

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to have visitors from the Rosetown Central High School. I have 37 grade 8 students seated in the west gallery. Their teachers are Jeannine Perron and Murray Purcell. I look forward to meeting with this group of students at 3 o'clock for pictures and refreshments and a chance to discuss what they have witnessed today in our legislature. I'd ask all hon. members to welcome the students from Rosetown.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all the members of the House, 26 students from Dr. Martin Leboldus High School here in Regina, just south of us here a few blocks. These are grade 10 students, Mr. Speaker. They are in the west gallery — a fine looking bunch, too, I might add. And they will be . . . I'll be meeting with them at 2:45, Mr. Speaker, after they have an opportunity to view the proceedings and listen to what happens during the question period session, an opportunity later to meet with them, have drinks, and discuss what they heard and what they saw here today. So please welcome the students of Dr. Martin Leboldus High School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to add my words of welcome to those students from Rosetown and Regina, but more specifically to a group of grades 5 and 6 in your gallery from St. Michael School in Saskatoon. They are accompanied today by their teacher Wendy Busa and chaperon Mrs. Kowalski.

I'll have an opportunity to meet with the students later on this afternoon. And I know that students from all parts of Saskatchewan visit the legislature at this time of the year, and I think it's a very important part of their education in that they do get a little bit of an idea as to how democracy works in this province, and I hope that they enjoy the question period today. And I look forward to meeting with them later and I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming these students today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery a group of 47 . . . the descriptive note says seniors but I prefer to call them active citizens from the city of Saskatoon, with the president of a club called the Old Boys and Ladies Club of Saskatoon; and in particular draw to your attention that in the gallery is the president, Mr. Mike Hnatiw. I wonder whether Mike would mind standing. There he is. He's the president.

This is a long-standing club, Mr. Speaker, which has been operating in Saskatoon for many, many years. And it was for the longest period of time known simply as the Old Boys Club, but proving that these people are in keeping with the times, it's now the Old Boys and Ladies Club.

But I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in my visits to their organization I even think that that's a misnomer. These people are active and they're intelligent and they're interested in their community efforts. I think we should rename it to the young boys and ladies club.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly on your behalf and on behalf of all the members. They are a part of our very important heritage in the province of Saskatchewan. And I look forward to meeting them after question period and have questions asked by them, and also the customary pictures and drinks. Thanks very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Murray Commission Report

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Health, I would direct my question to the associate minister of Health. Mr. Associate Minister, your government has spent \$1.8 million for the Murray Commission report on future directions in health care. Then I understand you spent another 750,000 publicizing it.

That makes more than 2.5 million spent on this report, Mr. Minister, and one year after it was presented to the people of Saskatchewan, it sits gathering dust on a shelf in your office. If it was your intention all along to ignore the report, why did you spend \$2.5 million on it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes reference to the Murray Commission report. The Murray Commission report was a good expenditure by the public of Saskatchewan on a blueprint for the health-care system of this province into the long-term future. There's no question about that.

The Murray Commission report has been well received as a blueprint, once again, by the health-care sector across the province and by the citizens at large in terms of being a blueprint and being the focus around which discussion of the health-care system, and the future of this very complex system, is centred. And that's exactly what it is. That's exactly what it was commissioned to do.

There are areas of the Murray Commission report where there is still some controversy. Certainly the area of regionalization and to what degree will regionalization take place — that's an ongoing discussion across the province. But, Mr. Speaker, the expenditure once again was a good investment by the public of Saskatchewan in a very good health-care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, the major recommendation in the report was the regionalization recommendation and you still have not taken a position on that. You have no plan for the delivery of health care in this province. Why don't you admit it, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — To the contrary of what the member says. The member says to me and to the government on this side, you have no plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And to reinforce that very incredible statement by that member, her colleagues all chirp and cheer — just to reinforce how incredible that statement really is, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member makes reference again to the Murray Commission report. The Murray Commission report is very much a part of a long-range plan for the health-care system. We commissioned the report; the report is there. It is the focus of discussion in the health-care system and for the change that has taken place in the health-care system. There's no question that that's true.

And that hon. member just last week, at noon last Thursday on the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio and I quote exactly, Mr. Speaker, the very member who asked the question said, and I quote exactly: there's no plan as it sits now. Referring to the health-care plan of the NDP (New Democratic Party).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, you have no plan as it sits now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — We have a plan on this side of the House. We have a plan and we've had it out at health-care groups and we've given it to the press over a year and a half ago, Mr. Minister. After \$2.5 million of government money and hundreds of individuals in groups spending time and money to attend hearings and present briefs, Mr. Minister, to the Murray Commission, we are facing another crisis in this province in health care because of your incompetent mismanagement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — If you are not going to accept the major recommendations of the Murray Commission, Mr. Minister, what is your plan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, our plan is to continue as we have. We have the Murray Commission report in place. The focus of discussion across the province is to a large degree focused on the Murray Commission report and the way that report will set out a blueprint and has set

out a blueprint for the system into the future.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is to continue to expend significant dollars on health care, as we have. Mr. Speaker, we have doubled the amount of money spent on health care. This government has doubled the amount of money spent on health care in this province of a million people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The hon. member knows that. Significant increase in technology and health care — we've spent money on that technology. A significant increase in terms of the age of the population. There are tremendous increases in expenditures in health care. We've responded to that challenge throughout to care for our seniors across the province.

Mental health is an area the Murray Commission identified, we've responded. Northern health, we've responded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, from the time you set up the Murray Commission, we, on this side of the House, said you were looking for a whitewash to your destruction of the health-care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — We said the commission would be little more than a public relations exercise aimed at deflecting public attention from your sorry record. Your government's subsequent lack of action has proven our point. How do you justify wasting \$2.5 million that's now sitting on your shelf, and not taking any real action to correct the problems?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, once again, what I have outlined. The plan is there — significant expenditures on health care, significant responses to the challenge of an ever-changing health-care system — that's what we've been doing. That's all based on a long-term plan that we've had in place for a number of years and we will continue with that plan.

The hon. member across the way, Mr. Speaker, in the radio interview that I cited in earlier in this question period and she says . . . and I quoted the other one just prior to that in the same interview, the CBC reporter. And I quote again. The CBC reporter is saying this and I quote: Simard says that doesn't sound like a plan to her. But when asked what the NDP plan is, this is how she answers, and I quote again from the hon. member: there's no plan as it sits now.

And then says the reporter: Simard says an NDP government would look at the needs of people throughout the province, then develop a plan.

That's what she says to the CBC and the public of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there is no credibility in the questions of the hon. member from the other side of this

House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Annual Report of STC

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Apparently some people didn't hear. I'm asking hon. members to co-operate and come to order. And now I will ask for your co-operation once again.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company. Minister, in the annual report for STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) you show a loss of \$5.3 million which is the largest loss in STC history, largest of yet a string of losses under your management.

When you came to power, Mr. Minister, STC had an operating surplus of nearly \$1 million. Today it has a cumulative deficit of \$29.4 million. That's mismanagement of gross proportions.

Minister, was it your intention to run this company into the ground as you have virtually every other asset of this province, or are you simply incompetent?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises the question of STC and makes the suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that the purchase of new coaches for STC, new coaches which are well received by the public of Saskatchewan, by the ridership of STC . . . and he makes the suggestion that the purchase of new coaches by this administration and the management of STC is somehow running STC into the ground. That's his view of running it into the ground.

Mr. Speaker, the new coaches are there because they were needed, desperately needed, by a corporation which provides service to a far-flung province. A lot of areas across this province receive STC service. Mr. Speaker, there is no question, as it has been for a long time, STC has been subsidized by the public of Saskatchewan to provide service to remote areas of the province. It still does that and will continue to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister and I ask the minister to pay closer attention this time. I never mentioned the word coach in the last question, so please to . . . perhaps respond to this one.

Your chairman, Minister, in Friday's *Leader-Post* blamed the loss on the high cost of painting the buses a new colour. That's got to be the world's most expensive paint job ever.

Minister, you hired Ryer Management, the company owned by the Premier's former political secretary, Sean Quinlan, to sell the new paint scheme to the people of Saskatchewan. Would you tell this House, the cost of the Sean Quinlan contract? Was it 350,000? \$500,000? \$700,000? What was the amount you paid to Sean Quinlan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member once again raises the issue of STC. I've answered the question as it relates to STC. The STC has losses which are large; I agree with that. STC as a company provides service, as I've said, to across the province, and it will continue to.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. I think that there's generally allowance made for a few remarks from hon. members' seats, but certainly when it becomes a . . . starts to sound like most of the members interrupting, it's not what we want. And let us allow the minister to answer.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And, Mr. Speaker, the member raises the question as it relates to the colour scheme or the new corporate image of STC. That new corporate image of STC, once again, has been well received by the public of Saskatchewan. And it has, and I don't think there's any question of that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be willing, as the hon. member I'm sure will be, to discuss the detailed questions in the Crown Corporations Committee. And the hon. member will have his opportunity to do that and he'll have his opportunity to receive his answers there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Minister, Sean Quinlan got paid to sell a new paint scheme for the bus company of Saskatchewan. The cost of the Quinlan contract was what — 350,000, 500,000, 700,000? How much money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I've said to the hon. member, in Crown Corporations Committee detailed questions like that will be answered. I'm fully prepared to answer them in Crown Corporations, as is always the case.

And, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who aligns himself with a party that would put a \$10 billion deficit onto the province of Ontario says if it was \$1.95 it would be too much for him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, you and I are having some difficulty with Crown Corporations. After two days of hearings, they're held over because you refused to answer questions repeatedly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Minister, you've had a choice. You chose to buy the world's most expensive paint job. It's hard to justify that. But when you combine a payment of nearly half a million dollars to Sean Quinlan to tell Saskatchewan people that green and yellow are prettier colours than red and silver, that's crazy.

How in the world, Minister, can you justify spending the money you have spent on Mr. Quinlan's services for such a shallow PR job? Where, Minister, is it written that friends of the Tories shall wallow in the trough for ever?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member well knows. He says in the House that the reason that the Crown Corporation was held over, because I refused to answer questions. Mr. Speaker, I want to make the record very clear that that is not the case. That is not the case and it should be very clear on the record what that hon. member has said. It's not because I refused to answer questions and that is not the case. Make it very clear.

Mr. Speaker, I have said that I will answer questions of detail in Crown Corporations, as is the practice of this parliamentary House for a long, long time, will continue to be the practice, and they'll get their answers.

Does he expect me to have the details here of the price of tires? Does he want me to have the price of tires here? I don't have them and I won't apologize to him for not having the price of tires, how much individual drivers are paid, any of that sort of thing.

Officials will be with me in Crown Corporations. I will answer the questions as I have done on that corporation and several other corporations and as my colleagues have on all of the corporations through the time that we've been in office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Loans to Joytec

Mr. Koenker: — A question to the Minister of Economic Development, Mr. Speaker. Back in August of 1989, Mr. Minister, your government indicated that Joytec had until this month to repay the province the 1.125 million of taxpayers' money that was secured through venture capital.

Joytec is now long gone. The two-year anniversary has come and gone. Mr. Minister, has that money, the taxpayers' money, been repaid in full to the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the best information I have is that that debt has become due and the officials in my department are making every effort to collect that debt, as any other debt that is owed to the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Koenker: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. What a deal, Mr. Minister. That is not good enough. We were told two years ago that your departmental officials and your government was negotiating with the company, and we are owed an explanation today as to where the taxpayers' money is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, that company, after it received developmental money in Saskatchewan, chose to move to British Columbia. The reports I have is that they are becoming profitable there and that they will be in a position to make payments on the debt that they owe us.

Mr. Koenker: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, that is out and out avowed hog-wash. The 500,000 shares of Technigen company corporation that Joytec holds are virtually worthless. Technigen's balance sheet of a year ago shows that it's in debt up to \$800 million, running a deficit.

The money isn't there. All we have is glib propaganda and assurances from yourself that the money is there. Have you deregistered the company, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I couldn't hear the last part of the question, but it probably wasn't very intelligent in any event.

I will answer as best I can that there are times when corporations will not be successful in their ventures. This is an example of a corporation that had difficult start-up costs, difficult time in starting up, getting their new technology up and rolling.

The members of the NDP like to dwell on the negative. It makes for good press, it makes for good political propaganda. But the fact is that not everything will be successful. There are members opposite who couldn't run a Dairy Queen. There are members opposite whose friends couldn't run hotels, and they cost the government a lot of money. There are members opposite who put money to Nabu computers. It went boo. And that is the situation. Not everything will be successful.

This province has multiplied the manufacturing jobs to a large extent. This province is diversifying. The members opposite shout negative comments, scare business away; and they do it in Ontario and they're coming to Saskatchewan now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, companies may not be successful, but you have an obligation to protect taxpayers' money if they're not successful.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — The venture capital legislation of this province, put into effect by your government, says that after the two-year anniversary the government shall take

steps to deregister the company, secure assets, and recover the taxpayers' investment. Have you taken those steps, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, Joytec Equities Incorporated, the venture capital corporation. By definition, venture capital means that there is some risk. It is not a guaranteed corporation. It was a venture capital corporation under the venture capital program. The government lost some money in that venture, and the private investors also lost money in that venture. It is normal that some of these things will fail. No one is 100 per cent perfect. The opposition isn't. This government isn't, and business is not 100 per cent perfect. There will be some failures.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPMC Rental Charges

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, and he would know that virtually everything that government does they have to pay a payment in terms of rent and services to the Property and Management Corporation.

And last year you've decided that the rent wasn't high enough. You've now this year increased the rents and services by almost \$40 million. Can you tell us how you can reconcile this, in the year you're supposed to be making great decentralization moves, to Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just ask the members opposite to open their books and to read what's in front of them. I'd ask them to turn to *Supplementary Estimates*, 1991. And on page 13 of *Supplementary Estimates*, 1991, they'll see payments to Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation for ongoing operations in the order of \$22.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, if you add those numbers to the numbers for 1991, you'll see that the numbers for the Property Management estimates for 1991 are very similar to what they are for 1991-1992, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Well you brag about \$22 million overexpenditure, Mr. Minister. I find that little to brag about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — We add up the figures, Mr. Minister. It's no wonder. Add up the figures this year, you get another number. You subtract last year's number from this year's number and you get an increase of \$39,652,100.

But I'm not surprised. I would look at your book. You have in here a rent to Fair Share Saskatchewan, \$2.2

million. I also have here a contract for their office in Watrous for six months. Isn't that an overexpenditure? Are you paying \$2.2 million for a six-month lease in Watrous?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, I know that the opposition takes, you know, a great concern and are very interested in property management, and I'd like to inform the members opposite . . . I'd like to inform them that no, Mr. Speaker, no, we'll not be able to purchase a new car for the Leader of the Opposition.

But over and above that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members opposite to carefully revisit those numbers, to not only take out the numbers for 1991-1992, but I ask them to visit the estimates for 1990-1991. And if they look at the estimates there for rents and the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) subvotes, they will see that if they compare most of those with the ones for 1989-90 with the ones for 1991-92, that they'll see that they're actually reduced in most cases, Mr. Speaker.

We've been able to, Mr. Speaker, by streamlining government, by reorganizing, by reducing the purchases of new vehicles such as the Leader of the Opposition, and by reducing purchases of new furniture, to increase efficiency, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: — Could we just pay attention to the House proceedings? I mean there's been, unfortunately, a relative bedlam in here during question period. And let's get on with the orders of the day, with the government orders.

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 9 — Initiatives to Encourage Small Business

Mr. McLaren: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get into my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I haven't had the opportunity to congratulate you for making history in the province of Saskatchewan on your election as Speaker, the first time in Saskatchewan's history that a Speaker has been elected in this Assembly. And I'm sure it means to you that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now I'm going to just once more draw to the attention of this House that I believe it's in their best interests and their responsibility to co-operate with the proceedings of this House. Today we are not getting it.

Now we have the member from Yorkton, a private member, and I can't hear what he's saying because the noise level is that high. Now let us get together as hon. members and responsible members and work together that this House works.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I start my remarks, I want to congratulate you on making history in the province of . . .

The Speaker: — Now the member from Quill Lakes, I'm going to ask you to co-operate with my previous request.

Mr. McLaren: — I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on making history in the province of Saskatchewan on being the first elected Speaker, and I'm sure it indicates to you the confidence that we have in you in carrying out your role when you in fact were elected unanimously by all members of the Assembly.

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity once again, Mr. Speaker, to stand before the members of this Assembly and commend the government for the role it has played in the diversification of our economy and the strengthening of our communities through the programs like the small business loans association program.

This popular and effective SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) initiative is just part of the comprehensive plan our government has to stabilize our communities, protect our economy, and diversify away from the total dependence that we have on agriculture. Every person in this province has seen the damage caused by the downturn in our agriculture sector. Towns, villages, and cities alike suffer and suffer greatly, Mr. Speaker.

The problems that rural Saskatchewan faces head-on are at the foot of the problems the entire province is up against, because if there's one thing that you learn fast when you live in Saskatchewan, it's the fact that the whole province, rural and urban, lives and dies by what happens on the farm. Anyone who has seen the damage done to communities who are totally dependent on farm income to keep the economic wheels turning will agree.

For all Saskatchewan's history, the province and her people have been at the mercy of the external forces affecting agriculture. And as a result, the extremely difficult times caused by low commodity prices, grain price wars, drought, grasshoppers, have affected all of Saskatchewan. Until we make our provincial economy stronger by broadening our economic base and diversifying away from a complete reliance on agriculture, this will never change, Mr. Speaker.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, it is more important than ever to encourage and promote programs and economic development efforts like the small business loans association program. It is important because efforts like these have what it takes to make Saskatchewan strong again. They lead to a broader economic base and to growth and stability at the local level.

The small business loans association program has helped many Saskatchewan communities do just that. And what makes them unique is that these associations are formed by the people in the community to work for the people in the community, people who are concerned with the future of their town or village or city, getting together to

work towards some solutions rather complaining about how bad things are.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you know, the motion that we are debating here today was slated for debate during the last session of the Assembly. And I had notes prepared at that time. And in preparing to bring this motion forward today, I checked my notes from last session, Mr. Speaker. And in those notes I found that in April of last year, the 100th small business loans association had just been formed — 100 loan associations in April of 1990.

I now find as of November of 1990, seven months later, that over 200 such associations exist across our province. Mr. Speaker, the 200th was formed last November. The number of associations doubled in just that seven months.

And I understand from my colleague, the Minister responsible for SEDCO, that each association averages assistance to about five small businesses. That's impressive no matter which side of the House you sit on, Mr. Speaker.

And with over 200 loans associations across the province, at five small businesses per association, that's a lot of small businesses. That's a lot of friends. And the small business loans association program is only part of a family of SEDCO programs geared toward building and diversifying in Saskatchewan.

Here's a little figure that a lot of the members opposite will no doubt find disturbing, Mr. Speaker. Given that the NDP accuses SEDCO, under this government, of focusing on big business interests and not concentrating on building in the rural sector, how can they explain the following? How can they explain that of over 2,000 active SEDCO clients, over 1,500 are rural clients — over 1,500, Mr. Speaker.

So the member from Riversdale has said that if given a chance he would change SEDCO, he would reform it.

Well, what is he going to change, Mr. Speaker? Would he take away the small business loans association? He says no. Would he take assistance away from over 1,500 rural clients? He says not likely. Would he kick Impact Packaging out of Saskatchewan? He says no. Would he decrease current 85 per cent success rate, Mr. Speaker, rate that SEDCO enjoys right now? Well maybe, he says.

We may never know the answers to these questions, Mr. Speaker. But as far as I can see, the only thing that individual or that party could ever honestly say that could be changed about SEDCO is that they wish GigaText would not have lost some money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we wish that GigaText hasn't lost money either. But I will guarantee and suggest that somewhere down the road what was started in that program will come to fruition and that French will be transferred into English with new technology.

We all wish that Nabu under the NDP had never lost \$4 million, but it did. We all wish that fibre forms industries under the NDP and the member from Riversdale had

never lost over \$2 million of taxpayers' money. We don't hear about that. This is the way they managed, but evidently in their day it was the right thing to do.

We all wish that Rogers Lumber had not lost over \$4 million under the NDP. We all wish that Pro-Star Mills under the NDP had not lost a whopping \$5.6 million, Mr. Speaker. We all wish a lot of things, Mr. Speaker.

But the fact of the matter is that there are people all over the province today who are prospering and building and growing because of the work of SEDCO and efforts like the small business loans association program. And those are the people we work for; not for the critics who will twist an issue out of the shape to suit the purpose of the moment.

Now there have been criticisms from the members across the floor there who are saying that the government's effort at diversification are not wanted by the people of Saskatchewan. Well I guess that's why there was such incredible growth in the number of loans associations, Mr. Speaker. I guess that's why the number of associations doubled over the seven-month period.

But through some twisted logic, the members opposite feel comfortable saying that people don't want this type of initiative. They say it not because it's factual, but because their ideology says that people don't want the right to determine what is best for them, and they don't want to be responsible for their own fate. Rather they say the people want the government to do all for them, for the government to take their tax dollars and decide what businesses it's going to buy and run.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the evidence indicates otherwise. The evidence definitely indicates otherwise. There are an awful lot of people in this province involved in things like community bonds, and rural development corporations, and small business loans associations — involved in the hands-on process of building and stabilizing their communities and diversifying our province.

And that should send a message to the opposition, Mr. Speaker. People in communities all across the province are interested enough in determining their own future, interested enough in having a say in what happens to them and their families that they get together, co-operate, and work hand in hand with government, forming these associations — the associations which allow them and members of their community to access money needed to start up small businesses and new ventures in their community.

And the success and the popularity of the program under discussion today tells us all that people don't want to be told by the government what to do. They want to decide for themselves. They want to be a part of the plan for building our province. People of this province are innovative and competitive and determined to make it work. They have enough sense and are capable of handling and developing businesses, and the government recognizes this. I think my colleagues will agree with me when I say that our constituents would be insulted — and I would suggest greatly insulted, Mr. Speaker — if we took the decision-making process away from them and went

top down and told them what to do with their communities.

(1445)

It is foolish and naive to think that we, as government, have a better handle on what is in the best interest of the individual communities than do the people who live and work there.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to discuss a particular aspect of the program that I think is very important to note.

As most of the members will know, under the program, a group of businesses or individuals at the local level forms a small business loans association to raise capital for its members. SEDCO makes an interest-free advance of up to \$50,000 per association. The association then makes loans of up to \$5,000 to new or expanded businesses.

The benefits in as far as creating economic activity are obvious. Through this program small businesses are given access to funds that they might not otherwise have been able to obtain. But above that the actual administration of this program is admirable and efficient. By dealing with a group and having that association deal with the local applicants on an individual basis, the distribution of funds is more cost-effective for the government and more convenient for the applicant. Rather than dealing with up to ten individual applicants, the government deals with just one — just one, Mr. Speaker — and allows that association to then deal with the applicants at the local level.

I'm inclined to believe that this set-up encourages the smaller-business man to seek assistance more readily than if it involved through trudging the sometime daunting process of application that he might be faced with if the program was set up differently. Sometimes it is a lot easier for people to approach individuals that they know, members of their own community, than it is for them to approach some stranger in Regina.

This is one very positive part of the whole set-up is the small business loans association program. The fact that it is so simple a process for the end recipient really does not encourage business development in our smaller centres where the growth is most needed.

As a matter of fact, the vast majority of these associations are formed outside of the four largest cities. That in itself shows you just how attractive this program is to the people of the province, especially those who benefit the most from this type of economic diversification effort.

Another benefit of this program that should be noted lies in the range of projects, projects that it has helped get started, Mr. Speaker. Because the funds have a broad range of application — new or expanding businesses — a wide range of entrepreneurial spirit is represented by the approved loans. Some of the projects include crafts and toys, food processing, tourist facilities, taxis, and waste material removal, to name a few.

The simple fact that this program is virtually unlimited in

the type of business that qualifies for funding makes it all the more effective as a diversification instrument, and all the more attractive to businesses and individuals thinking of developing a business. It is through programs like the small business loans association program and other SEDCO programs that the much-needed economic diversification will occur in our province.

And the only way that kind of long-term growth will occur is if the growth originates at the local level with the backing of people and businesses who know what will and will not work in their communities.

People are concerned with our dependence on agriculture and they want to see our economy diversified. People are concerned with the stability of their communities and they want to create a future for their children that will allow them to find a career without leaving the province.

People want the opportunity to have businesses of their own. The small business loans association program satisfies all of those needs, and at the same time it is done in a way that is responsible and cost-effective for the government.

Mr. Speaker, the economic development and diversification of Saskatchewan is a priority with myself and my colleagues. The success of programs like this one demonstrate that these things are also priorities with the people of the province. It is great to see new business ventures and business expansions taking place in our constituencies and all across the province . . . and something that is needed to secure a future for Saskatchewan.

And with those brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly commends the Government of Saskatchewan for strengthening communities and for supporting small business and personal initiative throughout the province by establishing through the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, the small business loans association program, which encourages community involvement in the promotion of small businesses.

And this motion is to be seconded by my colleague, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have several things that I'm going to try to cover this afternoon. And I am first of all going to begin by saying that it's a pleasure for me to, at the end of my remarks . . . in seconding this resolution.

I would like to think, if I could begin, when I look at this resolution that there are two things that have built this province, Mr. Speaker. And that, Mr. Speaker, is agriculture and small business.

When we look at our communities in rural

Saskatchewan, for instance, you will find the small businesses playing a major role in promoting growth, prosperity, and a sense of community. They are by far the largest employer in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, small business in the province of Saskatchewan is big business.

But unfortunately small business in Saskatchewan is tied very close to agriculture. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we have been as a government trying to diversify the economy of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving in in several of my remarks that I make this afternoon, will be trying to point that very thing out.

I know members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, will not want to listen or agree to what I have to say, but that is only because, Mr. Speaker, that the members of the opposition, the NDP, since I've come back to this session, have been more than feeling a little beaten up because of our budget that has been presented to this House, as well as the programs that we're discussing upon in the resolution that we're discussing today. Mr. Speaker, the NDP today feel so threatened and so beaten that they are . . . what we have found is a display of gutter politics once again during our question period time.

Although I'd like to indicate to you, sir, that in the government's move to protect agriculture through various *ad hoc* programs, those kinds of *ad hoc* programs have to agriculture meant over a billion dollars from the provincial government and over several, in fact 7 to \$9 billion in federal *ad hoc* programs and dollars that have gone directly into the farmer's pocket. Mr. Speaker, that money not only helped farmers but it helped small business throughout the province as well.

I'd like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the introduction of new farm safety net programs will not just help farmers but the entire economy. About \$1.3 billion a year will be pumped into our economy through the GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs.

Farmers don't bury this money, Mr. Speaker, in the back forty somewhere as members of the opposition may tend to think. But, Mr. Speaker, they go out and they spend this money, and they spend it in the small businesses across this province.

But of course helping farmers is not only the element of our plan for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, unlike the plan that the NDP say they have but aren't willing to talk about — not willing to talk about unless there's about a 28-day writ period. So that people of the province of Saskatchewan cannot really sit down to analyse their particular plan for small business, let alone agriculture or education or health in this province.

We have also worked together, Mr. Speaker, with small business to create a number of innovative programs that provide help with financing and create a healthy business environment in the province. One of these programs created by government is the small business loans association program. And I'm not so sure whether there might not be one or two of the members of the opposition that have not taken advantage of this program, Mr.

Speaker, as they have with other programs in agriculture and home protection, etc.

Mr. Speaker, one of these programs, as I said, is the small business loans association program. The program has met with a tremendous amount of success. It was created only a short time ago and yet, Mr. Speaker, already there are 176 loan associations in the province of Saskatchewan. And yet the NDP won't talk about those — plus 176 loans association working to stimulate small business growth in their communities. Their efforts have created over 926 new jobs in the province and maintained 835 more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we hear in this Assembly is the NDP telling the people of Saskatchewan how people are leaving in folds, leaving the province for other provinces.

I will say this, Mr. Speaker. We have maintained the population in this province, next to no other administration across this country. Where they're leaving, leaving in fact, leaving Canada from Ontario now with businesses because of a budget that has come down in Ontario with I believe . . . by the time the whole thing is calculated, there will be somewhere in around a \$12 billion deficit.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you, is that not only bad for small business but the larger industries as well. The larger industries have a major effect on the small businesses in Ontario, and those are the certain kinds of things that, Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to have happen in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to indicate to you, sir, that if it was our administration and we came in with a \$12 billion deficit, as the NDP would have to if they kept every one of their promises, that small business, Mr. Speaker, would not be surviving in this province and they know it.

Mr. Speaker, their promises that they've been coming out with in education, health, welfare and this and that, that mean absolutely ridiculous promises to the people of this province. Well, there isn't one of us that could afford to pay for an NDP promise.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, they ought to start coming clean because the people of the province of Saskatchewan . . . And they know it, they're beginning to hurt, and they show it. They show it in this Assembly; they show it by their gutter politics. But I'm saying to you, sir, they've got to prove to the small business and not only the small business but all the people in this province, what their plans are.

(1500)

They have no plans, Mr. Speaker. No business plans. No business sense. And, Mr. Speaker, we have got to have them come clean and I believe it's not only up to the government to try and force them to come out with a plan, Mr. Speaker, regarding small business, but it's entirely up to the media as well. I believe that they've been left alone far too long in criticizing and not coming clean with the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the small business, especially

in my particular constituency, I see a fairly substantial growth that has been happening within my riding. And it's been because of the diversification and the actions that this government and the federal government have done in co-operation with also the Alberta government. And I give you an example. It's the bi-provincial upgrader, which all three governments had taken part in.

I want to indicate to you, sir, that that has not . . . like some reporter from, I believe, it was back a couple of weeks ago that I seen a couple of clips on CBC television where they said it really had no impact to the economy in Saskatchewan whatsoever. Well I think that that has had to have been one of the poorest — the poorest — bits of media production that I've ever seen.

I want to indicate to you, sir, that you try and talk to the folks around Lloydminster, in the smaller communities, and they will point out to you the extreme value that that upgrader has had — not only to our constituency, sir, but to indeed the provinces and this country.

I look at it today, sir, where there's going to be approximately 300 — I mean, pardon me, 3,000 workers — 3,000 workers on the site by summer. If that doesn't mean some sort of backing towards small business, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what does. I absolutely don't know what does.

The restaurants, the hoteliers, the moteliers, the grocery stores, the clothing stores — I can name one, Canadian Tire — some of the larger hardware stores, some of the smaller independents like Home Hardware, a lot of these industries, Nelson Lumber, for instance, and Windsor lumberyard, they all are profiting from this — our cement plants, Mr. Speaker.

That meant jobs for our communities through these small businesses. And that's what it is. There's no conglomerate of . . . there's none of these huge businesses that the NDP can only talk about, these multinationals that they so desire to have people believe in this province.

I'm not talking about those people. I'm talking about the small people, the people that employ the majority of individuals across this country, not only in Saskatchewan.

And I say to you that it was our administration, sir, the Progressive Conservative government that put that upgrader, along with the other two governments . . . and put that upgrader in Lloydminster. It was not . . . I believe it was four or five election promises by the NDP that they were going to put an upgrader in Lloydminster to help diversify the economy out there.

They've never ever come clean with the people. They knew that they weren't going to do it because here in this House, here in the House . . . you know what they're going to do for my particular area, Mr. Speaker? Well I'm going to tell you what they're going to do for small business in my particular area. The same member that is mouthing off right now is one . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order, order. I don't believe that we need to refer to members in those terms. I

don't appreciate that language.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well I didn't use any language. I . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Order, order, order. I think when we refer to hon. members in a derogatory manner, we invite reprisal, and then the decorum of the House slowly deteriorates, so that's what I'm referring to.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well whatever. I would suggest then that with members of the NDP Party, when they can make promises for four and five elections, Mr. Speaker, four or five elections and never deliver on any of their promises to my particular area, when our government has worked hard to get an upgrader such as the one that's being built, an industry such as the one that is being developed in Lloydminster, then I say they can laugh all they wish, but the joke is on them, sir. The joke is on them because the people realize that they are an administration that has definitely not ever, ever kept their word at that particular degree.

I want to say to you, sir, that when I look at what they are planning, what the NDP are planning to do today as individuals in this . . . have pointed out in their speeches in this House that they're going to bring on high royalty taxation in this province, I want to just say, Mr. Speaker, that those people are the people that will go out into my riding. They will say the totally opposite and come back here to Regina and speak in the floor of this legislature, and they say total opposite.

But they're going to be taxing. The statements that have been made by several of the NDP members in this Legislative Assembly have indicated that they were going to tax the oil companies. They were going to tax the resources in this province like they've never been taxed before to pay for all debts, to pay for all their promises.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, if that's the case, then I say to you that the promises that the NDP have made . . . And I take those numbers from the member from Wilkie — what he has been pointing out to the province of Saskatchewan — I take those numbers, and I put that on the backs of the resources. And, Mr. Speaker, we won't have one bit of development in our resource sector in this province as long as they're an administration. It is just not going to happen.

I want to say this: that when you look at taking that resource sector out of this province, you might as . . . everyone in small business might as well close their doors because that spin-off effect from those kinds of resource sectors that are processing and manufacturing is phenomenal.

I want to give you an example. I want to give you an example. Mr. Speaker, I have a little community of Cut Knife. It's a population of about 600, and that community is probably about one of the most aggressive communities that I've ever come to know. They back each other in that community, sir, and I'll tell you just how far they go.

We've been hunting for industry to come into this community to diversify the economy. It's a farm

community and the farmers that have been running that community, that have been building that community, understand that that community had to be diversified. We've gone out, Mr. Speaker, on several occasions and have tried to bring some diversification into the community.

And I'd like to indicate to you, sir, that we've put a valve manufacturing . . . an industrial valve manufacturing plant in that community. And it was through an ad in our paper, from the Economic Development office that had gone into *The Globe and Mail*. And this particular manufacturing company, valve manufacturing company, read it and they were already established or partially established in Calgary, Alberta.

And, Mr. Speaker, we had put out an ad and we had told them about community bonds and said, come to Saskatchewan, help us diversify. Well they did. They gave us a call. And we visited them. And they came to Saskatchewan. And no sir, they didn't. They could've, but they didn't. They could have went to the larger major centres but this little aggressive community of Cut Knife, which is a story of its own, had gone out and sold itself to this particular corporation.

That corporation, Mr. Speaker, is now under manufacturing valves in Cut Knife. There's going to be a grand opening down the line here as soon as they get more and more established here. But I'm going to tell you that the excitement that that has created in that community of 600 is just unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, that valve manufacturing plant — and for members of the NDP that would wish to listen instead of babble — that company will be, and has the potential, of being able to employ up to 50 people. That is their goal. Right now I believe and I understand, Mr. Speaker, that since they've opened the doors of just several weeks, that they've already got, I think the last number I heard, was about eight or nine people employed and they were expecting to be hiring more as the time goes on.

And I would like to say that through that kind of a spin-off, Mr. Speaker, we've got a hardware store that's going to engage in some benefits on this; we've got an SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance); we've got insurance agency in the community; we've got implement dealerships in the community that will be able to purchase valves now for equipment purposes and others. And we've got garages; we've got the grocery stores that are going to benefit from it; we've got housing, Mr. Speaker, that's going to be — new housing that's going to have to take place in the community. Those are the kinds of spin-off. Those are the kinds of things that this administration and this government is working towards. And that's just one little story.

And it's not a major impact or major story maybe for the people here in Regina when they get to see what an upgrader looks like or they get to see what a fertilizer plant is, Mr. Speaker. But I'll tell you what that means to small business. It just means a great deal, in the small rural community.

You put 50 more new families in Cut Knife,

Saskatchewan, and I'll tell you that is a horrendous impact to the local economy. That means taxation, that means — I'll tell you we'll get right back into what the NDP were saying about education and about rural Saskatchewan shutting down.

That kind of diversification, Mr. Speaker, for small business, means that the teachers are going to be able to stay in the class-rooms because there are going to be more and more children in those class-rooms, and those teachers are going to be spending money in those small businesses.

That's what that means. That's what it's all about. Those farmers, Mr. Speaker, out in Cut Knife, they realize that. They realize that if their sons or daughters do not wish to farm, that there is no other benefit for them in that small community of Cut Knife unless they diversify, unless they bring businesses in there. If there is nothing else other than farming for them in that community, then they have to leave. And that's exactly what the NDP have been trying to do all these years, Mr. Speaker, is keep this province at a stagnant pace.

(1515)

I am serious, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province ought to be thinking a little bit serious before they make up their minds about voting. And there is an election coming up in the near future, and, Mr. Speaker, they ought to really think hard and strong about them ever voting for a party that has no plan for small business, has no plan for diversification, has no plans whatsoever for agriculture, no plans for health or education. They have to this day, Mr. Speaker, refused to lay out any kind of a plan for the people to analyse, for the small-business people to analyse.

Mr. Speaker, I look at SEDCO and when I talk about SEDCO, members of the opposition, they talk about the SEDCO losses. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we've had SEDCO losses, and I believe in the neighbourhood of maybe up to \$19 million worth of SEDCO losses.

An Hon. Member: — Last year alone.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well fine, the member says, last year alone. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I would tend to debate that anywhere in my riding with the members that could holler that across the floor about \$19 millions lost in SEDCO, any day.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the successes. Let's talk about the successes that SEDCO had as well, and let's compare. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, maybe the reason there are some members on the opposition of the NDP, some reason why they're so successful, I'll tell you, maybe we could add that success up — the only success up — to the fact that the only success that they've ever been successful at is absolutely do nothing. Nothing.

I look at, Mr. Speaker, what we could have done for small business in this province if we wouldn't have lost the \$90,000-plus a day at the Prince Albert pulp mill. Those guys purchased that. The NDP purchased that pulp mill at

millions of dollars of loss. Potash mines the same way.

Mr. Speaker, even Allan Blakeney, when he was still in this legislature, even Allan Blakeney admitted where they went wrong in the good times. Even Allan Blakeney admitted that the NDP were wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, when Allan Blakeney began to admit that, they dumped him. They dumped him as leader and they said, we're going to have a leadership review and we're going to bring in another guy. And they did.

And that Leader of the NDP is now hiding. He won't come out with a business plan; he won't talk about what he's going to do with SEDCO. He's going to do so much. What's he going to do? Is he going to take all these programs and wave some miniature SEDCO away? Well, Mr. Speaker, I think he ought to take a look at what he's telling the folks, because he's absolutely telling the folks nothing.

Oh, he's a great orator, Mr. Speaker. He can say . . . he can use the words, but if you listen to those words, they're empty. There isn't anything behind it. There isn't anything to back him up. And that's where I say, he better start explaining to small-business people in this province where he stands on the issues for small business, where he stands on the issues for agriculture, because if we haven't got agriculture, we haven't got small business.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that we've spent thousands and thousands of dollars and millions of dollars in expansion of business in this province, in start-up loans and making cash available for people to start up. And I'll say, Mr. Speaker, that we've accommodated the people where even the banking institutions have turned their backs on them.

Oh, that's true, we have. There has been instances where there are people that they had a good idea, but they just did not have the cash equity to get into it that the banks wanted. And SEDCO helped them. We helped them get started. This government helped them. And now that we're into furniture manufacturing, we're into all sorts of processing that's going on.

Mr. Speaker, I just have to look around, you know, like . . . I take a look at, let's use the furniture manufacturing, for instance. Look at the hundreds of jobs that are created through furniture manufacturing in this province alone. Well members opposite said, it's a shame. But when you look at the spin-offs in the communities and across this province because of the furniture manufacturing in this province, we've now established in excess of 150 jobs.

Let them argue that they're not happening. Let them argue they're not happening. Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you that with those kinds of job creations — and it's real job creations — that it's just definitely hard to argue.

I want to say that investments made by Saskatchewan people in their own communities does stimulate the growth and build a future, not only for themselves, Mr. Speaker, for their children and for the rest of the community, and for people that are willing to want to move into the community.

I look at the tax bases that are behind all these small businesses, for instance. I'll give you an example in our community, in the community of Lashburn, and I'm one of the small businesses in the community of Lashburn. Mr. Speaker, if I wouldn't have had the opportunity to have some diversification in my particular area — and I'm probably one of the more fortunate ones to have some diversification, and that is oil and gas — I would tend to think that I would be fairly unfortunate like some other areas had been. And I want to say that my tax base alone in the community of Lashburn, just for me a little individual, a small business, runs roughly \$5,000 a year just for the municipal tax. If a disaster was to hit and my business was to go down, Mr. Speaker, in that community, that community loses that tax base.

If the farm . . . at one time if it was just farmers . . . and farmers tell me this back in my area, and if they were not . . . if it was just them that I had to rely on as far as entertaining my business was concerned, they wouldn't be the industry to keep my doors opened. And I know that. And I respect them for being up front with me.

Farming was difficult over the last several years. But this government had put their back to the wall for farmers and that is not good enough from the NDP. The NDP have ridiculed GRIP and NISA. Well they're going to rewrite it or do something with it or they're going to throw it out and bring in something else.

And I go back to the time when interest rates were 24 per cent. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I paid 24 per cent in my small business. I survived that. But I'll tell you I was one of those small business at that time asking, asking for an NDP administration to help our small businesses, not only me, but to help all the small businesses and home owners in this province to survive those times. And the Leader of the Opposition — the Leader of the NDP — the now leader said: oh, you'll have to do as well as you can, my friends. It's no help from us, no help from the NDP government at that time.

But I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker. When we had a Progressive Conservative administration coming forward on the march, they said they will be for the people and they'll stand for the people and they'll help the people. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly, exactly what they've done.

And then after we've done all this, Mr. Speaker, for small business communities and everything else, the NDP are up there and they're hollering, they're hollering a bunch of nonsense. They're saying we're running unnecessary deficits. Well where did the money go, Mr. Speaker? That's what they ask.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Where did the money go? I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the money went . . . I'll tell you where the money went, Mr. Speaker. They went in all our plans. They went into the plans of our small businesses. Yes, we have a plan and we had a plan and we have another plan and we'll be taking that plan into the future, Mr. Speaker.

But I'll tell you something. A good portion of that money

has gone into small business, and has gone into small business not directly through SEDCO, not directly through our small business association loans, but, Mr. Speaker, it's gone in through the agricultural sector, it's gone in through the educational sector, it's gone in through the health sector, it's gone in through all these sectors to help just exactly what we're talking about here today. To help the small rural communities and the small businesses in the cities cope with just that — those high interest rates, yes, those high interest rates that were set because of the Ontario market-place and everything else.

And I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker, about that. We have had to endure in this province, we have had to endure in this province — and I hope members of the opposition listen to this — we have had to endure in this province, ever since 1981, high interest rates unnecessarily because of what was happening in Ontario, because of that inflationary impact that was going on in Ontario. Western Canadians had to suffer because of the Ontario market-place, because of that huge inflationary impact.

We've suffered, Mr. Speaker, over the years because of the Ontario economy. We've paid for it yesterday, we've paid for it, and we're going to pay for it tomorrow. And I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker. Small business across this western country again, western Canada, is going to pay for it because, Mr. Speaker, Ontario has now one of the largest deficits in the history of Canada. In fact it was pointed out it is the largest.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Ontario has been put on alert — what is that going to do? — by the bond rating companies, have been put on alert. Well the members ask, what has that got to do with SEDCO? What has that got to do with small business?

I will tell you what it's going to do to SEDCO and small business. It will once again force a surge of interest rates. That's what it's going to do to SEDCO and small business. We are now going . . . instead of . . . like we in the province of Saskatchewan, yes, Mr. Speaker, we ran a deficit. Yes, Mr. Speaker, our government put the back to the wall for the people in this province. But yes, Mr. Speaker, our deficit was manageable — our deficit was manageable.

Members of the NDP may not . . . may holler. They don't like to hear that, Mr. Speaker. They don't like to hear that we're going to be a balanced budget in the next three years, because they went out and told the people it would take them 15 years.

(1530)

Small business likes to hear that, Mr. Speaker. Employees of those small businesses like to hear it, because they well know, they well know what the Ontario deficit is going to do to them. It's going to drive the interest rates back up on their small businesses, on their homes, on their vehicles, on literally every transaction that's going to take place again, Mr. Speaker, in our lifetime, in the next few, several, could be another 10 years, Mr. Speaker. Unless the Ontario administration, the Ontario NDP government does not get a handle on their economic situation in the

East, it means devastation again out west.

And so now what do we do, Mr. Speaker? What do we do? Do we turn our back again on the people of this province? No, I think not. I think, Mr. Speaker, the NDP should have learned a lesson from this. And I do believe that when we look at those blinding, those blinding promises that they are making to the public of Saskatchewan, I would think that now it becomes more incumbent upon this government and the medium to make those people more accountable. Because I say to you, sir, I know it will be this government that will be trying very hard to make the NDP more accountable as we near an election. And I will be one because I will tell you, sir, that they cannot have it both ways.

They cannot have the luxury of, over these years, talking about us running a deficit for nine consecutive years, a manageable deficit.

An Hon. Member: — Ten.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well a member says 10; I give him 10. They cannot have that luxury, sir, when they are spending more money through their promises, as the member from Wilkie had pointed out in his budget address. And I'll tell you, sir, they can't have it both ways because if they are lambasting this government for running those deficits, I can only say to the people of this province, sir, that through those promises our deficit is going to be in the neighbourhood of somewhere — and I would say this, sir — in the neighbourhood of somewhere around the \$3 billion mark that I've just shortly added up. That's a one-year deficit.

So from us going to three years for balancing the budget to make it a more prosperous accounting, that the people are wanting to get into, because it's going to mean lower interest rates and more money available through the lending markets to the small business communities and everyone else . . . This is what is going to impact on us. They are going to . . . as far as I have been able to add up, it's going to cost us in the neighbourhood of around a \$3 billion deficit if the NDP was ever, ever, ever elected government in the next short term.

But I also believe that it's as well for the media. I also believe that it is up to them as well to start asking questions for small-business people, start asking questions for the individuals in this province that the NDP are not willing to talk to . . . who the NDP are not willing to talk to. I think it's incumbent upon the media to help us because the media have always assured the people that we had to put our program forth to the people. And we've never hidden that. But now it's up to the media to make the NDP come forward with their plans for small business, their plans for SEDCO, their plans for agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, they think about — not only think but they talk about — all the great things they're going to do; that they're going to save some people that they supposedly think that want saving. But I indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that they haven't said a word.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition stood in this

Assembly during the budget debate. He tore down our budget, the government's budget. He just tried to tear it apart because we weren't doing this, that, or the next thing for anyone. He said how horrendous it was for us running another deficit. Tenth, he said, I think it was the tenth consecutive deficit he called upon.

Well I don't think anybody in the public has to be reminded about the world economic situation that's out there. But the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, were ready to take it and get things under control. They're ready to back the administration in this government just for that reason.

And our Finance minister had laid out his budget which was going to help small business. Our Finance minister had laid out a budget that was going to help diversify this economy and allow small businesses to grow in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when I talked about, in the last little while, about 835 jobs that had just been maintained because of past programming, the small business loan association . . . and 317 new businesses started in this province.

Yes, we can talk about some of those failures that the NDP wish to talk about. But I'll tell you something. When you look at our population, you look at the strength that this province is building towards . . . Mr. Speaker, I guess I come from the side of the world in this province where I'm more prone to see what goes on in Alberta. And I'd like to say to you that what I see goes on in Alberta, I think that attitude is certainly moving eastward, sir. I see that attitude moving through my riding. And as I see that attitude moving through my riding, I can go into The Battlefords, and I see that attitude there in business and I see things happening.

And as I go into the Prince Alberts, I see that happening with the small-business world. I see that diversification from the Prince Albert pulp mill.

And as I come southward, and we don't have to stop in too many communities, but we can stop in Saskatoon and see the expansions and see what has happened. And I'll give you an example — that new arena that was built there and this government participated in, sir. I'll tell you, there's been more world events held in Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, that has helped, and where small business has taken direct advantage of. That has been just a pleasure being able to . . . well it's just been a pleasure being able to be part of it. Because I will tell, Mr. Speaker, when I look at that beautiful facility and what it's meant to the city of Saskatoon and the whole province, it's just great.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when people in Lashburn, Saskatchewan, or Lloydminster or Maidstone or from Neilburg to Marsden or Cut Knife, when they travel to Saskatoon and they take in curling events or they take in hockey events, world hockey events, if they take in concerts, I'll tell you, sir, those people all spend money in Saskatoon. And the only ones that have an attitude about a rural and urban split in this province, Mr. Speaker, are the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, rural Saskatchewan, as far as I am concerned, has always been a strength to the cities of this province. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this, that if anyone supports the suppliers in the city of Saskatoon or Regina or Prince Albert, the meat-packing plants, the dry-good suppliers . . . I will tell you, sir, that a lot of that money has not flowed from within but has come from without to within, to the larger city centres.

And I say we have to take a look at the attitude. And there's nothing more that the NDP administration would love us to have in this province but is a negative attitude, a negative attitude.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to tell you something. You take a little kid, you take a little kid and you tell that little kid from day one that this place is the most rotten province to live in, it's just a terrible place to live in, and you tell that kid every day of his life that Saskatchewan is a rotten place to do business in, it is the most . . . well you heard what I said.

You tell that kid every day of his life. When that kid grows up to be 18 years old, I'll tell you something. He's going to stay here and tell other little kids how rotten this place is, as the NDP are doing, or he's going to leave or whatever.

Now you take the other kid and you tell this kid how we can build this province, how great this province is, the opportunity that's here in this province, you take that kid and tell him everything is in his hands. That kid is going to be one of the most successful young men or women when he grows up than you'd ever think of. And I know. I know, Mr. Speaker, and you know that that is true. It's an attitude. It's an attitude, and there is nothing more . . . and I'll tell you there is nothing more the NDP . . . Well the NDP survive on negativeness. They just love negativeness.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you something. There are days when I am down. There are days when I am down, and I'll tell you something and I'll tell you something right now, is that when I get to visit with my Premier, that guy is so positive. That guy is so positive.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — The NDP kind of make fun of this but it's true. Listen, listen to the positiveness that comes out of our Premier. He believes in people and people believe in him.

It's an attitude problem. And that is why the NDP are so afraid today. Today they're afraid, Mr. Speaker, that they are losing in the polls because of their attitude, because of the attitude that they have, a negative attitude.

They have told the people of the province of Saskatchewan . . . they won't tell them anything what they're going to do about small business. They don't tell them what they're going to do for health care and education. They won't tell anybody anything, Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition says the time that I'm going to tell you is when . . . the 28 days. You'll have 28 days to make up your mind, and that's during an election period, a writ period.

Not good enough. The press should not allow this to happen. I am not allowing it to happen. I'm asking every one of you to stand up and tell the province of Saskatchewan your plan for small business. And they say, well, Mr. Speaker, sit down. That's because, Mr. Speaker, they can't stand, they can't stand the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. The members will certainly have an opportunity to enter into the debate. I'd ask them to allow the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster to finish his comments.

(1545)

Mr. Hopfner: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you something. You know, like I look at the families in this province and I look at the sincerity of the small communities.

And I look at, for instance, Fair Share Saskatchewan. I look at my riding when I talk about Fair Share Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I went to a Fair Share meeting in my riding. And, Mr. Speaker, there was not one community that did not come out to support Fair Share program that our government is instituting in the province of Saskatchewan. Not one community failed to show up.

And members laugh. Members make a joke of it because the NDP believe in central government, believe in central power, do not believe in diversification in small business, do not believe in rural life. When I look at every one of them, Mr. Speaker, they couldn't . . . well when I look at the NDP and see the look on their face and the fun they make and I'm trying to talk serious about it, I will say to you, sir, that that Fair Share Saskatchewan program is probably one of the most important programs right now to those rural communities in my constituency as will any.

So now members are hollering again, Mr. Speaker. I want to tell you. I want to tell you the member says: well we'll take them all out of Regina. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's like everyone else has been trying to tell them but they haven't been listening. Yes, we might be taking a few people from Regina to go into other parts of the province. We are a government for the people, and the government is going to the people as we have in the past. We're continuing to go to the people, and I will tell you this: that we are going to be seeing some nice things happening from as far as the federal administration is concerned as well. We will see federal administrations flowing into our city centres. There is going to be a diversification of government, and it's just something that I know that the NDP wish they would have thought of before we, Mr. Speaker.

Because every program that we have come forth with so far, every program and every announcement that has been made, Mr. Speaker, to date, the opposition members will criticize this way. They will criticize in different parts of the province. They won't criticize, Mr. Speaker, where the various events are taking place. I have not had anyone one of those members show up at a Fair Share meeting in my riding and say how bad it was. Not one member showed up in my riding to say how bad it

was because they know that everyone of my communities would run them out of the constituency. They know it's popular. They know it's popular.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, if you have a solid rural base, you have a solid city.

I look back, as a young fellow in this province, and I look back as a young fellow in this province, and I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I listened to my grandfather talk about his days as a young man in this province. And I say this to you: he told me about the development years. We used to visit the museum in Saskatoon at the Pioneer Days. We visited museums together and things like this, and he told me lots of stories about the progression in this province and stuff like this. He's told me about the hard work and dedication of their family and how they've had to cope. And then as I was able to grow through it and see the development in this province — you know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't all that bad.

I even gave the NDP credit for some of the things that they've done during their administration. But I do say this. They've lost sight. But when I look back at the development of this province and I look back at the heart — at the heart of this province — the rural way of life supported the city life. It built the city; it built the cities in this province.

The pioneers came to this country years ago and they diversified. They built cities and they built towns and the railroads and the transportation network and everything, had an all part to do with it. And we're trying to build on that. And we have one of the . . . and because of the geographic location of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that we're not close to ports and stuff and points, Mr. Speaker, it makes it a lot more difficult to diversify.

But I'll tell you something. If the NDP's attitude would change, if the NDP's negative attitude would change and if they would quit trying to spread these negative attitudes and make people believe that they're not worth anything, possibly things would happen a lot quicker in this province than what it . . . But I'll tell where the fright is. I'll tell you where the fright is. The fright is now of what NDP administrations are beginning to do in this country. That's what the fright is.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's what it's all about. It's no plans, but spend money relentlessly. Right now, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what it is. In Toronto alone they will be spending \$844 million on welfare, in Toronto alone. That is more than P.E.I. budget in the entire province, of 734 or \$36 million.

Mr. Speaker, what is that going to do to small business in Ontario? I'll tell you what. Today, Mr. Speaker, as of today anybody making \$35,000 or less are better off on welfare in Ontario than they are working. That's an NDP's platform. That's an NDP's platform for fighting recessions and inflation.

Now I haven't heard of anything more ridiculous in my life. Where is the incentive for industry to stay in the province? None. Where is the incentive for small

business to stay in the province? There is none.

You know why, Mr. Speaker? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you why. Because the NDP administration said small business and industry is going to pay for the program. They're going to pay for them, those people that are making \$35,000 or less now, just to remain on welfare. Don't go out and find a job.

They want to keep these people down. They don't want the people to work. They don't want the people to feel good about themselves. That's what's happening in Ontario. They don't want the people to believe in themselves. They don't want to have a good attitude about themselves.

That is what's happening here, Mr. Speaker, as those NDP members have tried to go across this province. And I know they've been in my riding and they've been laughed at in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, yes, even people that have supported me and still support me to this day have gone just to hear what they might have had to say, to a couple of community meetings that the NDP have held in the riding. And so when they came back from those meetings, I asked them, I said, well what did they promise you, because they certainly aren't telling the media and they certainly aren't telling us. And the members know when they were there. And in fact one of them got kind of in a hurry to leave a grocery store in my home community because he didn't want to answer any questions. And because we're not allowed to mention a member's name or get into that — I wish they'd push me on it — but because we're not allowed to, I won't mention the guy's name. But anyway, he didn't stay long because they weren't able to talk about anything. They didn't have any answers to anything or another.

But I asked them, well how many people showed up at this community meeting they held in Lashburn. And the guy knows who I'm talking about. And anyway, Mr. Speaker, they talked about everything that we did wrong. They talked about all the negatives and how we lost a little money here or lost a little money there, how we might have put a little money here and put a little money there, how we're dealing with our friends.

Well I want to tell you, sir. Well I want to tell you something, sir. They talked about opening the books. They talk about all these kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. Well I give you this. We opened the books in 1982 with the Provincial Auditor. Small-business people can now come in and see every program that is available to them, how many actual dollars have been spent in that program. Mr. Speaker, they can come in, in public, it's open to the public, we opened the books.

But they want to know . . . They want to get right back to that and say, well where did the money go? Well, Mr. Speaker, it went into small-business programs. It went into health programs. It went into education programs. It went into industrial programs. It went into agricultural programs. Mr. Speaker, it went into a Progressive Conservative government's plan.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, we are open to criticism and we've had good constructive criticism. Our Provincial Auditor gives us constructive criticism. But again, I go back to the issue that it is the NDP, Mr. Speaker, it is the NDP with their negative attitude that want to dig up smut. They want to talk about, well, want to talk about GigaText. How often, Mr. Speaker . . . I mentioned GigaText. I say, yes it was a failure. Sure it was.

An Hon. Member: — What about M.A.S. Medical?

(1600)

Mr. Hopfner: — What about M.A.S. Medical? Well, Mr. Speaker, it didn't do so well either.

But I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker. Do the NDP talk about the motel at Moose Jaw that Mr. Skoberg was involved with? No. Do they talk about Nabu that they were involved with? No. Do they talk about the \$90,000 a year that they lost with the Prince Albert pulp mill after they purchased it without a country money? No. Do they talk about the purchase of the potash mines and that the people of this province had to absorb almost a billion dollars in write-off because of their bad investment? No. They don't talk about those things. Do they talk about the deficits that we absorbed and now they blame us for through the Crown corporations? No.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, you give this administration the kind of cash and the billions of dollars in cash that those fellows, that the NDP had taken out of this country, have spent wastefully, have not been able to pay with or to dividends to the people of this province, you give us that in cash. If we would have had that in cash in this province, Mr. Speaker, there would not have been a deficit in the province of Saskatchewan even during these rough times.

That's the way it is, Mr. Speaker. That's the truth. That's the truth. And yet they will stand up here in their righteous old negative attitude and tell us and tell the people in the province of Saskatchewan, and indeed the world, that this administration is responsible for all the debt.

Well I'll tell you something. I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker, that I look at a couple of years ago when we had to write off that billion dollars in interest on the potash mine purchases that the NDP had made in the province. It made me sick to know that we had to absorb that as taxpayers across this country. They don't go out and educate the public in the province of Saskatchewan about that, and we are so busy trying to talk about positives here, we don't dwell on all those negatives, Mr. Speaker. So they're just hoping like heck that the public don't hear about those stories, but I'm telling them now.

We're a billion dollars further in debt because of their potash investments. And that's only in interest. And that is because we wanted to make the potash mines more accessible and more accountable for being able to market the potash and put them in a much better and profitable situation. And, Mr. Speaker, we did that, we . . .

An Hon. Member: — Running it like a business.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well the member here, the member said we're running it like a business. You bet. We're running it like a business. That's one of my favourite . . . the member from Pelly's favourite says, you run it like a business. I had to throw that in here because my friend is not going to be running in the next election.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to indicate to you though that that billion dollars . . . you take that billion dollars and you put that into small business in this province. If you'd put that into small business in this province through SEDCO for instance — a billion dollars — just imagine it. Members of the opposition, the NDP, imagine a billion dollars and put it into just a program for small business.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that billion dollars that the taxpayers had to write off because of their mismanagement of purchasing potash industry that they knew nothing about, knew absolutely nothing about, couldn't make a profit. They couldn't even raise the money here in the province of Saskatchewan or in this country. They had to go into New York markets, borrow the money from the people that they hate, borrow the money from the United States, from the people that they hate. And I tell you, sir, it's sickening. Because if we could've taken those dollars and put it into any one program, Mr. Speaker, look how much better off we'd have been.

I look at being able to just take that interest that we wrote off and put it into health care. And the members babble on about the fact that there's not enough money put into health care. And yet, you know, this administration has more than doubled health care in the province of Saskatchewan in its short tenure.

I'll tell you, when I look in my riding, I look in Maidstone and I look at Cut Knife and I look at the moratoriums being lifted on nursing homes and hospitals, just those communities alone, Mr. Speaker, just those communities alone know what even Health has meant for diversification in those communities. It's kept doctors in the communities. It's kept nurses in the communities. It's kept home-care people in the communities. It's kept the people in the communities in their own homes. And they knew that if they weren't able to manage in their own homes, they wouldn't have to leave their home communities but they would be able to stay there and go to the nursing home.

Those are the kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, that we've built on over the years. We've built on the belief that by diversifying, by not just relying strictly on agriculture, small business would be able to survive in this province. Members of the opposition know that. Members of the opposition would not go and publicly debate any one of my members, any one of my colleagues in their home communities about those real issues because, Mr. Speaker, the proof is in those communities. The facilities are in those communities and most services are in those communities, and the people that are receiving those services know.

And I'll give you an example here as well. It reminds me of going back to the election in 1986, it goes back to the

election in 1986. Bob Long, the former minister of Highways under the NDP administration, and Allan Blakeney in the community of Cut Knife-Lloydminster went to the . . . I mean, were travelling the constituency of Cut Knife-Lloydminster, and they went into the community of Cut Knife and they were main-streeting. And they were indicating that a nursing home in a hospital would not be built by our administration.

Well first of all, the hospital was already built and the nursing home was under construction. And the seniors at the senior centre couldn't understand what they were talking about because this was already been taking place. Now if they would have only have driven around to see that it was under construction, they wouldn't have had to go around to . . . they wouldn't have had to have egg in their face because of the statement that they made. See, this administration was already building. And it's a true story.

You know what I mean, like when you have constituents coming back to you during the election and telling you these kinds of stories, I says, well didn't they go travel around a couple blocks just to make sure that this facility was or wasn't being built? No, they drove directly to the senior centre to prefab some big story about them not having their nursing home, that they thought, well they'll throw a mediscare out there and then we'll just leave town and they'll say, oh yes, those mean ugly Tories, and then away.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — But that wasn't the case, Mr. Speaker. And the members from the opposite know. But that is just the kind of attitude that they want to display to all the people in this province.

And I'll tell you something. They are masters, Mr. Speaker, of manipulating media. They are masters at it. And you know, when you get media people . . . Not in all cases. There are some . . . I'm not picking on all of them either and I don't want to. But I will tell you this, that when they get sucked in and editorialize instead of actually report, then, Mr. Speaker, I say they've been taken. They are not reporting or giving even a report where the people can make up their own minds or seek the information. That reporter might as well be sitting across with the NDP.

And I would say that for us on this side, if that's the only message that the media were trying to sell the public, if it was only our message that they were trying to sell the public . . . Because I will tell you, sir, we should be openly criticized as a government. We should be criticized for . . . but criticized to the point where the criticism is probably, if you will, in a way that can be weighed out to a point of an explanation and that explanation be accepted finally. If there is no explanation, well then the questions are left there and they're left hanging. And then the people make up their own minds for themselves.

But a true reporting system such as that would be just that — is to let the people make up their own mind and not allow the NDP with the negative attitude spill over into their reporting or editorializing and allowing such negativeness even entering into the news media. I mean,

like I could probably draw you numerous examples, but I guess probably that's for another day.

I guess probably, Mr. Speaker, when we look at . . . just looking at the positive side of things for a moment, I say this. If every one of us could go out of this room today and just say one nice thing about Saskatchewan — not about a government or anything else, but just one nice thing about Saskatchewan to someone else — and that person carry that message, just think in the short period of time what kind of an attitude change we'd have in this province about ourselves. I think . . .

An Hon. Member: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is the hon. member's point of order?

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I'll try and . . . I rose on a point of order; it's actually a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, and I want to have an opportunity to outline that to you.

As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, today is known as private members' day. And in all of the Commonwealth parliamentary or the British parliamentary system, all our legislatures, the parliamentary system in the United Kingdom have always had a private members' day.

And the purpose of that is so that neither . . . that day cannot be dominated by either government or opposition or the political parties. It's a day when private members get up to express their areas of concern or to pass on gratitude for something they want to accomplish as an individual member. It could be a private members' Bill, for example.

And traditionally in this legislature Tuesday has been private members' day. And in the earlier part of the day there was an agreement between the House leaders . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, I know you're shaking your head but I want to go on to build this case, and this comes into it.

(1615)

And part of what I want to use to build my case as a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, is in fact from Beauchesne's 5th Edition. I believe it also appears the same in Beauchesne's 6th Edition. And references can also be found in Erskine May, but I will not quote from there at this time.

I will use Beauchesne's because Beauchesne's is a reflection of what's also in Erskine May. And it has to do with citation 10. It's precedent and tradition.

Behind the written rules and filling in the gaps, lies the vast quantity of precedent. Although the House normally assumes that a ruling is binding for the future, Speakers have used the flexibility available to them to develop procedure regardless of conflicting precedents in the past. Changes in the Standing Orders from time to time also give ample opportunity for the House to adjust the interpretation of its precedents and tradition in the light of changing circumstances. It is impossible to

estimate the extent of this body of traditional parliamentary law. In Canada, not only is there more than a century of native practice, but also Standing Order 1 adopts for Canada all the centuries of tradition (where applicable) of United Kingdom House of Commons. Custom and precedent are basic to the parliamentary system. Parliament, and the manner in which it works, has developed over centuries and the written rules are relative newcomers to the procedural field. Indeed, increasingly, the written rules are being used, not to codify existing practice, but rather to trim and adjust historic traditions to modern needs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, private members' day is a very important day in the preservation of democracy and not allow the domination of a government or opposition. And that, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, is why I have to bring into your information an agreement that was made earlier amongst the House leaders, that at 2:30 resolution 9 would be debated, that it would be put forward. The resolution was by Mr. McLaren, and the seconder obviously was the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster.

And it's also a very long part. I'll bring it to a conclusion. It's also a very long part of tradition that members of others have indicated an interest to speak, namely Mr. Lautermilch and myself. That was supposed to be concluded by 4 o'clock . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member is giving a speech more than anything. I've given you plenty of time to put your point of order. Clearly I think I understand what your point of order is. You've certainly given me enough opportunity to understand what you're trying to tell me. But I'll just give an opportunity to put it succinctly, and then we can move on from there.

Mr. Anguish: — I will put it succinctly, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity, and I appreciate the amount of time that you have given me. Mr. Speaker, the agreement has been not honoured and it's obvious, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's obvious to me at least that this is a question of privilege, not a point of order. It's a question of privilege in that we had — myself and the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster — indicated that we wanted to avail ourselves to the opportunity of speaking during private members' day on this very important motion put forward by the member from Yorkton. Because of the filibuster conducted by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, we have gone by the agreed times and therefore we have been denied our opportunity to speak in this forum. And I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that's a question of privilege.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises his concerns as a matter of privilege. It's obviously not a matter of privilege. He raises points about the traditions of this House, on Tuesday being private members' day.

Mr. Speaker, all members in this House, in this legislature, this 20th legislature, have experienced on many occasions members — from the hon. member who just took his place, and perhaps even that member and some of his colleagues — speaking for hours and hours about whatever.

For him to raise the question of a legitimate time for a member to speak, be that member a private member on private members' day or a member speaking on other motions during government orders, it is not certainly a matter of privilege for the member to raise that he hasn't had a chance to speak yet. He will have his opportunity to speak. The hon. member who is on his feet from Cut Knife-Lloyd has every right to speak and he's exercising that right.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the hon. member's point of privilege and the hon. member's response. There are two elements to the issues the hon. member raises — an alleged agreement that was made between House Leaders. Now once again, I simply reaffirm my statement which you will find under No. 76 *Votes and Proceedings*.

You will find in that statement that I indicated at that time that agreements or alleged agreements between House leaders are not part of our rules and therefore it is not the right, even of the Speaker, to rule on an issue like that which is not part of the rules of our House. These are a dispute of facts between two members of the House and those do not come under our rules and regulations. Number one.

Number two, in this House we do not have time limits on our length of speeches, whether that may be on a discussion of a Bill or a motion or on private members' day. Our House does not have time limits on speeches.

Order, order. Our House does not have time limits and therefore that is not a question of privilege either because we don't have time limits. And we have seen many speeches of many varying lengths here. And therefore I must rule that your question of privilege is not a question of privilege.

Order. I cannot recognize the hon. member until some intervening House business has taken place. I have just made my ruling.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate what your ruling would be. I was just saying as I was being interrupted there, that the attitude in this province, if we could just begin to, instead of tear ourselves within apart, that you know, there's a lot more direction that we could take this province.

I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that just what the member maybe have raised is the part when he spoke on in the budget. I didn't have that opportunity, and these are kinds of some of the things that I was hoping that I could say during that particular debate but it was not able. So I have to try and word it into a resolution instead on private members' day. So I hope you would accept that.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, though, that because of the facts of the inherited deficit that we had managed to

absorb from the NDP administration back prior to us taking government in 1982, that deficit from the Crown corporations had been into the billions. And I'd just like to say, sir, that in seeing what our accomplishments have been to help offset the problems for the people in the province, especially like I look at the seniors.

We had, Mr. Speaker, to help the seniors in small rural communities and cities in their income security, for instance. Increased maximum Saskatchewan income plan benefit since 1982 from \$25 a month to \$80 a month for singles — that was 220 per cent — and from \$45 a month to \$135 a month for couples, at 200 per cent. Significant increases. And there would have been possible chances of having significantly more increases and higher increases if we might have had some of those dollars.

And this compares favourably to the rate of inflation which increased by 44 per cent from 1982 to 1991.

We also introduced the senior citizens' tax reduction and increased it to \$200 in the 1987 tax year. We've established the Saskatchewan Pension Plan in 1986, which now has over 52,000 people subscribing to it, Mr. Speaker. We have established the senior citizen heritage program in 1986, providing an annual grant to about 70,000 low and middle income senior households each year.

Since 1986, 186.6 million in grants have been provided to Saskatchewan seniors, and an additional 36 million is available for 1991.

Mr. Speaker, think, seniors in our province do spend money. They do incorporate their spending into our small businesses and co-operatives throughout Saskatchewan. And this means a great deal to small business.

Mr. Speaker, as I'd indicated earlier, in health care we've approved over 2,500 new and replacement special care home beds in the province. We've expanded adult respite and day programs in special care homes. We passed The Personal Care Homes Act in 1989, which will ensure that minimum standards are met by the private care homes. We've increased funding for home care by 142.1 per cent. That's 13.3 million in 1981-82, 32.2 million in 1991-92.

We've established the province-wide chiropody foot care program in 1984, now available in 33 clinics. We expanded physiotherapy and occupational therapy throughout the province. We've introduced the senior citizens' ambulance assistance program in 1986, which limited the cost to seniors to a maximum of \$150 per road ambulance trip.

Implemented the computerized health card, making access to the prescription drug plan less cumbersome for seniors and others. All those simplifying and meaning dollar savers to our seniors in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, how much more could we have added to this if the NDP would have saved the money under the good times.

Then I look under agriculture, Mr. Speaker, just in

programming alone, to help small business, help agriculture helping small business. Counselling assistance for farmers guaranteed. Farm purchase program rebates. Feed grain adjustment program. Feeder association loan guaranteed programs. Livestock facility tax credits. Livestock investment tax credits. Save Our Soils. Farm oil royalty programs. Grasshopper control. Irrigation assistance. 1984 livestock moving program. 1985 drought assistance program. And this goes on and on. Pages and pages and pages, Mr. Speaker, of programs for agriculture.

This farming community, Mr. Speaker, in this province means a great deal to this government because we know that with the strong base, as I had said earlier, in rural Saskatchewan means a strong viable economy for the larger city centres. And there are not too many people in Regina here or Saskatoon or Prince Albert, Yorkton, Swift Current, Lloydminster, anywhere, that would argue that the farm economy does not mean a great deal to their businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I want members of the opposition to know this. That as they speak, they ought to be bringing their plan forward. And I am going to take my chair here in this Assembly and allow some of you people to speak. And instead of your negative attitude of ripping and tearing apart about some of the failures that yes, we as a government have had, I would like you sooner to compare your programs with our programs for small business.

Tell us what you're going to do for small business. Tell us what you're going to do for agriculture. Tell us what you're going to do for health care. Tell us what you're going to do for education. Tell us what you're going to do for social reform in this province. More importantly, tell the people of Saskatchewan the truth.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that it's been a privilege and a pleasure for me to speak here this afternoon. It's like I said earlier, I did not have the opportunity to speak during the budget debate, but I want to indicate to you, sir, that this budget has set forth many good ideas, has brought forth a hope for this province, has brought hope for every small-business person and employee across this province for the simple fact that we are on a direction of going back to balancing the budget in this province. We're going back, Mr. Speaker, to allowing the people in this province to be the spenders, to direct the dollars.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to see more and more of this as years go by. And I know that through our Premier and his positive attitude that our links from markets throughout the world will come back to benefit everyone in this province. And I know through this proper management, through supporting small business, I want to indicate to you, sir, that we can only see, we're only going to see good, positive things happen.

And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that all the people that are here in this province right now will be able to take part and will take part in that attitude change, not believe this negativity; believe in themselves and take hold and let's move forward to make Saskatchewan that much

more better place to live. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say in the outset it's been rather an interesting couple of hours as I listened to the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster. I'm going to have to sit down and reacquaint myself with the motion put forth by the member from Yorkton because this guy was all over the wall, and I'm not really sure if he knew what we were talking about.

But as I understand the motion, Mr. Speaker, it is endorsing this government's action with respect to the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation or SEDCO. And interesting, I find, that this motion would come before the House just shortly after the annual report for 1990 was tabled in this legislature.

I want to during the course of my remarks refer to some of the figures that were put forth by this government which indicates clearly this government's direction with respect to the small-business community or the Saskatchewan business community, sir.

I also intend at the end of my remarks to move an amendment to this motion that will, I believe, more accurately describe the actions of this PC administration since their election in 1982 — a record that I would say, Mr. Speaker, has been one that has had some very negative impact on the Saskatchewan business community. And during my remarks I will be using some figures from Statistics Canada and other sources that will clearly indicate that that is in fact the case.

I will, because of a shortage of time, be shortening my remarks because I would like to give my colleague, the member from The Battlefords, the opportunity to second my amendment to this motion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting the mover of this motion would stand in this place and talk so glowingly about what this government has done with respect to SEDCO and the business community. And you know, I found it quite interesting, Mr. Speaker, that this is the same MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who indicated to the media in his home community that, well, you know, by golly, I'd been out canvassing for an hour; I came back and I decided I'm not running in the next election.

And there's a good reason why. There's a good reason why that would be reported in the press, I say to that member who sits in this Assembly. Because you, sir, are part of the regime that has been destroying the economic base of this province since you were elected in 1982. And part of it started with when you were the minister you sold off the Manalta Coal mine in the southern part of this province. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, shame on you too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, they talked about stabilizing community, and he drew some kind of a parallel that he was saying that SEDCO has some 2,000 clients and 1,500 of those are in rural Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that when I look in their annual report, it tells me that their commitment is not to the small-business community in Saskatchewan. And the question is, where did all the money go that's built into now a \$75 million deficit from a surplus that they took over in 1982?

So I want to share with that member the amount of money that's been put into small business and the amount that's been put into some of the larger corporations in this province. I want to say to the member from Yorkton, that when I first looked at this financial report, I was a little surprised because I didn't even realize it was the magnitude that it is.

You know, I look on page 6 of that report, under loans and investments, and there's an aggregate total of about fifty-seven and a half million dollars, loan, and it's broken down in terms of the size of the loans. And what I found was quite interesting — that loans under \$50,000 amounted to something in the neighbourhood of three and a half million dollars out of the fifty-seven and a half. But you know when I looked at the loans over a million and a half, I find that, you know, by golly, there's only 14 of them over a million. But you know how much money they got, Mr. Member? They got over \$38 million. That's what they got.

So you've got for small borrowers three and a half million and you've got \$38 million for 14 of your corporate friends. That's what's been the problem in this province, Mr. Member, and that's why you're going to be defeated in the polls. That's why you're not running again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I mentioned before that when they took this corporation over in 1982, it was in a surplus position. And what is it this year? There's an accumulated debt of \$75 million in the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, and you've turned that around from a surplus. Last year alone this corporation lost another \$20 million.

And when people say to me and say to members of my caucus, where did all the money go, these are some of the places that are visible where they go. But I tell, Mr. Member and Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of areas in this province where they simply can't account for where all that money that they've squandered has gone, and the people will hold them to account when the election is called.

Mr. Speaker, part of economic development in this province and part of my critic area is tourism. And I wanted today say a few words about tourism. It's projected that it can turn into the largest major industry in this country by the year 2000, and it's a statement that I wouldn't argue with. But you know some of the actions of this provincial government and some of the actions of the federal government are, I believe, putting that very

valuable industry at risk.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Tourism Research Institute has indicated that they believe the federal goods and services tax will cost the Saskatchewan tourism industry as much as \$10 million in lost accommodation and food services. Now I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what kind of support is that for the Saskatchewan tourist industry? What kind of support is that for the hoteliers? What kind of support is that for those that have rental accommodations and restaurants? I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this government is totally pricing this province out of the market.

It's not only what the federal administration has done with their implementation of the 7 per cent goods and services tax. Now if that wasn't bad enough, this Minister of Finance, with a stroke of genius, before even presenting it legally through legislation in this Assembly, indicates that he's going to introduce another 7 per cent. And by golly, Mr. Speaker, you know he does it.

People who were going to come to this province to view our North and to share with us our facilities and the beauty of this province are now looking at a 14 per cent tax.

Mr. Minister, but that's not all. That's not all. Our Highways budget has just been cut and anybody who has driven over these roads will understand that there's a need for repairs on many of our highways. The park fees have been increased dramatically and if you compare them with other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, there's good reason why tourists may not want to come to this province.

We've got the highest gas prices we've seen in a long, long time in this province, when we were promised in 1982 that there would be none. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that all of these things make a mockery of the motion that the member from Yorkton put before this legislature.

And what's the reality? What is the reality of what's been happening in this province? Have retail sales increased? Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. They haven't even kept up with the rate of inflation. Have the number of business men and women who have closed their doors in this province since this government was elected decreased? And I tell you the answer is no. Last year we set a record — 616 bankruptcies in this province, 616 families dependent on those businesses for their livelihood. This is the plan of this government. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, this government has had choices and they've made the wrong choices. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province are saying, no way; they're saying, no more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, when we go through the estimates in this legislature, and when you look at department by department by department and the kind of money that's funnelled into Dome Media and Dome Advertising, it's a disgrace, Mr. Speaker.

It's a disgrace at a time when they're closing hospital beds, when they're asking tourists who are coming into this province to pay more for the services because of

taxation, that they aren't willing to look internally at the kind of expenditures that they've been making so that they can make the right choices. You can only, Mr. Speaker, go to the well so often. And I say to you that the people of this province are fed up.

And they are saying, no more, no way. They're asking for an election, Mr. Speaker. This government is almost to the limit. It's almost to the five years. Normally any thinking government would prepare itself so that in a four-year term they could call an election, but not this Premier. He goes from disaster to disaster, from flip to flop. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I get calls from people on a fairly regular basis, people who have been asking this government, small-business men and women who have been asking this government for some support. And what do they get in this budget? In this budget there was nothing for business. In this budget was a massive tax grab that's going to mean less disposable income and less consumer spending. That's what the business people in this province got. It's going to affect everyone from the retailers to the tourist industry, and I would even suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, the manufacturing sector because the average men and women in this province have seen their disposable income decrease to the point where they can't support those businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's a sad commentary on a government that has run out of ideas.

And it's clear that they've run out of ideas. All you have to look at — the way this budget was presented. Normally in this province, as is the historical agenda, the government presents a throne speech in which they outline their general direction and a long-term plan for governing the province. But you know, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time this has ever happened in Saskatchewan that an arrogant government would first of all announce a budget outside of the legislature, and then, totally ignoring accepted procedure, would come in and present a budget without outlining a long-term game plan.

(1645)

It's this kind of government, Mr. Speaker, that has people saying no more, no way. And I say to you: if this Premier ever has the courage to stand before the people of this province and ask for another mandate, he is going to find that his candidates are going to be defeated right from one end of this province to the other.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I believe even the Premier's own riding is not safe. And why I tell you this, Mr. Speaker, is because I have phone calls from that area, people who have said that they believed in this Premier in 1982 and that they supported this government in '82 and in '86. But they feel betrayed. They feel betrayed because of a number of reasons. And let me talk about a couple.

The amount of cross-border dollars that are leaving that community are causing institutions in the city of Estevan to close. And what is this Premier doing? What does this Premier do? Has he contacted the federal minister in charge? The answer, sir, is not that anyone's aware of.

And I say the lack of inaction and the lack of support for even his home community is just simply not acceptable to the people in that area.

Mr. Speaker, as I look through the different numbers that are put forth by Statistics Canada and Saskatchewan Corporate and Consumer Affairs, it tells me why people want a new direction and why people are calling on this government to go before the people so that they can make their choice. The number of bankruptcies, the unprecedented out-migration, are just not acceptable.

You know, Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw North, tells me that the out-migration in this province, the net out-migration is so bad that this administration has quit publishing the monthly figures. And I can tell you why. I can tell you why they'll no longer publish the figures, this new open government that they're talking about, because in the last two-year total we had the highest two years of out-migration of any years in this province. And the sad part about it is, Mr. Speaker, three-quarters of them were our young people; three-quarters of those people were under 35 years of age.

And I say, what a future and what a legacy that this government is leaving our next generation.

If the programs and the policies of this PC (Progressive Conservative) administration are maintained and if they're allowed to govern, Mr. Speaker, where will we get our tax revenue from? Who's going to be in this province to shop when we're losing in two years 45,000 of our youngest, brightest people?

Mr. Speaker, that's why you never saw a throne speech. Because this government doesn't have a vision for the 1990s; they don't have a vision for the future.

And I see and I listen to the members opposite on a daily basis, standing in this legislature, calling for the NDP to release their election platform. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say to you this: it'll come soon enough because this government can't hide any longer than October or November of this year. And in the 28 days of that election campaign, believe me, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province will know and clearly understand that there is a direction and a future for this province in the 1990s because it'll be reflected in our election campaign.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — And I say to the member from Cut Knife, two hours I listened to him, or an hour and a half in this legislature . . .

An Hon. Member: — In a monotone drone.

Mr. Lautermilch: — In a monotone drone, as my colleague from The Battlefords indicates. And what did the man say? What did he say in terms of the future of this province? He attacks an administration that was defeated in 1982 that governed 10, 11 years ago. He didn't want to talk about his budget. He was back even into the days of his grandfather's era.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, if there was any vision for the future, that member could've outlined it very clearly and enunciated where his government is taking the people of this province. But he didn't do it. And I say to you that's why the people are saying, no way, no more; give us an election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, there is much more that I would like to say but I will allow my seconder of the amendment, the member from The Battlefords, to say a few words.

Therefore I would move:

That all the words after the word "Assembly" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

condemns the government for pursuing contradictory policies toward small business and community economic development such as the imposition of the provincial goods and services tax which will cause irreparable harm to Saskatchewan communities and the small business sector.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise and second the amendment for the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake. I will be supporting the amendment and opposing the motion put forward today by the member from Yorkton.

As I was listening to the drone of the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, Mr. Speaker, I tried to think to myself, what is it that the government has done that has made the people in Saskatchewan despise it so much; made it so angry at them that it would be reflected in the polls and the public opinion and the feelings of people? What is it that they've done?

Now I think the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd gave a very good example of that. Everything that he stated could not be borne out by statistical fact, Mr. Speaker. It was like an Alice in fairyland sort of story that he was telling — no basis of fact to the arguments he was putting forward to the legislature here this afternoon, when he talks about the growth of businesses, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that in 1981 businesses grew in a percentage of double-digit figures? Almost 11 per cent growth rate in 1981. Do you know what it is in 1989? It's a negative growth rate. There are more businesses going out of Saskatchewan than going into Saskatchewan.

Now where would we get this from? We didn't make it up — it's from the . . . the source is the state of small-business document, economic development and tourism business library. Their documents, Mr. Speaker.

Business is suffering in the province of Saskatchewan as

people are suffering in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And what does this government do as an answer? They impose a goods and services tax on the people of the province. More tax on individuals in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — that's what this government has done.

They've been deceptive, they've been deceitful, and they have been dishonest, arrogant, with the people in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's why people in the province of Saskatchewan are saying no way to their way, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — How about if you look at new corporations . . . new incorporations, Mr. Speaker. In 1981, over 3,000; 1990, hardly 2,000.

People don't want to do business in Saskatchewan any more, Mr. Speaker, because the climate for change is not there. The climate for prosperity is not there. We find the Minister of the Family, who can't find enough money to feed hungry people in the province of Saskatchewan as his government can pay to Chuck Childers, for one man for one year's salary, Mr. Speaker. What a disgrace.

The minister from the family — what's his response across the aisle of the legislature? He says, so what. I say to his constituents, Mr. Speaker, when he goes canvassing, when he knocks on the door and he asks for their vote, that constituent should say, so what, Mr. Speaker. He should say no way to their way, Mr. Speaker, that's what they should be saying.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Saskatchewan business bankruptcies in Saskatchewan, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake has already pointed out, the highest of any time in the recorded statistics in the province of Saskatchewan: 616 business bankruptcies — source: Government of Canada, the very government that this group over here, Mr. Speaker, won't stand up to. They keep transferring more and more onto the debt of the taxpayers in the province but won't stand up to their cousins down there in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time is almost elapsed. There's much more can be added but I think I've made my point. I do support the amendment and oppose the main motion put forward by the member from Yorkton.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 4:55 p.m.