning its lessons from the federal government and there's going to be increased co-operation and improved federal-provincial relations. Well sure there is. They're going to both get together on the act of off-loading onto the backs of local municipalities and local taxpayers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1145)

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it doesn't stop with health and education either. This kind of improved little cosiness with the federal and the provincial government, the improved relationship, we know what that amounts to when it comes to agriculture, when it comes to GRIP and NISA.

We know that the people of Quebec will pay \$18 per capita for GRIP and NISA; the people of Ontario will pay \$30 per capita for GRIP and NISA; and because of this cosy little relationship between the federal government and the provincial government and the improved relationships with Mr. Devine and Mr. Mulroney, what we will have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is Saskatchewan taxpayers paying \$164 per capita to fund GRIP and NISA.

Why? Because the Premier can't negotiate a deal. They couldn't negotiate their way out of a wet paper bag. And he allows the federal government to off-load the cost of agricultural funding onto the backs of Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Put another way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it amounts to this when it comes to agriculture: when it comes to GRIP and NISA, as over against the payments that are being made for agricultural support programs this past year, and what the payments will amount to this year for all the various partners, GRIP and NISA represents about a 3 per cent increase for the federal government; about a 35 per cent increase in costs to farmers who participate; and about a 365 per cent increase for the Government of Saskatchewan which is government taxpayers.

And that's the result of this sixth and final point in the PC plan about improved federal-provincial relationships. This is a real bad PC plan, as the member from Regina Victoria has said.

I just want to close by saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, close by saying . . . echoing the words of one of my constituents that I talked to last Saturday, again on O'Neil Crescent in Saskatoon. And he says, these guys, he says — talking about the PC government — he says these guys think they're little gods. They do anything they want and they don't listen. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why this government isn't going to be around very long.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — On this ninth anniversary they think they're immortal. They think they're omnipotent. They think they can last for ever. But they can't, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, because they act like little gods and they don't listen. And I say the time has come for Saskatchewan to have a government that's as good as Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And that time will come in a few months when an election is called and the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale, is elected premier of this province and begins to rebuild this province with a real plan that preserves the way of life here in Saskatchewan instead of attacking it and destroying it. And that's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I won't support this budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muller: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Right at the start I'd like to tell how pleased I am to have this opportunity to stand in my place today and speak on behalf of the people of Shellbrook-Torch River constituency. I really enjoy representing them in this legislature and I look forward to representing them for a long time.

Mr. Speaker, as you and my colleagues here already know, I always enjoy adding my voice to a good debate in the House. Well today is no different. In fact, as I consider the budget that we are debating and as I think back to some of the comments we have already heard from the members opposite, I think this is one debate I've looked forward to more than usual.

Why would I be in such a hurry to get up and talk about the budget? Well for one thing, it's a good budget. It's a tough budget but a good budget.

And I think the government and my colleague, the Minister of Finance, both deserve a pat on the back for the tough choices and good decisions that they've made with this budget. They deserve congratulations for setting out a plan for all of Saskatchewan to see, a plan that is geared towards stabilizing our communities through things like community bonds and Fair Share Saskatchewan.

Fair Share Saskatchewan. You know, I have to stop there for a minute and go over some information that was given to me the other day. I don't know how to talk about the first person on the top of my list here. He used to represent the constituency of Humboldt; he now represents the constituency of Regina North East. I guess he centralized himself into Regina.

But this is what he said about decentralization when he was the minister of the Crown. It's *Hansard*, February 6, 1973, page 415. He's moved himself into the city now and:

It is interesting to note that of 580 formal complaints (to Consumer and Commercial Affairs) 405 of them originated from southern Saskatchewan; 252 from Regina and immediate area. This indicates the need for decentralization of Government services.

And that comes from the now member for Regina North East who used to be the member for Humboldt that got scared to represent or try to represent an agricultural seat and tried to build a wall around himself in the city of Regina in a safe seat. And I understand there's a member sitting very close to him that has done the same thing; he's just vacated himself from the rural area and moved into Regina Elphinstone . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member from Prince Albert says that my opposition is out there campaigning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muller: — Well the more he's out there, the better chance I've got. So . . .

An Hon. Member: — What did he say about agriculture?

Mr. Muller: — Anyway, he said the same about agriculture as the Leader of the Opposition.

But anyway, and here's another quote from *Hansard*; here's another quote from *Hansard* about decentralization. It comes from a Mr. Vickar — I don't know, does anybody in here remember Mr. Vickar?

But anyway, the opposition's opposed to decentralization. But Mr. Vickar, in November 17, 1975, page 42 of *Hansard*, says:

It is hoped that the government will promote to a greater extent the decentralization of government services. Indications of this are already apparent in some parts of the province, and I am hoping that efforts will further be made to provide further services more closely to the people in the constituencies.

And that's the end of the quote. But I'm sure Mr. Vickar meant that they were going to buy as much farm land as they could and then they'd be seen as being government in the rural areas.

An Hon. Member: — What's the point you're making?

Mr. Muller: — The point I'm making is: these people are opposed over here to decentralization. And here . . . and they never did it. They said they were going to do it, they said they were going to do it; they never did it. And now when we are going to decentralize and have done it, we have done it. We put the Water Corporation into Moose Jaw, ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) into Swift Current, Crop Insurance into Melville, the Pension Plan into Kindersley. We are doing it. Those people said they would, and they never did. But that's nothing new for them.

An Hon. Member: — But what's the point, Lloyd?

Mr. Muller: — The point is we're moving government closer to the people. You people want to centralize it all in Regina, and that's the point.

Another member, a Mr. Banda, I don't remember where he came from . . .

An Hon. Member: — He came from Redberry.

Mr. Muller: — Oh, was he from Redberry? Well it's had a lot better representation since the 1982 election anyway than it ever had before.

I'm certain that all members in this House will agree that rural Saskatchewan of today is a vastly different place than rural Saskatchewan of a few short years ago.

This can be attributed to several factors. Certainly world agricultural prices are high and we have benefits from this. I should briefly like to deal with some of these programs implemented by the NDP government: SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) small-business loans, SaskTel expansion, or decentralized government services, decentralized government services, bringing government and government programs in contact with those they serve.

So that's just a few of the things that . . . there's many more here that I could quote from. They say one thing and they do the opposite. They talk about decentralization; they never did any of it. They see how popular it is in the Moose Jaws, Swift Currents, Melvilles, Kindersleys, and Kamsack, I understand, and it certainly will be in Shellbrook.

I don't know. Here's maybe one more I should use. It comes from a Mr. Snyder. What did he ever get in Moose Jaw? Did he ever get anything in Moose Jaw, or was it him . . . Did he put the Water Corporation in Moose Jaw or was that . . . I think probably that was after Mr. Snyder was gone. And you will know I believe of the commitment of this government to decentralize . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order please. Order on both sides of the House. Allow the member from Shellbrook-Torch River to continue with his remarks.

Mr. Muller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Snyder says:

You will know I believe, of the commitment of this Government to decentralize a number of the agencies of government . . . that it has been a commitment of this Government to look for ways and means to decentralize the operations of this Government.

I don't remember him ever putting the Water Corporation in Moose Jaw. But I'm sure he comes out now and speaks in favour of it because he was in favour of it when he was in government. And anyway that's a few of the quotes from some of the members, former members and some members that are here today, some of the members that have centralized themselves into Regina.

The other reason I feel so strongly about speaking in this budget debate, Mr. Speaker, is quite simply because I just can't sit here any longer and listen to the utter nonsense coming from the members opposite in response to the budget — utter nonsense, Mr. Speaker, rhetoric, partisan posturing, and grandstanding that doesn't do an ounce of good for the people of the province, behaviour that they should be ashamed of. But the thing is, Mr. Speaker, it's very, very easy to be in opposition.

Think about it. Think about it. They don't have to come up with any solutions. They can just criticize and say, oh we would have done it better. They would have done it better, but — going back to the decentralization — they said they were going to do it, and the way they did it better was not to do it. So I mean they aren't even committed to their own promises.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they couldn't have done it better. Just look at their record during the '70s. Those were prosperous, good times for the Saskatchewan economy. And those folks over there were running around bragging about breaking even. They bragged about breaking even in good times. Obviously they had never heard of saving for tough times.

The member from Saskatoon Nutana says it's not a very good speech because she probably doesn't like the facts that are in it. I've never accused her of dealing in fact. And if you want a textbook case of how to be wasteful and mismanage an economy, well just look at the history books under the NDP in the 1970s administration.

We had high prices for our grain and decent growing conditions. We had historically high prices for potash, uranium, and you name it. Everything we sold was going for top dollar, Mr. Speaker. Through the 1970s, when the NDP were in government, there were buckets of money flowing into provincial coffers. Where did it all go? Well they blew it, literally. They bought and spent and wasted and made government fat. They didn't save a dime for the tough times that were to come. They didn't plan for the future then, and they refuse to plan for the future now.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's a lot easier to be in that position than it is to plot a course, build a province, and make a plan for the future. But they wouldn't know anything about a plan, Mr. Speaker, not a chance of that. Instead of forming a plan, those guys have spent all their time flip-flopping on any issue that comes their way.

I want to talk a little bit about flip-flopping. And I'd like to talk a little bit . . . I'd like to make some comments out of *Hansard* . . . the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale, in his answer to the budget speech. On Monday last the member from Weyburn, our Minister of Finance, delivered his budget speech and the Leader of the Opposition of course gets the opportunity to comment and to adjourn debate. So this is his agricultural policy.

An Hon. Member: — I thought we had no agricultural policy.

(1200)

Mr. Muller: — Well this is his agricultural policy:

First we suggest a short-term moratorium on farm foreclosures to keep farm families on the land during this time of crisis. Second, because we acknowledge that a moratorium, short term or otherwise, won't solve anything . . .

I mean he flip-flopped in the same paragraph He

flip-flopped in the same paragraph . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, he doesn't understand agriculture. He knows moratoriums won't work but he's going to put them in anyway.

The other thing he flip-flopped on, and he's been after us as government for years now to come in with some long-term programs for agriculture. We need a long-term program. I've seen him stand in his seat and say, give us a long-term program for agriculture so they can plan for the future. Let them plan for the future.

Now here's what he says in his return to the budget speech.

An Hon. Member: — Who says?

Mr. Muller: — This is on page 2722, the member from Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition, this is what he says in return to the budget speech:

producers . . . favour an *ad hoc* Special Canada Grains Program type . . . because it is sensitive to productivity, directly puts cash in the hands of producers, and does not require long-term commitment.

I mean, he's talked to us for years about getting a long-term program in place. We come up with NISA and GRIP, working together with all the provinces of Canada and the federal government. And certainly there's some short-term money involved with NISA and it'll be coming this summer . . .

An Hon. Member: — The summer now. Now it's this summer . . .

Mr. Muller: — Well it's just . . . well spring and summer. The man from Regina Elphinstone is afraid to represent an agricultural seat . . . centralized himself into Saskatchewan, or into Regina, now knows all about agriculture I mean, he couldn't stand again to run again in an agricultural seat so he moved in and he fenced himself in in a safe seat in Regina where the former premier of this province lived and worked for years. Never did anything for the seat of Elphinstone and nor has the member that's over there now, I'm sure. He'll look after himself in fencing himself in that comfortable seat. And he's supposedly an agricultural-background person, but he moved into the city because he can't survive in a rural area. They talk about the rural/urban split, that's what causes it.

Anyway, in time I'll get into more detail and fully I intend to go into great detail, but now I'll say this, and I will direct this to the member from Riversdale because he appears to be a leader of a pack over there.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve better than what you've been throwing out during this budget debate. The people of Saskatchewan deserve something better. They also deserve at least one original idea from a man who learned the fine art of foreclosure at law school.

You would like to think, Mr. Speaker, that after some 25 years of political life, the Leader of the Opposition would

have some ideas that at least people could shape . . . at least took shape in the '90s, rather than using old policies from the '60s and '70s. And that's what he is, he's a man of the '60s and '70s. He wants to go back to the future.

Well those policies didn't work then and they certainly won't work now. Moratoriums didn't work then and he even admits they won't work now but he's going to use them anyway. I mean that's the only ideas he's got is the ones that won't work.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we are all trying to be more and more environmentally friendly. But somebody should let those people in on something.

And again I want to give you these helpful hints to members opposite. You can recycle paper, you can recycle aluminum cans, and you can recycle plastic. But please, do us all a favour and stop recycling your ideas from the '60s and '70s because they certainly don't work.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have been grandstanding and playing politics for so long, they're missing something very important. The people of this province are tired of your rhetoric. They're tired of the fact that you complain and complain and never offer a solution that holds any water — no solutions at all. No plans, no solutions, no ideas, just rhetoric.

They are tired of the fact that you have no plan for this province, at least no plan that you are willing to reveal to the public. You won't put it up for public scrutiny, that's for sure. If they have a plan, it's a back-room plan that they're scared of themselves, unless it's a moratorium that they're not in favour of.

They're tired of the opposition leader with absolutely no ideas and no vision for Saskatchewan. Mind you, what can you expect from a guy who can't decide what he really thinks about anything.

I say to the members opposite, they are tired of your old ideas, your old ties to the unions. Quite simply, they're tired of you.

Mr. Speaker, you've got to come up with something better than we'll do what the Tories do, only we'll do it better. That's the only line they've got. We'll do what the Tories do but we'll do it better. Well they proved that with the decentralization. They were going to do it but it took us to do it better; at least we went out and done it. They talked about it and never did it. The people on this side of the House don't buy that. The people of this province don't believe it either.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Finance critic and Energy critic and all those people over there that are going to solve all the province's economic problems by milking the oil and gas industry for all its worth — you all have to do a lot better than that.

You know, when I hear the lame-duck excuses the members opposite try to pass off as real solutions, something very interesting comes to mind. For some reason I picture the Leader of the Opposition as the leader of a buffalo jump. And we all know what happened to that

kind of a herd.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend some time today talking directly about the budget, the efforts of this government, and how those efforts have affected the constituency of Shellbrook-Torch River. Early I talked about the plan that our government has for the province of Saskatchewan. Some of that plan was put forward in the budget in this session but the plan itself has been in motion since 1982.

Right from the beginning we were for growth and development and for strengthening the traditional base of our economy — agriculture. We were for building our communities and for encouraging people to pull together and make things happen in their towns.

I know in my own constituency I have seen the positive change that has taken place since 1982. I've seen 38 small businesses in my constituency benefit from SEDCO assistance, 38 small businesses, Mr. Speaker. I have seen homes and farms get the benefit and convenience of natural gas and private line service. I've seen farmers, friends and neighbours of mine, helped through some of the most difficult years agriculture has faced in Saskatchewan. I've seen nursing home beds built, schools renovated, and people able to keep their homes in a high interest-rate environment because of the things the government has done.

The Leader of the Opposition, again on Monday night, talked about high dollar, high interest rates, and what that was doing to our economy. He stood in his place and talked about the problems of high interest rates, but he certainly didn't remember the high interest rates that we faced in the late '70s and early '80s when he was deputy premier of this province on this side of the House, and he would not look at any relief for agriculture, home owners, or business people, or anybody in this province. He supported the federal government in their high interest-rate policies, and he ignored everybody in Saskatchewan.

And now he comes back and said we have to have lower interest rates. We have far lower interest rates today than we ever had in 1979, '80, '81. In 1982 when house mortgages were 21 and 22 per cent, we guaranteed interest rates at thirteen and a quarter per cent for house mortgages, the same as it is today. And he's saying it's too high, and he wouldn't bring them down that low in 1982.

He ignored home owners in 1982, totally ignored them. And thirteen and a quarter per cent looked pretty good to people in Saskatchewan in 1982 for home mortgages. And these people now talk about high interest rates, and they wouldn't even try and help the home owner in Saskatchewan or a farmer or a small-business man bring down their interest rates.

And I think that's deplorable, Mr. Speaker, that these people now have flip-flopped again just because they can promise anything they like from opposition, but they know they'll never have to live up to it because they're never going to be sitting over here to be able to deliver anything. Because they will not deliver, they haven't delivered, and they won't deliver.

And most recently, Mr. Speaker, I've seen communities all across my constituency working together to attract a government agency to the Shellbrook-Torch River area. Well maybe we should revive some of these old members that were here and wanted to decentralize Saskatchewan when they were in government. Could we recycle Mr. Snyder or Mr. Banda? I don't think so.

An Hon. Member: — How about Mr. Vickar?

Mr. Muller: — Maybe Mr. Vickar, yes, we could maybe recycle . . .

Anyway, I don't think Mr. Blakeney had much to say about . . . Quote of the week, quote of the week:

The bald truth is that many New Democrats are somewhat uncomfortable about the serious decentralization for fear that local people will not make the appropriate left-wing decision.

So anyway, we knew where he was coming from, Mr. Speaker. He always has come from there, and I don't know where he's at now but . . .

Over 50 organizations in that constituency are working together to make something happen in their towns and villages. It's really been exciting to be out in the country and watch these people getting themselves together, working together, not working opposed to each other, and trying to attract something to the area, not necessarily directly into their town but bring something into the area so that they have some input in government.

And that's all the plan that the PC government has had for Saskatchewan since day one. They want to involve people, keep them interested in what we're doing and let them have their input into what we're doing.

There's no denying that this province has faced real tough economic times over the last 10 years. They have suffered through low prices for our grain, low prices for our oil, low prices for our potash and uranium, and practically every resource in Saskatchewan fell.

And if that wasn't enough, we were faced with droughts and high interest rates to boot. There was quite a lot of relief came from the provincial government. There was quite a lot of interest rate relief came from this government, none from those other guys when they were in government. I think people have to be reminded of that. They let the interest rate rise way over 20 per cent and ignored the people of Saskatchewan.

There's no denying, Mr. Speaker, that fate had dealt Saskatchewan a tough economic hand. But what is important and what the opposition over there is ashamed to say is that through the droughts and high interest rates and low prices the PC government continued to protect our way of life and build for our future.

We protected farmers. And certainly they forgot them; we protected. They said they were going to buy their land. We supported them in allowing them to keep it. This government pumped more money into agriculture than

any government before us. And in addition to that, we've got billions out of the federal government for agriculture. We got billions out of the federal government for agriculture.

And certainly the Leader of the Opposition has never got a nickel out of the federal government for anything. They gave a lot away I think in the western energy agreement and a few other things and certainly in the Constitution, but him and the now Liberal leader in Ottawa cooked up a few deals in the kitchen I think one night. But they did it behind closed doors in the kitchen rather than involving people and asking them what they wanted as we did with Consensus Saskatchewan.

(1215)

We protected them. When interest rates were putting so much pressure on our home owners, we were there to help. We did help. We brought the mortgage rates down to thirteen and a quarter in 1982. They were over 21 per cent. You people ignored them.

We encouraged development in the oil patch, and now for the first time Saskatchewan exports our natural gas instead of buying it from Alberta like the NDP did. And now because of that, over a thousand people work in the oil patch compared to a couple hundred under the NDP.

We put our resources and our people to work, and as a result manufacturing investment in Saskatchewan has grown by nearly 700 per cent in the past nine years. In difficult times, manufacturing has grown 700 per cent — tremendous unprecedented growth, Mr. Speaker, growth that is building and diversifying our economic base today so that our kids can live and work and make a life in Saskatchewan tomorrow.

Now I know I have covered a lot of ground in my comments today, Mr. Speaker, but to sum up my thoughts, I'd like to say this: the government that you see before you, Mr. Speaker, has always been dedicated to the future of this province. From the beginning we have fought to protect our people and build our economy. We have achieved growth and development in an era of real hardship. In short, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan.

What is the NDP plan, Mr. Speaker? Moratoriums that don't work, that's the only plan the Leader of the Opposition came up with the other night in answer to the budget speech . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Your guess is as good as mine. As far as I can tell, they don't even have a plan. That's the question I get asked most when I'm out in my seat. What are the other guys going to do? Well I don't know. The member that's running against me doesn't even know what they're going to do. But I'll give him this, he's honest. He at least says he doesn't know what they're going to do, but give me a chance at it.

He's got a leader that doesn't understand agriculture. He doesn't know what they're going to do, the leader doesn't know what they're going to do. And the member from Saskatoon Sutherland spoke just ahead of me, I thought maybe he just got the new Agriculture critic position. He was talking about GRIP and NISA. He probably is more up to date on it than some of the critics they have now, but

anyway . . . And as I said before, Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan people deserve a lot better than that. They deserve a lot more than somebody that doesn't know what they're going to do.

We have a plan and we're going to put our plan to work. And we have our plan out there in front of the people. These people opposite don't have a plan. They don't have a plan. The member from P.A. said, we don't know what . . . nobody knows what our plan is. We got NISA and GRIP, we've got beef stabilization, we've got loans out on beef cattle, interest-free loans. We've done more for agriculture. We've helped people with interest rates. And anyway, Mr. Speaker, I won't be voting for the amendment, but I certainly will be supporting the main motion for the member from Weyburn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this budget debate. I have waited somewhat patiently for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. As a student of parliamentary history, I'm sure you are aware that this government has set yet another parliamentary precedent. Here we are at the end of April debating a budget that was introduced in February. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have waited a long time for this debate. We are debating a budget that was introduced in February by press release. And when we have the opportunity, the member from Wilkie and others don't seem to want to particularly debate the budget at hand, they want to debate everything else under the sun, but not the issues that are in front of us through this budget.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Shellbrook-Torch River that just occupied the floor said that as he's home he hears one question. That's peculiar, Mr. Speaker, because I happened to be in his neighbourhood not so long ago. I happened to be in the neighbourhood of the member from Wilkie not so long ago and in the neighbourhood of the member from Melville. And the question, Mr. Speaker, that I hear asked all over the province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The minister from Assiniboia wants to know what they're asking down there because he's so rarely there.

I'll tell him, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell him, Mr. Speaker, what they're asking in Assiniboia and Coronach, Rockglen, and Gravelbourg is this question. They're asking: where in the world has all the money gone? Where has all the money gone? Since this budget has made its official appearance here in the legislature, the question is everywhere. People are asking: where has all the money gone? And it's a logical question, Mr. Speaker. Is it any wonder people are asking that question?

People understand that this government has sold off the assets of our province. They know that. That's not a mystery. They advertise it as good economic planning. They've sold off the assets of our province. People know that. People understand. My colleague from Rosemont asked who have they sold it to. Well I recall Saskatchewan Minerals wholly owned by the people of Saskatchewan, sold lock, stock and barrel to Toronto and Montreal in a secret deal — one example, Mr. Speaker.

People know that they've sold off the assets. They know, Mr. Speaker, that our tax rates have gone up and up and up. And they know as well, and it's confirmed by this budget, that this government has heaped a mountain of debt on the people of Saskatchewan. It's a logical question, Mr. Speaker: where has the money gone? The assets are sold, the taxes are up and the debt continues to rise. So is it any wonder people ask: where has the money gone?

Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough, the Premier of our province may have given us a clue to the answer to this question, where has the money gone. Not so long ago, when he spoke at what will be his last Premier's banquet, I'm told by someone who was in attendance at the banquet, I'm told that the Premier said — and some members opposite I'm sure were there and they will likely confirm this — I'm told that the Premier said at his banquet: we've made a few mistakes; we've made a few mistakes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he didn't elaborate at the banquet about those mistakes, but it may well be that in that short comment there may be a clue indeed, to where all the money has gone. I'd like to speculate a little about what the Premier may have been referring to when he said, we've made a few little mistakes.

Now I listened carefully. I was listening last night as the member from Wilkie entered the debate. And he gave a section of his speech to the P-words; he was talking about P-words. He was talking about P-words. Well interestingly he talked about prosperity. He talked about progress and he talked about profit.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, there was one word that he didn't inject into his P-section of the speech. He did not use, I noticed he did not use the word, privatization. He didn't say privatization and, Mr. Speaker, I've not heard the Premier of this province use that word in recent weeks.

What has happened to the major economic game plan of this government? It has simply been erased from the vocabulary of members and the vocabulary of the Premier. Now that may be as a clue, Mr. Speaker. I think now what the Premier is saying, we made a little mistake. We sold off your potash and we sold off your oil and we sold off your coal and we sold off your timber. We sold off your sodium sulphate — just a little mistake. Whoops, just a little mistake. And now Saskatchewan people . . . we expect Saskatchewan people will forget. We should forget the mistake.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder, when the Premier says we've made a few mistakes, if he's talking about what he's done to the Highways workers in this province. Remember that? Remember when that Mr. Jim Garner said he was freeing these workers up to go to the private sector, an opportunity to go to the private sector? They'd sold off our Highways equipment for a song; they fired the Highways workers — many of whom could not find other work and hence have gone off to Alberta where they get now contracted to come back and build roads in Saskatchewan. Our roads have gone to pot. And I think

now the Premier's saying, well we made just a little mistake in firing all the Highways workers. Yes, just a little mistake.

And what's the response in this budget? Well, more firings in the Highways department. The road construction association of Saskatchewan predicts the cuts will mean 2,800 fewer people working in road building and maintenance this summer. The Premier says, well, little mistake. And we're supposed to forget about those little mistakes.

When the Premier says we've made a few little mistakes, perhaps he's referring to some of the campaign promises that he made. Perhaps now he knows they were mistakes. Remember the promises that were made to the people of Saskatchewan? I remember this Premier saying there will never be a gas tax in Saskatchewan so long as I'm Premier of Saskatchewan. He's still the Premier and we've got a gas tax, twice as much as we were paying in 1982. I guess maybe that commitment was a little mistake.

Maybe it was a little mistake when he said, I'm going to eliminate — eliminate — the sales tax.

An Hon. Member: — Did he?

Mr. Calvert: — Well he eliminated the 5 per cent sales tax and changed it to 7 per cent. And this February he sends his Minister of Finance out into the press and announces — what? — the provincial goods and services tax, the largest tax increase in Saskatchewan's history. Now that's from a promise made some time ago that we're going to eliminate the sales tax. I think he thinks that commitment was a bit of a mistake.

He said he was going to cut our income tax. He said he was going to cut the income tax on Saskatchewan people. That was his promise. That was his promise — we're going to cut the income tax. And the member from Regina — what's his . . . Wascana?

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Calvert: — The member from Regina Wascana seems to agree. The Premier said he's going to cut our income tax. He's going to cut our income tax. And what's happened to our income tax? Well ask any tax-paying citizen in the province, ask any tax-paying citizen in the province. We have something now called a flat tax, unique to Saskatchewan. Came in at a half a per cent and then one and then one and a half, and now it's two. Another Saskatchewan first. He said his commitment was to cut our income tax. I think he thinks that commitment maybe was a little mistake.

I'm still waiting, Mr. Speaker, frankly I'm still waiting for the free phones for seniors. The free phones for seniors. My mother is still waiting for her free phone. Mr. Speaker, I think maybe the Premier is now saying, well that campaign commitment was a little mistake.

Mr. Speaker, I could talk about more recent commitments. Remember the commitment made just a few months ago. A factory in every town — another promise, another commitment — a factory in every town.

I heard him say it, I heard him say it. There's the Minister for Economic Diversification, he hasn't quite produced a factory in every town just yet.

I think when the Premier stood up at his banquet this year and said we've made a few little mistakes, he meant I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have said a factory in every town. Mr. Speaker, maybe when the Premier says we've made a few mistakes, maybe what the Premier meant is the budget of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. It's Friday morning, it's 12:30, as a matter of fact. It's early afternoon. Hon. members are a bit agitated, probably want to go home. One thing leads to another, and I am hearing some unparliamentary language at this point, and I'm going to ask hon. members to stop using that. Stop using that. It is not the kind of language we want in the chambers.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Premier says we've made some little mistakes, perhaps he's . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to apologize, but I was pointing out that members in this Assembly should not lie.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. The rules state clearly that hon. members are not to accuse other members of lying. That's a clear rule. Now the hon. member from Melville has just broken that rule. I'm going to ask him to rise and apologize.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I didn't intend to call anyone a liar.

The Speaker: — Order. I'm just going to ask the hon. member to rise and apologize without any qualifications. Just an apology, straight apology.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I give you a straight apology.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1230)

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps when the Premier, at his banquet this year, said we've made a few little mistakes, perhaps he was referring to the last pre-election budget speech and budget presentation. Perhaps that's what he was referring to when he said we've made a little mistake because — you recall in that pre-election budget — a commitment was made, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to balance the budget of the province of Saskatchewan by 1991. That's what they said.

And that has turned out to be a little mistake. And, Mr. Speaker, you recall in that pre-election budget before the 1986 election, the then minister of Finance, on behalf of the Premier, stood in the House and said, well the deficit this year is in the neighbourhood of \$389 million — \$389

million. He told us that would be the deficit in 1986. And when the election was over and a few months had passed, what was the true deficit that year? A little mistake, \$1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, an \$800 million mistake. Now the Premier would have us just sort of forget those kind of little mistakes and carry on.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on. I could talk about . . . perhaps now they view the cut of the food subsidy to northern Saskatchewan as a mistake. Perhaps they understand that the slashing of the prescription drug plan was a mistake. Perhaps now the Premier will admit that the elimination of the school-based children's dental plan was a mistake. Perhaps they will now admit that the appointment of two former cabinet ministers to plush trade offices was a mistake. Perhaps now the Premier would admit that his undying support for Brian Mulroney and the federal Conservatives and free trade and the GST, perhaps now he would admit that's a mistake.

Or perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he will admit that it's a mistake to force Saskatchewan farm families to get into GRIP and NISA long before the verdict on these programs is in, long before they have the kind of information they need. Perhaps he'd admit that's a little mistake.

Perhaps he'd say it was a mistake that Ontario and Quebec negotiated a far better deal for their taxpayers in terms of federal support for these long-term programs than did the Premier of Saskatchewan. Perhaps he'd say that's a mistake. Perhaps he'd say it's just a little mistake that 80,000 people have left our province in the last few years. Perhaps now he'll admit it's a mistake that we're spending, this government is spending \$2 million a month on government advertising. Perhaps he'd admit it's a mistake that every member of the government benches, with the exception of one, is either a cabinet minister or an associate minister, a chair of committees, or a Legislative Secretary, earning extra money, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps he would now admit that's a mistake and perhaps he would admit that it's a mistake to be cutting beds from our hospitals and cutting teachers from our schools and cutting employment for Saskatchewan young people.

Mr. Speaker, the budget which is before us today is a direct result of nine years of Tory mismanagement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, the only mistake that the people of Saskatchewan have made is the mistake we made when we believed them and entrusted them with the treasury of the province. That is the mistake.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few moments highlighting some of the figures from the budget under debate. Mr. Speaker, if you turn to page 25 of the *Budget Address* delivered by the Minister of Finance in this House, there is the statement of total debt on the province, and beside the Government of Saskatchewan, the total debt in this document reads \$4.889 billion — 4.9, almost \$5 billion debt on the Government of Saskatchewan.

I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that when these people came to office in 1982, this column did not exist in the budget except to show a surplus of \$139 million. When Mr. Andrew introduced his financial statement as minister of Finance at that time, he showed in his statement a surplus of \$139 million. That today, Mr. Speaker, reads in the minister's address \$4.9, \$5 billion in debt. Every dollar of that debt heaped on the people of Saskatchewan by this government since they came to office, Mr. Speaker.

What does that mean? Now, Mr. Speaker, I must put a caveat on what I've just said, because the auditor says this is not entirely accurate. There should at least be another \$500 million in debt here — \$555 million if you review the last audited statement provided by this government, March of last year. The auditor's comment at the front of that statement indicates that the statement is out by \$554 million. So add that to this figure.

And we do recall the pre-election budget of 1986. We know that one was out by \$800 million and so we take these figures for what they're worth. But even at that, Mr. Speaker, the minister indicates we're \$5 billion in debt as a province.

And what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? What does it mean? Well if you turn to page 55 of the *Estimates* document, this is the page in the estimates — again a page that did not exist when these people came to office — the page that describes what it costs the people of Saskatchewan to service this massive debt. On this page you will read, Mr. Speaker, total expenditures to finance the public debt. And this I remind you is simply to pay the interest charges on this debt. In this year we will spend \$499,729,100 — \$500 million interest payments on this debt.

Do you understand, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House, do you understand what this means? It means that the taxpaying citizens of Saskatchewan pay their taxes to pay off these interest payments to the bankers in New York, the bankers in Tokyo, the bankers of Geneva. We're paying this money into interest payments that exit our economy into the hands of the bankers and the bond dealers.

Mr. Speaker, I am troubled that if not already, we very soon, I think, will be beholden to these financial institutions. If something isn't done about this pattern of deficit financing and debt, we will be beholden to those bankers and bond dealers of New York. The first claim on the tax dollar in Saskatchewan now is to the bank because we are mortgaged to the hilt. We are on the verge, Mr. Speaker, of bankruptcy in this province.

What does this mean? What does a \$500 million a year interest payment mean? It means we have \$500 million less to provide services for people. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, what we could do if we had this \$500 million, if these people hadn't amassed this \$5 billion deficit.

There wouldn't be quotas at the universities. There wouldn't be cut-backs in hospital beds. We could find meaningful ways to deal with the real poverty that exists in this province. We could find meaningful ways and long-term ways to support suffering farm families and the

farm families who are in need. We could have an economy that's moving.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have this \$500 million because these people gave us a \$5 billion debt and that \$500 million now leaves the province, leaves the province to the bankers and the bond dealers.

And so I say to you, Mr. Speaker, what does this debt mean? It means that the very first responsibility of a new government must be to restore fiscal integrity to the Government of Saskatchewan. It means, Mr. Speaker, that we need a government in this province that will cut the frills and pay the bills.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, it means we need a government in this province that views the treasury as a trust and not as a trough, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — And it means, Mr. Speaker, we need a government that will go to Ottawa and stand up for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — And it means, Mr. Speaker, we need a government in Saskatchewan who can get this economy working again as the best tool to fight the deficit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I do want to say a word about the impact of this budget on the city of Moose Jaw, the city that I and the member from Moose Jaw North are proud to represent.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, delivered to us in February, of course you recall, this budget means we are losing beds in our hospitals when they are desperately needed in our community. We are losing jobs from our hospitals when those people are desperately needed to provide care. It's a double tragedy, Mr. Speaker. Not only is there the need, we have the people who have given their life's vocation to the care of others who are being put out of work in our city.

We are seeing cuts to our schools in Moose Jaw. We've seen cuts to STI (Saskatchewan Technical Institute) in Moose Jaw, to the SIAST campus. It means that our city council will have little option, because of the cut-backs from the province, to increase property taxes or to drastically cut services.

The lack, the complete lack of any employment strategy in this budget means that even more of our Moose Jaw young people are going to have to leave this province, Mr. Speaker. And this budget means that seniors in my constituency, seniors in the city of Moose Jaw are paying more today for their prescription drug plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that the seniors of Moose Jaw South and the seniors of Moose Jaw North were interested

last night to hear the review of the cuts by the member from Saskatoon Centre as she pointed out what this budget does to the seniors of our province. It means, Mr. Speaker, this budget, that every citizen in Moose Jaw will be paying more and more and more in tax.

Why? To cover up for the mismanagement and the waste of this government, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm confident in saying that I speak for the majority of my constituents that want their member to come to this House and oppose this budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a specific word about a specific line in this budget document. If, Mr. Speaker, you turn to the budget for the Department of Agriculture and to page 22, you will find line 15 which is described as "Matching grants for international aid."

Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps the most unkind cut of all in this budget. This is perhaps the saddest of all the records of this government. Mr. Speaker, grants for international aid in the provincial budget have always been a very, very small, small, teeny-weeny portion of the budget.

In the mid-'70s, the churches of Saskatchewan, volunteer relief organizations, people like Oxfam, World Vision, Mennonite Central Committee, the United Church of Canada, the Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church, the central Baptist union — these people formed a partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan, a partnership to assist those in our world most in need. We did it through a program called the matching grants program.

Mr. Speaker, over the years the generosity of Saskatchewan people through their churches, through relief organizations, through development organizations, have contributed millions of dollars to this effort.

I want to review some of the funding. In 1974, through the volunteer organizations, \$995,000 was raised. Mr. Speaker, by 1982 the people of Saskatchewan generously were giving to the neediest in our world, through this program, \$3.5 million. Mr. Speaker, by 1990-91 it is estimated that the people of Saskatchewan through volunteer givings will provide \$6.365 million.

And recall, Mr. Speaker, these are tough times. No one debates that. But in tough times, Saskatchewan people respond. We are a generous people in this province, Mr. Speaker, we are a caring people.

(1245)

I talk about the partnership now. I talk about the partnership. In 1974-75 the Government of Saskatchewan contributed \$142,000 to this program. By 1982, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan was contributing \$2 million to this program. These people got elected in 1982, what did they do? They immediately cut it to \$1 million. They slashed it in half. Then they lowered it to 900,000. Then they lowered it to 800,000. In last year's budget I couldn't believe it when this government cut the matching grants program from

850 to 450,000. I couldn't believe it, Mr. Speaker. And they bragged about it. And, Mr. Speaker, this year I opened the budget documents of the province of Saskatchewan to find the matching grant program cut from 425 to \$200,000 — \$200,000 is the extent of the commitment of this government to the poorest of the poor in our world. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, it's a shame.

Mr. Speaker, these are tough times, Mr. Speaker, nobody debates that. These are tough times. But times are not as tough for us as they are for the children on the mountains in Turkey, the Kurdish peoples on the mountains in Turkey. They're not as tough as they are for the people in Costa Rica picking up after an earthquake. They're not as tough as they are for the people in the Horn of Africa . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Assiniboia would like to contribute to the debate. Well perhaps the member from Assiniboia can explain, Mr. Speaker, a choice that was made by this government.

This morning my colleague from Saskatoon University indicated that this document, this political propaganda that came with the budget, this 57-page document, this thing called *CHOICES*, 57 pages of political propaganda . . . after the budget speech there was literally hundreds of copies of these things left out in the lobby that nobody bothered to pick up because everybody knows what it is — political propaganda.

My colleague from Saskatoon Sutherland today in the House reveals that this thing cost \$150,000 . . .

An Hon. Member: — Sixty.

Mr. Calvert: — One hundred and sixty thousand dollars to print pure political propaganda. And then they take out ads in the newspapers to advertise it that cost another \$54,000. That's \$204,000 spent on political propaganda, but we don't have money for the children that are on the mountains in Turkey, for the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Speaker, where in the world . . . how in the world have the priorities here gone so wrong? How have the priorities gone so wrong? Mr. Speaker, why does this government betray the partnership with Saskatchewan people through their churches and through their relief organizations? How have the priorities gone so wrong, Mr. Speaker? And I look forward with anticipation to the opportunity when the Minister of Agriculture must come into this House for his estimates and must defend this cut into the budget.

This is not, Mr. Speaker, in my view, what Saskatchewan people want; this is not what Saskatchewan people want.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'll be honest. I am not exactly sure what the member from Rosemont said, but it sounded not very nice from this vantage point. If in fact you are guilty of making any kind of a remark that isn't parliamentary, I ask you to not do it.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this is not what Saskatchewan people want. Saskatchewan people are a generous people. Saskatchewan people are a caring people, and in tough times they understand. This is not what Saskatchewan people want.

And, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of this alone, because this budget has moved so far, so far, from the reality of Saskatchewan people, how could anyone of us support it? How could anyone of us support a budget that is so out of tune with the Saskatchewan way, the Saskatchewan spirit, the Saskatchewan generosity? How could any member in this House support this kind of cut and this kind of budget? How could anyone support a budget where the priorities are so skewed as they are here?

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this budget because it makes the wrong choices. I vote against this budget because it does not enjoy the confidence of the people of Saskatchewan. I vote against it because this government has no mandate left whatsoever, this government has no credibility left whatsoever. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess I vote against it most of all because this budget, in the springtime of the province, offers not a sign of hope to our people. And, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment introduced by the member from Saskatoon Centre. Mr. Speaker, I will support that amendment because I know there is a better way. I know that this province has a place in the nation and in the world, a place we will find again. I know there is no better place in which to raise a family than in the province of Saskatchewan. I know . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I know that we can meet the needs of our people and still be generous in the world. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that the spirit of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan way, is still strong. It'll take time, Mr. Speaker. It'll take time, but there is a better way. There's a better way than this budget and this government would take us. And, Mr. Speaker, if the people of Moose Jaw South grant to me the privilege once again to serve in this legislature, I look forward to building that better way under the leadership of the member from Riversdale.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to enter this debate this afternoon on the budget that has been brought down by my member, the member from Weyburn, the Minister of Finance.

It's also a pleasure for me, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate you on being the first elected Speaker of this Assembly. It is an outstanding person in an outstanding job. And I know you've done a good job over the years, and I feel very confident in the future you'll do the same.

I also want to say to the members of this Legislative Assembly that the last eight years that we have been here, or nine years that we have been here as government, it has been a pleasure to serve, certainly as a minister, and to serve my constituency well. I believe it's been an opportunity for me to meet with people, not only in my constituency but across the province.

I want to talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, about the province and about the Department of Rural Development, about the government, the role we play, the plan we have for the future of Saskatchewan. And the plan started back a long

time ago, Mr. Speaker, when . . . under Rural Development particularly on the area that I've been responsible for and we put together a plan of road rationalization, of rural development corporations, of economic development committees. We brought also into there . . . we've had ADD (agriculture development and diversification district) committees. We've got RMs (rural municipality) and urban communities working together.

There's been a lot go on over the last three or four years, just to give you a breakdown — because I know it's very close to 1 o'clock — but just to give you a brief breakdown of some of the things that have happened where municipalities, urban and rural together, working together, have created new industries in this province. In the last 15 months, Mr. Speaker, there has been 160 new industries created in this province because urban and rural municipalities, funded by different departments of government and by the local people, have put together . . . have worked together to create these types of opportunities.

I give you one example. In Kelvington-Wadena constituency, in fact in Kelvington is the example. The agrologists out there worked with the community. They put together what they call a peola chip, where they use peas and make it into a flour and then they dip it in canola oil. They got a name for it — Kris-p Chips, very unique. They have, in fact, Mr. Speaker, started the manufacture of it, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, over the next three or four years we'll probably end up with about 100 to 150 new jobs in that community — started with five jobs and people thinking of how they could take a raw product and transmit into something that all of us can use and do use.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about the future of Saskatchewan, government plans, the plan that we have for the 1990s and beyond and how we got to there. As you know, Mr. Speaker, over the last nine years, I've literally visited just about every RM and every town and village in this province. I've been to dozens of conventions where — RM convention, SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention, administrators convention, SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) convention — I've been to lots of conventions, Mr. Speaker, where farmers, both from the towns and from the villages and from the farm itself, have all been working together as a community group.

In town halls and auditoriums across Saskatchewan and western Canada, I've talked of the need to protect and to build this province. I've talked also about the need to diversify and expand our economy. I've talked about the partnership of communities working together to build their part of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I've talked about how our government needs to be restructured for the future — how we need to revamp and how we need to restructure our communities for the future. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, how communities can get involved in doing that themselves, and how we maintain the structure out there of communities that me and you have known for many, many years.

And while I was visiting these communities to share the plan, our plan for the future, I was also there to listen to

what communities told us and I believe were very good ideas. Our plan to build and protect this province of Saskatchewan, to see us through in the next century with a strong and a very vibrant economy.

The overall challenge we face, Mr. Speaker, today is the challenge to lay the foundation for that new economy, that new structure. There is much energy devoted to discussion about the new economy and about the world change, but precious few with the courage to create a vision for the future and the strength to lead our province through these very difficult times into the next century.

This Premier, our Premier and this government, have demonstrated the courage and the strength necessary to take important steps in diversifying our economy, and in thinking of solutions that will ensure all the people of Saskatchewan have the opportunity to grow in these very challenging circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, we've targeted expenditures in an integrated plan to develop and build the categories of infrastructure needed for this province. Infrastructure in this province needs . . . if it is to deliver the product of diversification efforts, provide opportunities for young people, security for seniors, and opportunities for our native people.

Mr. Speaker, roads, I just want to take a moment on roads. Our road networks are critically important to our province. Forty-five per cent of our population live outside of the 12 cities. Almost half of our population live in rural Saskatchewan, and the roads that are needed, not only for personal transportation but to maintain a market delivery system.

Just to give you an idea of the roads we have built, that were built in 1947. There was 250 kilometres of roads paved then. Today, today, Mr. Speaker, we have 20,000 nearly kilometres of roads paved. In the rural . . . Under RMs we have 57,000 grid road miles out there. We have almost 150,000 main farm access or just access roads in the province of Saskatchewan. We have almost 170,000 kilometres of roads in this province, Mr. Speaker, more than any other province, and in fact more than . . . almost as much as all of Canada in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I want to also just mention another area that we've been working on, and that's municipal capital grant program which provides funding for municipalities to build and maintain the municipal infrastructure, ensuring the facilities of our towns and municipalities do not deteriorate, in spite of the difficult agriculture economy which have reduced many of our municipalities' ability to raise the revenues needed to keep things up on their own.

These are all new developments, and they're all intricate. And I just want to go through some of them, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It being 1 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until Monday at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.