

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, on behalf of my colleague, the member for Regina North East, to introduce to you six guests from the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. They're seated behind the rail. They're accompanied by Joyce Seigny and Lynne Demeule who are supervisors of the life enrichment program at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council.

I would ask all members to join with me to welcome these guests here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hardy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce through you and to the Legislative Assembly members here, nine grade 10 students from the town or the village of Bjorkdale in my constituency. They're here today accompanied by their principal, Mr. Canning, along with some chaperons: Holly Currey and Bertha Woswiczka. I think I said that right. I'm not quite sure. I asked my colleague here how to say it properly.

I want to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly. I hope that they find the question period both interesting and informative. I'm sure that they will find that. I'll meet with them afterwards for pictures and some questions they may have in regards to what goes on here in the Legislative Assembly. I hope they find the tour here both enlightening. And I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me in welcoming the students from my constituency in Bjorkdale here to the Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hardy:** — And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce to you a very special person of mine, been special to me all my life — my mother, who is sitting in the west gallery over there.

She lives in our town of Hudson Bay. She's a pioneer, a true pioneer. She moved from the south here in the Weyburn area to the Hudson Bay in 1934. We still own the same homestead that her and dad homesteaded on back in those days. Today, Mr. Speaker, she's celebrating her 81st birthday.

I'd like all members of the Legislative Assembly to join in welcoming to the Legislative Assembly a very special person to me.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, allow me to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly,

23 grade 8 students seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, from Carnduff Elementary School. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with them a little later for pictures and refreshments and just a discussion on what they see take place in the Assembly this morning.

They're accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Keating and Mr. Nicholls and chaperons, Mrs. Logue — I hope I've got that right — and Mr. Logue, the bus driver. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these students and their chaperons and teachers to the Assembly this morning.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet allow me to introduce just a couple of other individuals who have joined us this morning. They're seated in the east gallery: Mr. Steve McLellan from TISASK (Tourism Industry Association of Saskatchewan), and a gentleman from my area, a business man from the Kenosee Lake area, Mr. Loren Sproat. Would members join with me in welcoming these guests?

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my hon. friend from Moosomin for welcoming the students and teachers from Carnduff. That is my home town and my parents still live there. My mother works at the Legion and my father is the town foreman and farms in that area, or just sold the farm. So I know that you would know my folks. So I just want to say a special welcome in joining the hon. member.

And I was just recently in Carnduff and I get back there fairly often. So I know it's a yearly event, it has been for 30 or 40 years, for the class to come to the legislature, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) barracks, and the museum. So I hope you have a good day, and all the best to you for a safe trip back home.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Nurses' Strike

**Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, as you know, as of 7 o'clock this morning most Saskatchewan hospitals are without nursing staff except for the most life-threatening of emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, the minister, in our judgement, had lots of prior warning about this particular development, so my question to him is the question that most Saskatchewan people are asking today. Mr. Minister, what steps are you taking today to try to bring about the speedy resolution of this dispute? And what steps are you taking today to protect the health care of the people of this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Speaker, there is no question that

we are dealing with a difficult dispute, and we have to temper the entire situation regarding the public interest as well as honouring the bargaining process. This has been going on for quite some time, Mr. Speaker.

My department and my prime role is to be of assistance in a labour dispute and not an interventionist. We did appoint a conciliator to both sides. The conciliating process worked very, very well. And our conciliator was able, through an awful lot of diligence and work with all the parties, was able to clear many issues that hadn't been resolved and has done a good job till then. Unfortunately, as well all know, the negotiations broke down last night.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must say as a preface, Mr. Speaker, that I'm somewhat surprised that the member from Regina South is answering the question. I understand under what dimension it is, but the last several days the responsibility for answering about this dispute falls on the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health, and this I think is a puzzling if not significant development.

So I'm going to go back to the Minister of Health because what we're concerned about here is certainly a matter of labour dispute, but we're concerned about also the safety in the health-care system. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, what I want to ask the Minister of Health, the Deputy Premier, who is after all the next senior minister in the government behind the Premier, this. The conciliation services to which the former member has referred clearly have not been successful, because we have the dispute. They may not be successful, Mr. Speaker, because quite frankly both the nurses and the hospitals are suspicious of this government with respect to this dispute. This is no criticism of the conciliation officer, just simply means that he or she is working under this kind of handicap.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Deputy Premier is this: in the interests of trying to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible, why not consider an outside professional conciliator which is acceptable to both sides? Perhaps a fresh face with a fresh perspective one step removed from this government might be the solution to finding some common ground. Will the Deputy Premier tell us whether he'll consider this particular suggestion, and if not, why not?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Speaker, the suggestion that the hon. member opposite has just put forward . . . After much discussion with my department and officials throughout last night and early this morning, I'm pleased to say that we have offered both parties the assistance of third-party intervention by way of a mediator. We are presently awaiting their response.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister, I guess the Deputy Premier has decided to withdraw from this issue on this aspect of it and I find that unfortunate; but I will ask, I guess, the minister who's taking responsibility

this morning.

The minister says that he has offered both sides the offices of a mediator. I would ask the minister to advise the members of the House who that person is, the terms of reference that that person has been given, the timetable which that person has been provided with, and what the minister expects the response is going to be from both the nurses and the SHA (Saskatchewan Health-Care Association), the other people on the other side.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Speaker, I think that suggestion I can't agree with, because it endangers the entire process. I think what we have to do is get both sides first to agree, indeed to a mediator and hopefully a mediator that would be acceptable to both sides.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the minister. The minister says that the answer to the question would somehow endanger the whole process.

Now presumably, Mr. Minister, your government must have been thinking about the possibility of a fall-back position such as mediation. I would argue you're behind the curve on this, given the fact that we have a strike. But none the less you must have been giving it some thought. Surely to goodness the name is not a recent development, that is to say, within the last few hours. That name must have been suggested to the parties well before 10 o'clock this morning.

It is in the public interest, I would submit, for you to tell the House and the legislature who it is you have in mind to provide the mediation services and the terms of reference. What is the reason for not providing that information to the public of Saskatchewan who are so concerned about getting this dispute resolved quickly as possible?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset of my questions, my role is one of assistance, not intervention, and until we have a mediator that is acceptable to both sides, to directly have to appoint one that may not be acceptable to either, will get us nowhere.

This offer is there. Both sides are aware that a mediation process is there, and you just can't pick a mediator out of the air. We have to see who indeed it is that they would be comfortable in working with, hopefully both sides would agree on the same one, and then that the whole mediation process would begin. But indeed, we have to see if they are truly interested in a mediator. Both sides have indicated that they're still prepared to continue discussions without third-party intervention.

Well I think that part of the process, of the bargaining process, is to allow them that part of the very important part of the bargaining process without intervention.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the government opposite. Mr. Speaker, I preface my question by observing the following fact: that up until the actual dispute broke out unfortunately this morning, we had the Deputy Premier taking the position of non-intervention. My colleague made specific suggestions over the last few question periods about conciliation proceedings, conciliation boards, and other dimensions, all of which were rejected by the government.

Is the minister saying in effect, by refusing to provide the public any details as to what he has in mind, that he continues on in the policy that the Deputy Premier has adopted, namely in effect, a hands-off approach?

Notwithstanding the fact that there is high public concern about the necessity of resolving this quickly, that there's concern by patients, concerns by families who are affected by this dispute, is the minister saying that we the public must be left in the dark, notwithstanding the fact that the situation has changed so radically in 24 hours, we do now have a major dispute. Surely you can't be saying that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Klein:** — Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult that the Leader of the Opposition stands in this line of questioning trying to have some form of negotiation on the floor of this Assembly. I always thought that the party that they represent certainly represented the bargaining process. And we are dealing with that bargaining process. I have offered them a mediator. Now surely, are you saying that we should take the heavy hand of a dictator and say, you accept this one?

We are dealing with a very difficult situation, Mr. Speaker, and we must measure the public interest versus the bargaining process. We believe that the steps that we have taken — and particularly in the past two weeks — the steps that we have taken have been very, very sound. We have had all of various things in the health-care system that the Minister of Health has explained in place. The conciliation process was indeed working. How was anybody to determine in advance of 7 o'clock this morning that indeed a strike would be called. And how . . . Well they say, oh. Then they have no faith in the bargaining process, Mr. Speaker. And if they have no faith in the bargaining process, then obviously the appointment of a mediator is not their concern but rather they're making it a political issue.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### **Crime Compensation for Abused Women**

**Ms. Simard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice and it has to do with the *Report of the Ombudsman* in regards to the Crimes Compensation Board's ruling that an abused woman is not entitled to compensation if she does not leave an abusive home, Mr. Minister, and is subsequently abused again.

That, Mr. Minister, I find to be quite ridiculous and it does not take into consideration the situation that an abused spouse finds herself in — the fear that she suffers and her desire, of course, to keep the family together. Now, Mr. Minister, do you agree that this problem should be corrected?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well as I indicated to the press, I would not have made the same decision as the Crimes Compensation Board; however, they do have the right to make the decision.

One of the difficulties that we had under the existing legislation is that because no award was made . . . the Act says that a minister can only vary an award, so there has to be an award in the first place.

My response when asked this by the media the other day is to advise them, and I advise the hon. member in the House, that in addition to reviewing the operations of the board, we are looking at the broader question — in light of the victims' compensation fund — to a broader review of victims' compensation and services. And the internal review was started some several months back. As of yesterday, the department advised me they expect to have it in the very near future.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Minister, women don't want to find some recourse in some back-door solution. Now you said the department is going to be forthcoming with some changes. Is this going to correct the situation, or what is it going to do for women who repeatedly find themselves in this position?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I believe the report will, one, correct the situation. But secondly, I have made it clear to the hon. member that it will as well be a broader report than just the matter of crimes compensation. The hon. member may be aware that about two years ago, established under the Criminal Code, were the victims' compensation fund. And the courts have the power to levy certain additional charges. That fund now exists.

And we will be going further without getting into all of the details in terms of, one, compensation; secondly, things like mediation and being able to expand those types of services of help and assistance to victims of crime.

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Minister, this appears to be a delaying tactic with all due respect. I believe that if there was some clarification in The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, some clarification with respect to this issue that the problem could be solved instantly.

Now, Mr. Minister, rather than waiting for some back-door solution and some report of which you're not sure exactly when it's going to be forthcoming, would you support a private members' Bill from this side of the House that would provide that clarification in The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, so that women who

are subject to violent situations will be treated equally as soon as this legislation is in effect?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, the government is looking very actively at its own legislation this session but, as I say, I expect the report from the advice of my officials to be imminent and I think we should take a look at that report. Those that are concerned about the issues of compensation to innocent victims of crime may be supportive of a much broader approach to the problem than dealing with the specific issue, which is not in any way to minimize the specific issue but certainly if legislation is necessary, and the other report would be delayed, certainly we'll be bringing in legislation.

### Weyerhaeuser Repayments

**Mr. Thompson:** — I direct my question to the minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation. Mr. Minister, it was about a year ago that I asked you whether or not the Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington had paid any of the \$236 million purchase price for the Prince Albert Pulp Company. A year ago they hadn't. In the ensuing year, has the company paid any portion of the money owing to the province? And, Mr. Minister, has it paid the province the \$10 million in dividends that it owes the citizens of this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that Weyerhaeuser is living up absolutely to the terms and conditions of the agreement that was put in place in terms of their obligation to the Government of Saskatchewan, the Crown, and the Saskatchewan taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — New question . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order, order, order. The member from Athabasca is asking a question. Deputy Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I will be brief in this question if you will. Has Weyerhaeuser paid any of the money it owes the province since I asked these questions last year? Mr. Minister, I ask you that question. Have they paid one cent to this province since I asked you that question last year, on the principal of the \$236 million loan?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — I can only repeat what I just said a moment ago — that they're living up to the terms and conditions of the agreement, Mr. Speaker.

And it's that kind of value-added manufacturing and processing that Weyerhaeuser is undertaking, Mr. Speaker, that is diversifying our economy, that's

stabilizing the provincial economy. It's that kind of business investment, Mr. Speaker, that the investment dealers association, when they put out their report today on Saskatchewan, was talking about when they said: last year in Saskatchewan business investment rose by 16 per cent. And this year I think they're projecting another 10 per cent increase because of other diversification projects like the upgrader and Saferco and Rafferty, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has a very good business climate, and Weyerhaeuser, we're proud to have them as part of it, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you have just indicated . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order, order. I don't wish to interrupt you but it's difficult to hear you. There are too many interruptions.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you have just indicated to the citizens of Saskatchewan that Weyerhaeuser has not paid one cent of the \$236 million that they owe this province. Mr. Minister, it was 5 years ago when your government sold PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) to Weyerhaeuser, in a deal which we characterized at the time as no money down, no money for 30 years. That still seems to be the case, Mr. Minister.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. I'm sorry to interrupt you again, but again it is difficult to hear you. I'm warning the hon. members. And I'm going to keep interrupting. We can't have this constant interference when the members are on their feet, and I'm going to now allow the hon. member for Athabasca to put his question.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you don't seem to understand that what upsets the people of Saskatchewan is a government which could make such an incompetent deal. Mr. Minister, would you indicate as to when, if ever, Saskatchewan taxpayers could expect to see some of the money Weyerhaeuser owes this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, we've been, and I think the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have been, very happy with the performance of Weyerhaeuser in this province. They're meeting the terms and conditions of the agreements and the contracts. They've taken a \$91,000-a-day losing operation, they've turned into a more — under the NDP (New Democratic Party) — into a more diversified operation. They've built the plant, Mr. Speaker, the paper plant, that they said, the NDP said, would never get built, Mr. Speaker.

And once again we see the narrow-mindedness, the narrowed dogma of the NDP coming through. If it isn't a Crown corporation, if it isn't a Crown corporation leading the charge, it's no good. They don't like business diversifying in our economy. They're not interested in

wealth creation and the new jobs that have come with the diversification and the stability that brings to our economy, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, could you stand up and indicate how much money has been paid in the last five years on the principal on the \$236 million that Weyerhaeuser owes this province? How much money have they paid on that principal?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, I can bring back the details on the payments that have flowed from Weyerhaeuser to the government, Mr. Speaker. And along with that I'd like to bring along the record as it relates to new jobs, as it relates to what this manufacturing has meant . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order, order, order. Order, order, order. Is the Minister of Finance concluded? It's difficult to hear him. I'm sure the media can hear him. They don't need prompting. Allow the Minister of Finance to conclude his remarks.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, as I was attempting to say, I will bring back the information for the hon. members. And I will include with that, Mr. Speaker, the details on the number of new jobs that have been created there — what that expanded business has meant in Prince Albert and area and what the spin-offs have meant in terms of stabilizing and diversifying our economy.

If we're going to get away, Mr. Speaker, from the rain and the price of wheat controlling our economy, this kind of diversification . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Derby Cone Shut-down

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the minister that's responsible for Economic Diversification, Trade and unemployment in this province. Mr. Minister, I see once again that your government's incompetence and your own personal incompetence has led to another economic failure in this province, with the loss of jobs and with the loss of another closed business here in Regina.

Mr. Minister, tell us today: why did you let Derby Cone of Canada — which employed 34 workers here in Regina, which used Saskatchewan grain, which used Saskatchewan natural gas as their major input — why did you allow that to go under, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to respond to the question today as minister responsible for SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation). SEDCO had a loan with the original Derby Cone venture. The individuals that were

running that particular enterprise, Mr. Speaker, ran into some financial difficulty last year, and the individual in question made a business decision to shut that particular venture down.

It wasn't at SEDCO's request that that particular thing was closed down. In fact negotiations have been ongoing all spring to resurrect that business and have it up employing people in the city of Regina. And as I say, those efforts are ongoing all the time.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Economic Diversification, Trade and underdevelopment. The reason why I'm asking it, Mr. Speaker, is this: is that two days prior to the owner, the original owner of Derby Cone turning the keys in to SEDCO, the minister responsible for SEDCO — and I called him and talked to him personally on the phone — didn't know a thing about this.

That's why I'm asking the Minister of Economic Diversification. You're the one who's been pushing diversification. You're the one who's saying that we have to develop small businesses. You're the one that's saying that we've got to use Saskatchewan inputs. We see that you're draining hundreds of millions of dollars to Weyerhaeuser, hundreds of millions of dollars to Cargill, yet you, Mr. Minister, are involved in shutting down a locally owned, locally developed Saskatchewan business. Why the double standard, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Swenson:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is absolutely right that he did call me on this particular matter and I did appreciate the call. SEDCO tries to be as co-operative as possible with the business sector in this province. Indeed some of the programs that have been used by businesses like Derby Cone have been very successful. Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment record, I believe, in the country as of today. We've been able to create and maintain a lot of jobs.

In the question of this particular enterprise, SEDCO had no intention of closing the business down, Mr. Speaker. The individual in question took a look at the business, made a business decision that he would close it down to prevent, I suppose, any further losses that might have been incurred. But that was a business decision by a business person. It was no one in this government, Mr. Speaker, that shut that business down.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 61

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hepworth that **Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to continue . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now I'm going to ask the Minister of Justice again, the Deputy Premier, the member for Regina Centre, and the member for Regina Elphinstone, those four people, to allow the member for Athabasca to make his remarks.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to continue on today where I left off yesterday. And that was indicating and bringing forth the argument as to how we got into this terrible mess and why we're in here today discussing Bill 61, a Bill that is going to initiate in the province one of the biggest tax grabs in history. I want to continue on with that argument and I want to bring out the facts as to why we are in this situation.

I indicated yesterday some of the items that created the situation, created the tremendous debt that we now have in this province, accumulated debt in the neighbourhood of \$5 billion. And I indicated that we were . . . the taxpayers were paying \$500 million a year just in the interest on that loan.

I now want to turn to some of the other areas that I feel that created this tremendous debt, and of course it's the mismanagement and the waste that we have with the present-day government. I want to touch on the dental program that we had in this province and the amount of money that was spent on buying all that equipment and putting it into the school systems to have a program that the citizens of this province wanted and deserve and still would like to have.

There was millions of dollars went into the training of the dental nurses and the therapists and the dental assistants. Over 400 of those young women were trained in this province at a tremendous cost, and that's the type of waste that we have.

Not only do we have the waste of taxpayers' money to train them, but we have the human factor, the human destruction when all of a sudden the government decided that the program was no longer needed in this province and they decided that they were going to get rid of the 400-and-some dental nurses and dental therapists. And that's the type of mismanagement that we have in this province today.

And that's how that debt was created. And that's why we're in here today discussing this large tax grab that we have here in Bill 61. That's just a part of it.

Another good example of the waste and mismanagement that has created this huge debt is the Highways department and the massive sell-off of the Highways equipment in this province. We had an asset of over \$40 million worth of Highways equipment, and that was just up and sold off for less than \$6 million. And the majority

of that equipment was new equipment or equipment that was well-maintained, and it left the province. And that's how we get into the types of messes that we're in in Saskatchewan today.

Along with selling off of the Highways equipment, they decided that they were going to destroy another bunch of families and they announced that they were going to fire 200-and-some Highways workers, and that was done. The budget was brought in one day and then the next day the minister of Highways gets up and he announces that he's going to fire 230-some Highways workers. And what he did, he literally destroyed the families. And to me, Mr. Minister, that is a human disaster.

And that human disaster has followed this government right from 1982 right through to the present day. They have not stopped. They have not stopped that attack on the citizens of this province. They continually lay off civil servants, they continually cut programs, and no thought in mind of the families that are involved and the individuals who have those jobs and who have had those jobs for many years.

I now want to turn to another situation where I think it is another human disaster and that was the sell-off of the Silver Lake farm in Green Lake. Mr. Minister, that is where a lot of taxpayers' money had gone for many years to build up that farm, to clear the land. And all that land was cleared by the citizens of Green Lake. Nobody else came in and done that. They cleared the land, they picked the roots, they picked the rocks, they built up that herd, they built the corrals, they built the buildings on the Silver Lake farm.

And all of a sudden here we had a beautiful farm, it was operating well, and mainly run by the citizens of Green Lake. Some of those individuals had worked up to 19 years on that farm.

And then the government in their wisdom, through privatization, they decided they were going to sell the farm. That's not a great problem. But if they were going to sell the farm, why did they not sell it to the citizens of Green Lake? They wanted that farm. They still want that farm today, Mr. Minister. And they could have run that farm. The manager was from Green Lake.

But no, no, this Conservative government, through waste and mismanagement, decided that they were going to bring in a farm manager from Shellbrook. And he came in there to manage the farm. I believe he's still managing that farm. And I don't think that he really came in there to manage the farm. I think that was the type of waste of taxpayers' money so blatant, that individual came in there to set that farm — the Silver Lake farm in Green Lake — up for sale to the private entrepreneurs.

So what did they do? What did they do, Mr. Speaker? The taxpayers' money that went in to building up that farm, the labour that was put in by the citizens of Green Lake . . . The citizens of Green Lake wanted to take over that farm and run it. And there was approximately 2,000 head of pure-bred stock on that farm, and the land was all broke and cleared. But no, they didn't sell it to the citizens of Green Lake. They decided in their wisdom to sell it to

three business men from outside of the community.

And really, Mr. Speaker, to just show you how they have wasted the taxpayers' money here, all those assets should not have been sold. That land, there is a caveat in place today and the Court of Appeal has upheld that caveat of Green Lake which indicates quite clearly that that land, the title for that land, cannot even be turned over. And by the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier's own admission, he will not give out the information because he indicates that it's still in the courts. And that's in writing; I have that in writing.

So that land should not have been sold. But what happened is when they turned it over in their lust to give this . . . to turn the assets over to some of their friends, right away they started to move off the assets. It wasn't a week within moving into the Silver Lake farm that the three individuals who took over started to move that pure-bred stock off of the farm and started to sell it.

Today, Mr. Speaker, that is all gone. And that's why we're in here today discussing Bill 61, to get more money for the province of Saskatchewan, because of the fact that we're so far in debt because of the fact of the mismanagement of this Conservative government.

That didn't end there, Mr. Speaker. The caveat is against the Silver Lake farm. The citizens of Green Lake, to the mayor and council, still lay claim to that land. And yet this government still allowed the individuals to go ahead and sell off all the assets.

In the last two, three weeks they had an auction sale and have cleaned out the farm completely — all the machinery, all the tools from the shops — everything has been sold at auction price. And that is the type of a situation that we have in this province — don't really care.

The individual, the manager of the farm who'd been there for 19 years, getting close to retirement, at the top of the wage scale — they just said, well that's it, you're laid off, you lose your job. And he lost everything. He lost everything, Mr. Speaker. And other individuals from Green Lake who were also working on that farm, some of them up to 14 years, they were also given that same type of notice.

(1045)

That, Mr. Speaker, is a human disaster. Because of the waste and mismanagement of the Conservative governments, we have the type of human disasters that we see in this province. And coupled with the hardships now, they're going to have to pay all the extra taxes that we're dealing with here in Bill 61.

And this is a tax, Mr. Speaker, that's never gone through the legislature. They've already implemented a number of items that they're already taxing and yet there's been no legislation passed in the legislature. There's been no representation in the legislature from the four constituencies that have been vacant for, some of them up to just about two years. And I think that that's the type of disrespect that this Conservative government has

showed for the institution that we're in here today.

They will go out and implement a large tax change such as Bill 61, starting to collect the taxes. And one just has to go any place you want in this city, any place in the province and you see individuals who are continually saying, this has got to come to an end. Enough is enough. We just have too many taxes. And they're hitting the poor people. They're not hitting the Weyerhaeusers, as the Minister of Finance indicated today.

Weyerhaeuser, who owes \$236 million on the principal, hasn't paid 1 cent. The Minister of Finance has indicated that quite clearly today. And that's why we're here today asking for more money from the citizens of Saskatchewan who cannot afford it, and yet we're not saying anything to Weyerhaeuser when they owe us \$236 million. That's why that Conservative government is in real trouble today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — That's why the polls are indicating quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, that they are in trouble, because of the continual amount of taxes and tax increases that have been put on the citizens of this province. They're just coming steady.

But yet you don't have to worry about Cargills, you don't have to worry about the Weyerhaeusers and the Peter Pocklington. They look after the rich.

And I want to get down to some of the other people that they look after, Mr. Speaker. And I say to you, and I say to the members opposite, that they will pay dearly when they get up enough nerve to call the election. And I suspect that that has to come very soon. And there are members over there who know full well what's going to happen, and they've got out. They got out and they knew what was coming, and they got out in time.

And I say that before the next election is called, you're going to see some other individuals over there who are having a hard time making the decision whether to run again or not, will be saying: well I think it's time for me to get out and call it quits.

Because they are going back to their communities, Mr. Speaker, and they have to face the individuals that I have to face, my colleague from Cumberland and everybody else has to face when we go back. I'm getting it on a regular basis. Individuals are telling me, they're phoning me up, they're saying, what is going on down there? Why the continual increase in taxes? We've just had too much of it.

And I know that the members over there, and I know full well that my adjoining constituency of Meadow Lake, that that member has a big decision to make, whether he wants to be nominated again. And I suggest that he's having a hard time also making that decision. Because when I go into Meadow Lake, I get the same thing that he must be getting in the business community.

I'll tell you the citizens in Meadow Lake and the business community, when I go in there, they say: what is going on

down there? This has to come to an end. The business communities in Meadow Lake are suffering. There are bankruptcies that are taking place in Meadow Lake; office spaces for rent in Meadow Lake. And that never happened when we had things going good. We had DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) in northern Saskatchewan. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the citizens of northern Saskatchewan, they paid millions of dollars in taxes into Meadow Lake and the business community there appreciated it.

But now the citizens in northern Saskatchewan are finding it doubly tough. When you live in an isolated area and you have to drive so far, the high price of gas, taxes going up — it's just something that can't happen. And that is individual communities such as Meadow Lake who rely so heavily on my area in the Athabasca constituency. They are suffering.

And that's why I say, Mr. Speaker, that there are many Conservative members sitting on the other side who must be getting the same flak that I get and the same concerns must be expressed to them as are being expressed to me. And good Conservatives . . . I have talked to many good Conservatives and they say: never again, I'm never going to vote Conservative again. And I think that that's why you will see in the next short while, you're going to see a number of the Conservative members across there are going to announce that they will not seek re-election.

First of all, they know that when the election is called and the votes are all counted, there will be very few Tories re-elected in this province. Very, very few. There'll be very, very few, very, very few. And the polls indicate that.

Secondly . . . and I know the member from Lloydminster is getting lots of flak too up in his area, because he's in one of the border towns where they are suffering. Let me tell you they are suffering because of the GST and the PST in this province and the policies of this government. So he knows full well what's happening up there.

And secondly, the ones that might be lucky enough to get back, I don't think really want to sit over here on the opposition side. And I know the member . . . the Attorney General, he knows full well — he sat over here, I watched him sit over here to the right of me and then I watched him make the move to the left of me; went from the Liberals to the Conservatives — now he knows full well what's going to happen and he's decided that he won't run again. And that's what's going to happen to many of them over there, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to get back to the reason why we are really here today, discussing Bill 61, another large tax grab by this government. And I want to touch on Weyerhaeuser again. I touched on it today in question period. The Minister of Finance indicated that the Weyerhaeuser corporation has not paid 1 cent, not 1 cent, since 1986, on the \$236 million capital that they owe the citizens of this province.

One of the largest corporations in the world, Mr. Speaker, and they have, in this province, they have received from this province over 8 million acres of our prime forest land. They have access to that. They have access to a chemical

plant in Saskatoon. They've got the Big River saw mill and the pulp mill in Prince Albert.

And to date, since 1986 when they took over and signed the agreement, they have not paid 1 cent of the \$236 million they owe this province. And the Minister of Finance today stood up in the House and he confirmed that they have not paid 1 cent. And I have confirmation here also, and this here is up to May 8, that Weyerhaeuser has not paid 1 cent.

Now here we are today debating Bill 61, a tax increase, one of the largest tax grabs in the history of this province, and who's going to pay for it? Every man, woman and child in this province has to pay for it, Mr. Speaker. Who doesn't have to pay for it? Well, the Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington, they don't have to pay for it. They have our assets. They're selling all the lumber and the pulp and the chemicals but they don't have to.

And this is the way they're operating. This is why we're in such a mess today. We're in such a mess. And the Weyerhaeuser corporation, the annual reports, indicate the corporation is doing very well with annual profits, United States, as follows.

And I just want to say, why should Weyerhaeuser not pay their fair share? We're asking every man, woman and child in this province to pay. They're all paying the GST and the PST, and all the extra tax that are here. But yet, Weyerhaeuser . . . and what was the profits of Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker? Well in 1985 they had \$132 million profit. In 1986 they had \$180 million profit. And it keeps going up. And I want to go to 1989, where they have \$377 million profit — the Weyerhaeuser corporation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no reason why a large corporation like that, who have access to a large amount of the resources in this province, should not be paying their fair share. And yet the Minister of Finance gets up here today and he supports Weyerhaeuser. He said Weyerhaeuser are doing a good job. They don't have to pay their fair share.

But every other man, woman, and child in this province have to pay their share. They have to take the burden for the mistakes that were made by this government in signing agreements with the Weyerhaeuser corporation. I say it's a bad deal and it's a deal that has to be stopped. There has to be some rhyme or reason. They have to start paying their fair share.

I now want to turn to another group of people who are not paying their fair share and who are taking a lot of money out of this province, creating the debt that we have so that we're here debating another tax increase so that we can continue to pay. And I want to talk about PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.) and the president of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

While Saskatchewan men and women are becoming more deeply concerned about the lack of jobs and opportunities for ordinary people, the Conservative government has provided multi-year, no-cut contracts for



its top executives and bureaucrats.

We have a high unemployment rate in Saskatchewan. We have many citizens in this province and in northern Saskatchewan who can't get a job. And if they do get a job, Mr. Speaker, it's a welfare job. It's a welfare job paid at minimum wage, work for 20 weeks, get laid off, then go on UIC (Unemployment Insurance Commission). That's the type of mentality that this Conservative government has.

But then they have other people, some of their friends — not a Canadian, doesn't come from southern Saskatchewan, doesn't come from northern Saskatchewan, but he comes from the United States — and he comes in here and he becomes the president of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

And what does he receive? He doesn't receive minimum wage. He doesn't work for 20 weeks and then get cut off and go on UIC. No, he has guarantees. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, he has guarantees. First of all, he gets \$740,000 a year. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, in all fairness, I don't believe anybody's worth \$740,000 a year. That is too much money.

On top of that, he has a no-cut contract. He can't be cut, can't be laid off. If Mr. Childers becomes physically or mentally incapable of performing his job or dies during the term of the contract, he shall be paid compensation for the balance of the term of this agreement — as if he had not been disabled or died.

Now can you imagine any government signing a deal with a clause and an agreement like that? First of all, you pay him \$740,000 a year in wages. Then you have a no-cut contract, and then you put in there that even if he is disabled or died, you still have to pay out the contract.

(1100)

Mr. Speaker, that is why this government is so low in the polls. That is why this province has gone from 1982, where we had a surplus of \$139 million, to a deficit today of \$5 billion. This is what's happened. This is what's taken place, Mr. Speaker — contracts like this to their friends, individuals who do not even live in this province . . . I mean do not even come from this province. I say that that's a shame and that's why we're in the situation that we are today.

And that's why we got into this situation. And here, you know, this is the type of mentality. That's why the present-day Premier of this province said in 1983: Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you can afford to mismanage and still break even. That is exactly why we got into this trouble because they didn't realize it. They just thought they could do anything. They thought they could take and use the taxpayers' money and pay Chuck Childers \$740,000 a year.

That's why we have to have more tax in this province. That's why we're debating this Bill in the House. That's why . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — The minister indicated today quite clearly Weyerhaeuser hasn't paid 1 cent of the \$236 million they owe us. But yet we still need more money to operate the province and that's why we're in here discussing Bill 61 today — to get more tax.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — And that Minister of Finance has confirmed that today. He confirmed it today . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I think if the Minister of Finance would just let me finish my statement. I let him finish his statement.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the hon. member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Would the member entertain a question, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** — Would the member entertain a question?

**Mr. Thompson:** — After the election's over and I'm on that side of the House, then I'll entertain a question . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — And I want to say, we're discussing Bill 61 today, and I'm going to close off, Mr. Speaker. I know that the Minister of Finance has a burr under his saddle and is quite worried.

I just want to close off, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this is why we're here today asking the citizens of this province to pay more taxes, taxes that they cannot afford. But I say that the Weyerhaeusers of this world can afford to do that. And I say in all fairness to the Minister of Finance who indicated quite clearly today that they have not paid 1 cent of the 236 million, that if they would pay their fair share, then we wouldn't need the type of Bill that we're discussing today. They wouldn't need that.

And if the Chuck Childers of this world were not paid \$740,000 a year, plus all the perks, we wouldn't have to be in here today, Mr. Minister of Finance, discussing Bill 61, an increase in taxes. We wouldn't have to do that. All it is is some common sense and let's get it going. And your Premier of today, the present Premier of the day also said deficits are just a deferred tax that must be paid by future generations with tax increases.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear as to how we got into this mess, and I think it's quite clear to the citizens of this province how we can get out of this mess. And the only way that that can be done, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, after nine years . . . this government has failed, and they've failed dismally. And I say the only way that we can do this is to have an election so that we can get a government over there that will make things equal, make everybody pay their fair share — the Childers, the Weyerhaeusers, all those people have to pay their fair share — not just the men and women and children of this province.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I close my debate. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak on behalf of the Bill in the House. I've listened to the member and the long bow that he's drawn in regards to the type of Bill that we see before us in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I think that if I go back as far as the member for Athabasca was in prior to 1982, when it was under his administration, I'd like to say that we've come a long way in this province. I, for instance, can remember back in 1980 and '81 when people had approached me to run on their behalf in my riding. And really, I think probably, if I can remember, I was going to be challenging the then minister of Highways under the NDP administration.

And I remember the people in my particular riding saying to me, why can we not have natural gas in our small communities? Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, I'm going to give you an example, and I'll give you a personal example.

I went into Lashburn, Saskatchewan, I moved to Lashburn, Saskatchewan in 1979, and I had purchased the hotel there. Because of the fact that there was no natural gas in the community . . . and that might be hard for some people to believe, anyway there was not such a thing. In fact it wasn't even dreamt of having it in that community because they'd been told for so many years that there was not a chance of having it. We did not have the reserve in this province to be able to even have natural gas in that community.

Not only . . . when I began to look around I found out then, as the mayor of Lashburn, that there were other communities within that region as well. So when I took a look, here was Neilburg, Saskatchewan, in Marsden, Saskatchewan, in Maidstone, Saskatchewan — all my communities now that I represent.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, here we have had the then minister of Highways, Bob Long, an NDP with an NDP government, telling all those communities that there was no chance ever of them getting natural gas.

Well all the mayors of that particular region had joined together, joined force. We invited Mr. Long to a meeting in Lashburn, Saskatchewan, and he had once again reinforced with one of his officials, had reinforced it again with all the mayors present from all those communities, stating once again that it was not possible to have natural gas. We did not take that as an answer, and from that moment on we took the march and we were determined to get natural gas in those communities.

My personal experience was that that hotel was still being heated by a coal furnace — yes, coal, Mr. Speaker. In the 1980s that particular facility when I had taken it over was still being heated by coal. We had to shovel it into a stoker.

I will say this much. It wasn't that it wasn't good heat. It was good heat of its time. But that's the way it was back in Lashburn, Saskatchewan in 1980, just a short nine years ago.

And now the member from Athabasca says, goes back and says that this administration has wasted money and has been mismanaging the people's moneys. And we're here with an E&H (education and health) Bill discussing it in this legislature because of that waste and mismanagement and not everybody paying their fair share.

Well I'll say, Mr. Speaker, that that is the most ridiculous accusation that I have ever, ever heard coming from that member, because usually that member is a fairly quiet member and is usually a very up front member and a guy that's not misled by untruths.

But I believe honestly, Mr. Speaker, that that was not his own words, that he was reading from a speech that somebody else printed for him, had made up for him. I won't say any more on that particular issue other than the fact is that when that member makes those kinds of statements that there is a mismanagement and a gross mismanagement of provincial funds, that is inaccurate.

I'm going to say now, Mr. Speaker, that every one of those communities that I had particularly . . . that I have named, I should say, that did not have that natural gas in those communities . . . I was going to say, Mr. Speaker, through the government programs since we formed government in 1982, and took the initiative to bring delivery of natural gas to, not only the rural communities, but almost to every farm across this province, Mr. Speaker. That's what has been going on, Mr. Speaker.

Now the farmers can leave their farms, and they can take a break from their farm and they can go on a holiday or something, even in the winter, and not worry about maybe the fuel line freezing up from having to use fuel oil or . . . and it may sound very simple in a simplistic kind of way of describing something, but that's reality, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of farmers afraid to go on a holiday in the winter because of that fact, that their houses might freeze up, something might go wrong with the oil furnace, or something else like that.

But now they don't, because we all know there are less parts on a gas furnace, and so there's less apt to go wrong. And the SaskEnergy supplies the natural gas, keeps an eye on things, and you know there's just a lot less worry for rural individuals. And I don't say that has been a waste of money. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people with a lot of gratitude to this administration for getting behind this program and spending money and expanding on it. And now you know . . . you see, Mr. Speaker, what that has done as well, it has expanded an industry in this province that we never did have.

And I want to indicate to you that a lot of our members rightfully know now what natural gas exploration is doing in the province of Saskatchewan. It is delivering to the province of Saskatchewan revenues that it's never had before, revenues that come back to the cumulative fund here in the province and help pay for programs.

We are fortunate in this province to have less E&H tax here in this province than they do in many other provinces in this country. I believe the only province that

does not have an E&H tax, Mr. Speaker, is the province of Alberta. And we are probably one of the lowest E&H taxed provinces, other than that particular province that I'm talking about.

So I like to kind of draw this picture, because I border Alberta, Mr. Speaker, as you well know. And I know the difficulties that are posed upon border communities, and everything else.

But we learn to cope with things, Mr. Speaker, a lot, maybe more so than others. And so we're getting there. We've moved a long way and there is certainly some distance to move yet. And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that through this administration, through this Progressive Conservative government, that that distance and that movement's going to take place.

I don't think that everybody or anybody believes that everything has just got to happen overnight like that. And so I think probably we could work towards being patient in a lot of ways, and especially in this day and age when there's been a world economic, I guess probably crisis as you could say, because of the types of things that have happened.

But you see when we're talking about a particular province, when we're talking about Saskatchewan, we're talking about I guess probably a province that relied so many, many, many years on agriculture. And I guess probably, if you will, it wasn't wrong to do that, and it still is not wrong to do that, to a degree.

But I think even the farmers have come to realize and the people in rural Saskatchewan mainly, I think, have begin to realize that it's time to take a look within themselves and look around and say now look, what more can we do here in Saskatchewan to improve our existence here in Saskatchewan and to contribute back to this province, to keep our communities young and vibrant and viable, and to be able to carry on with the proud tradition that we've always had as rural Saskatchewanians, as well as the urban side of things.

(1115)

So I take a look at what's been going on in my particular riding and I will only speak in regards to my particular riding. And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that you know, with that drive that they had going back to that natural gas drive, to achieve that, and then to get in saying okay we got this, now where do we go? And you know what that's meant. I'll say to the member from Moose Jaw that that natural gas, Mr. Moose Jaw, has meant a lot because what it has done is it has opened the community up for other people to move outside of the cities that had those kinds of services. They know now that they can get natural gas in a smaller community.

When I speak of the communities that I've named, every one of those communities are beautiful communities in being able to offer people so much — in fact as much maybe in some cases and more in others — than individuals can maybe receive in large urban centres. And that's debatable and argumentative, but in people's personal view of life and what they want for their families

and everything else.

But I say they've, in those communities I've named, they've got recreation facilities that our tax dollars have gone towards since our administration has come into government here in the province. And we've got that in the sense of arenas, skating arenas for hockey and figure skating and carnivals of all nature. We have curling rinks that have probably produced some of the most excellent, especially out of the young people, some of the greatest curlers in this province — maybe across this country.

And then we get into the point of our school and education facilities and the expansions that have taken place. And that all comes from the E&H tax that we've collected in this province.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I look at my communities and look at the thankfulness in their eyes and the proudness of them walking down the street and saying: look, this is what we have in our communities and what we can offer. Like I don't think we have one community in our riding since this government's come to power, since this Progressive Conservative government's come to power, Mr. Speaker, where we haven't delivered, if not a brand-new education facility, an addition to a existing facility because of the need and the growth in the population in my particular region.

Now that has come about through diversification and through programs that this government has delivered. So I say to you, sir, that when I hear members of the opposition bathing in the negatives again . . . and that's what they are doing, Mr. Speaker. They've bathed in negatives. They love bathing in negatives, Mr. Speaker, and it goes right back down to the story that I tell the folks back home, is that if you tell people daily, daily, daily, every day of your life, that there is nothing good in this province, Mr. Speaker, there are a great many people that may begin to believe that maybe there isn't.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that is because we do, yes, have 26 negative thinking people of the NDP caucus in this Chamber talking on negatives. They have over the years . . . have not credited this administration for any policy through the last nine years.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, and they clap and chirp from their seats. But I will say this, Mr. Speaker, the 26 over there may not have, but I can remember in 1986, Mr. Speaker, that the people in the province of Saskatchewan, in our second term of office, had answered the question and had spoken positively for them and put us back here as a government.

And I recognize that same, that same kind of flow is happening again, Mr. Speaker, because the people of Saskatchewan, I'll tell you, have a real mind change on the fact of what the NDP have been trying to do and the mistruths and the misleading that they have been trying to put across in this province.

I recognize that in my riding for this example, Mr. Speaker. They have been coming into my riding for years

now, you know, as opposition. And they've been going into my riding and they've been trying to tell and convince the folks that they were not going to get hospitals, they were not going to get schools or nursing homes. They were not going to get this and they were not going to get that.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, even during fairly tough economic times, sir, I want to say that this Progressive Conservative government has delivered on many, many, many types of projects throughout my riding, those very projects that those members opposite, the NDP opposite, had said they would never get.

And that's what makes those people begin to think about the NDP and their attacks and their negativity and all this. And that's what we're talking about here today, Mr. Speaker, is the E&H, of what it means now to Saskatchewan.

We all recognize as individuals in this province that if essential services of government are to be delivered — and I say this in education, health care, in shoring up agriculture and our industry across . . . and our social programs across this province — that there is a much need to pay a tax, and everybody realizes that. No one likes taxes. I mean I don't like taxes. I don't like taxes any more than the next person does.

But I know if I want to be able to walk into a hospital, Mr. Speaker, I know that . . . and if I know that I'm not going to be just pulling out my wallet out of my pocket and having to pay out the dollar right there, I know in an indirect way, in an indirect way, this government has to achieve pulling in some dollars some way or fashion to pay the bill of that doctor or that nurse or that health-care worker of any nature. I know that that bill is going to be paid and that person's going to be paid and that person's going to be able to not worry whether I am going to be paying the bill.

I pay I guess probably through all the resources in . . . that we can expand upon in this province. I would say that . . . and the more resources we can expand upon in this province will just exactly help that very thing, that very thing in being able to give me those many more services and expand . . . in the expansion on those services.

So I guess probably we're talking about resource taxes and we're talking about income tax. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about E&H tax and we're talking about a freeze on income tax and taxes in general here in the province for the next three years.

We have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, in this province now with the type of budget that has been presented in this House, we have an opportunity here to once now take a look around our ridings and say, yes, we are in a fairly comfortable situation in our ridings.

I look at the member from Wilkie and what he's been able to do in his area and . . . well indeed all my members, you know. Like they've been able to secure a fairly comfortable position in their ridings. And now the people in their ridings have been saying, look, member from Wilkie, my good member from Wilkie, we're fairly well satisfied here and we can do maybe with a little bit less so

we can catch up. And that's what we're discussing here.

We're discussing the fact is that health-wise facility, as far as facilities are concerned or services are concerned throughout rural Saskatchewan and larger urban Saskatchewan, all of Saskatchewan, that we're fairly well significantly secure.

Education-wise as well. We have beautiful facilities throughout this province and it's just been phenomenal, you know, the quality of education that we've been able to give our students in this province. And members opposite say . . . they cry out that because tuition fees maybe have to rise a little bit and everything else. And it is difficult. It is. It's tough when you have to have an increase.

Mr. Speaker, I believe a member of mine would like leave to introduce some guests.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to say thank you to my colleague from Cut Knife-Lloydminster for allowing me to introduce some guests to you, sir, and to the Assembly this morning.

I have here today a group of 25 grade 4's from Midale school in Midale, Saskatchewan. And I have the honour of introducing these students and their teacher and chaperons to the Assembly today on behalf of the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

It may seem strange that the member from Thunder Creek would introduce students from Midale, but as the Energy minister for the province, Midale has a long history in our province as being a very significant oil centre. The Midale field, for the information of members of the legislature, has produced over a hundred million barrels of oil for the province of Saskatchewan, and that's a very significant contribution to our economy since the early '50s.

The students today are accompanied, Mr. Speaker, by their teacher Mrs. Anne Field; chaperons Mrs. Caroline Bunse, Mrs. Janice Vilcu, Mrs. Sharon Jacobson; and by the bus driver Mrs. Sandra Holman.

And I would just wish the students a good trip today to Regina, and I know you've got other things to do. And I hope that you enjoy the proceedings of the legislature and we'll give you some things to talk about when you go home and visit with your teacher and your parents.

And I would ask all members of the legislature to help me welcome the students from Midale today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 61 (continued)

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to have the young people visiting the Assembly.

I guess probably, Mr. Speaker, what I've been trying to say here in a short time is that I guess probably the Bill that we're discussing, the E&H tax Bill that we're discussing here is for the kinds of people that have been introduced, just the young people here and their futures in this province. And I guess probably, as us older people, we have to really take a look within ourselves and dig fairly deep to recognize the fact that it's no longer for us, Mr. Speaker, as it is more so for the younger people.

And so I have no hesitancy in paying my fair share to this province and giving back my fair share to this province, be it through E&H tax or some other means, and I will do whatever I have to do to make this Saskatchewan a much better place.

Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated before, the member from Athabasca had been asking and suggesting that the money had been . . . where did all the money go? He asked that question: where had all the money go in Saskatchewan under our administration? And the member again asks again: where did the member . . . I mean, where did the money go? So I want the member to pay close attention for just a few minutes, and I will tell him.

Mr. Speaker, money went to agriculture: 78.5 million through the counselling assistance for farmer program; 107.9 million through the farm purchase program; 14.1 million through the feed grain adjustment program; 203.8 million through the feeder association loan guarantee program; 12 million in livestock facility tax credits; 43.7 million through the livestock investment tax credit program; \$900,000 through the save our soils program; 58.5 million to the farmers' oil royalty program; 23.6 million through the grasshopper control program; 8.3 million in irrigation assistance; 2 million through the livestock moving program; 63.4 million to the 1985 livestock drought assistance program; and Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on and on and on because there's just an unprecedented list of people.

(1130)

Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina says: what did that total — 100 million? Mr. Speaker, if he'd have been paying attention, just the things that I've . . . is well in excess of 100 million, if you'd have been listening.

But here's some more then if he wants it: and there's \$600,000 in the 1982-83 drought relief; 3.8 million in assistance to the general agricultural programs; 10 million through the 1989 grain feed program; 200,000 through the homestead rebate program; 16.2 million in fuel tax rebates; 39.1 million through the 1990 Canada-Sask crop assistance program; 8.6 through the north-east flood control program; 244 million through the provincial stabilization payment program; 35 million through Sask Water supply program; 90.8 through provincial contributions through crop insurance; 30.3 million in ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation) capital loans interest subsidies; 67.9 million in production loan interest subsidies; 95.2 million in livestock cash advance interest subsidies; 3.5 million in spring seeding program interest subsidies; and 442.2 million through the

agricultural development fund, sir.

And where did the money go again here, Mr. Speaker? To economic diversification by Saskatchewan. It has helped Saskatchewan firms secure over 253 millions in contracts and that's from all over the world, Mr. Speaker: 235.4 million equity fund funding for the Co-op heavy oil upgrader; 222 million for the Lloydminster heavy oil upgrader which the NDP are opposed to, Mr. Speaker, and they were opposed to the heavy oil upgrader here in Regina; 64 million for the Saferco fertilizer plant, sir, and the NDP are opposed to that; 201.3 million for the Meadow Lake hardwood pulp mill — members of the opposition NDP are opposed to that; 8 million in financing through SEDCO for the Gainers bacon plant in the Battlefords — the member for The Battlefords of the NDP is opposed to that; 2.1 million financing from SEDCO for Great Western brewery in Saskatoon — the members . . . the NDP are against that.

Mr. Speaker, this list goes on and on and on and on. And there's been literally hundreds of millions of investment which have meant thousands of jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under the hard, what we called — and not just us as a government, but the people in the worldly economic picture if you will had called it — a fairly significant hard economic condition throughout the world.

And I want to say to you, sir, that through the toughest times in this province, through the toughest nine or ten years since the '30s that this province had to endure, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this province since we've taken over administration in 1982 . . . that there are still 40,000 more people in this province and growing once again, and growing once again. But there are 40,000 more people in this province than under the best years of the NDP.

And yet the NDP have been talking about out-migration, Mr. Speaker. Well my gosh, give us a break. I mean I cannot believe it. You know when they talk about these kinds of things, when you want to talk about out-migration, sir, where we have to look is in Ontario. They're not just out-migrating back home into their own provinces, Mr. Speaker, but they're leaving the country from Ontario into the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank you for allowing me to take some of the time to express some of the things that have happened here in this province. I've spoken on education. I've spoken on health. I think I've touched on agriculture and economic diversification. I hope some of the members across the way would have listened so that when they are making some remarks that they could give the Progressive Conservative government some credit for a lot of the good things that have happened in this province.

And I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that I have never once, ever, ever have gone out into my riding and even under the Allan Blakeney days of the NDP have ever indicated in my riding that they did not do some good things.

And I'd say, Mr. Speaker, that regardless of your

philosophical beliefs, that there are many good things that are happening. Around those folks — those NDP members in this legislature that have the blinders on — there are many good things that have happened around them if they would just open their eyelids and take a look and quit being so negative.

But I say this, I'll be taking my seat in a moment here. But I'll give you this guarantee, Mr. Speaker, from all the good things that I've been able to point out and that the Minister of Finance and his cabinet and our Premier and his cabinet have been able to do in this government, I'll give you this guarantee — that the next speaker that would stand in this House will definitely, Mr. Speaker, be right back into that negative trough and bathing in it with great glee and try to, I guess, demoralize the efforts that have been placed in this great province of ours.

I always thought to myself, Mr. Speaker, that if things are so tough as the members opposite have always portrayed it to be, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's a wonder that they haven't gone behind some building and maybe did something to themselves. Because I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, if I had to get up every morning in a negative mode as they do, I wouldn't be able to live with myself let alone anyone else. I guess the problem . . . maybe it might be . . . or one might want to start questioning whether you want to even be here.

But I guess those folks figure it's not that bad a place. I've heard some of the, I guess, people make some of the remarks about some of the terrible things, but I hope when they look at it and they go down and talk about education and what is happening in education here and agriculture, you know, try to get a real honest grasp on it and get out of the trough. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank you once again for recognizing me.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member for Cut Knife-Lloyd has just indicated to everyone in the Legislative Assembly that speakers on this side of the House are going to be negative. And I guess if standing in my place and fighting with all my might against the Tory provincial goods and services tax that's going to be an additional 7 per cent on my constituents, if that's negative, I guess I'm proud to be negative.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, what is happening in Saskatchewan in the tourist industry is certainly negative. We're trying to prevent the lack of people coming into our province. And the reason of course that people would not come into our province is this Bill we're debating today, Bill 61, which is an expansion of the education and health tax, the 7 per cent E&H tax which is going to be making purchases of goods and services in Saskatchewan much more expensive than they currently are.

And of course once you get a reputation of being an expensive place, people no longer look to Saskatchewan as a place to come and visit, and that will put many hundreds if not thousands of Saskatchewan people out of work.

As you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are well aware, there is a great deal of Saskatchewan that is very worthy of people coming to see. We've got a beautiful province, very diverse. Literally anything that you wish to look at you can find in our province. There is a lot that Saskatchewan has going for it. Unfortunately this tax is not one of the things that is going to be a positive thing.

So I guess if I'm viewed as being negative to fight against this imposed 7 per cent goods and services tax in Saskatchewan, so be it. I'll let, certainly, my constituents be the judge of that, and in fact I think the people of Saskatchewan will be judging that, certainly within the next five months. There's been some considerable talk about it being four years and seven months since the last election. A normal term of government is some four years. So they're seven years past the mandate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill is all about taxes, tax increases, corruption of the public trust, and mismanagement of the public purse. It's about incompetence and it's about a lack of direction from the government to the people of Saskatchewan. The government has no mandate to be forcing this 7 per cent E&H tax in the form of a goods and services tax — it will also include services. And I merely point out some advertising done prior to the 1982 election where the promise was . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — What did they say?

**Mr. Trew:** — Well what did they say? The member for Cut Knife-Lloyd, the current member, says: we'll provide a 10 per cent reduction in provincial income tax. Well the 10 per cent reduction has resulted in a 2 per cent flat tax on all income, it has resulted in increases in the provincial tax rate for individuals. We've seen an increase of some 93 per cent in the taxes paid by individuals in Saskatchewan since this promise of a 10 per cent reduction in income tax.

The second promise, the second major plank of the now government, was phase out the sales tax. And it varies from ad to ad, from simple phase out to an immediate reduction and elimination within the first term of government. And of course the record speaks quite the opposite. The E&H tax that they were going to eliminate represented 5 per cent on goods — on most goods in the province a 5 per cent E&H tax.

Well I guess the government could argue that they did eliminate the 5 per cent E&H tax. The unfortunate part is they replaced it with a 7 per cent E&H tax, which represents a 40 per cent increase in one swoop — 40 per cent increase in the E&H tax — which as you would know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one of the major sources of funding for the provincial government.

But this Bill would not be necessary if we had a government that could live within its means, if we had a government that could make astute business deals, if we had a government that, for example, earlier in question period today, my colleague was asking questions about the Weyerhaeuser deal — \$236 million agreed to purchase price. Nobody disputes that that's the agreed

purchase price. But we find now, after five years of Weyerhaeuser having taken over — walked in and taken over the pulp mill — after five years we find, or confirm, that there still has not been one penny paid on the interest on that \$236 million agreed to purchase price.

(1145)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a pretty good deal for Weyerhaeuser, and I take my hat off to them for recognizing a good deal and taking it when they could. But it's not a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan. There's \$236 million that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are carrying as a debt. We are carrying all of the interest costs on that. And because of that, the provincial debt keeps going up, the costs of interest keeps going up. Because Weyerhaeuser hasn't paid for that plant, we are now in a situation where the Minister of Finance has introduced a Bill that is going to expand the 7 per cent E&H tax onto services as well.

The sad part is that I don't believe this new tax is going to generate the moneys that the Minister of Finance has told us to accept, in a leap of faith, that it will generate. And I say this for the simple reason that border shopping has expanded in the last couple of years. But particularly in the last few months, border shopping has really expanded. And now we have a situation where people who previously made purchases in Saskatchewan are going into Alberta or into North Dakota where they can avoid paying this 7 per cent tax grab.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that people are leaving not nearly so much because of the untold hundreds or thousands of dollars that they may or may not save, I think that instead they're trying to send a message to that Minister of Finance, that what they're trying to say is they believed him a year ago when he said about taxes in this legislature, enough is enough.

And when he said enough is enough, they desperately wanted to believe that that was the new state of the Conservative government. People of Saskatchewan wanted to believe. They'd been hit with tax increase after tax increase after tax increase. They wanted desperately to believe that Minister of Finance when he said enough is enough.

Now the minister has crossed the divide with this Bill 61, which is the first step of the harmonization of the E&H tax with the federal goods and services tax. The Minister of Finance has crossed the divide. The people of Saskatchewan that are able to are making increasing number of purchases outside of our province, partly to save some money but largely to send a message to the Minister of Finance that says, you can impose a tax on us but if there's a way that we can legitimately get around it, we will.

And if it means spending \$30 on gas to save \$30 on E&H tax, we'll do it as a point of principle. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where a great number of Saskatchewan people have come to the conclusion they don't want to pay unfair taxes.

People of Saskatchewan, I think in the main, Mr. Speaker,

are very proud of the fact that we have health care, education, roads provided, a great number of government services, and we all understand there is a need for us to each pay our share of taxes. There's a great need for that to take place. Governments cannot operate on air. But when a government gets too greedy, gets too out of step with the people, they face a tax revolt, the likes of which we are seeing today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the restaurateurs of Saskatchewan are also very much hit by this new tax grab. They were hit January 1 with the 7 per cent federal GST that they had to add to their prices or swallow in their margin. But they have to remit 7 per cent of the value of the goods and service, the total price they must charge, to the federal government. Now they're being asked to submit an additional 7 per cent GST to the provincial government. That makes a 14 per cent increase in five months. It was actually in four months when this Bill was introduced.

Customers, if I can be so bold as to say people such as myself, who have a certain income and it's . . . like my income is a given amount. Previously I may have spent, for simplicity's sake, let's say I spent 5 per cent of my income on restaurant meals. Now we have a provincial GST imposed on a wide variety of things that I purchase, including natural gas and electricity, including clothing, and including gum, candy, a great number of things, dog food — a great number of things now I have to pay an additional 7 per cent for to the provincial government. And that means that out of my finite amount of income I maybe can't spend 5 per cent on restaurant meals now. Maybe I've had to cut it back to 3 per cent. And maybe part of it, for the Minister of Finance, is that I don't want to pay the tax to him, and instead I have chosen to take more meals at home.

Now I used myself in this illustration but that story can be repeated far and wide throughout Saskatchewan. Go to any restaurateur, ask them if their business is up or level or down. You will be very, very hard pressed to find any of them that aren't saying, this tax is devastating them. This tax is causing them to lay off staff, or in the failure of laying off staff, they are bringing in their part-time people who maybe worked 30 hours previously, are working 14 hours now.

So the hours that the employees in the restaurants were working are being cut. Their income is being cut. And their ability to make any purchase, their ability to simply keep food on their table, to keep a roof over their heads is being eroded. That is what this tax is all about.

You're taxing the people that have said, enough is enough. They're very, very clear about that. And, Mr. Speaker, I wish that the Minister of Finance would get clear about that and withdraw this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I look at the government's record and I have to ask myself why would any Saskatchewan person ever believe what the government says. I see a government that got elected with two major promises. They promised they were going to provide home mortgage protection plan. That mortgage protection plan has been changed at least four times subsequently and nobody in Saskatchewan believes with certainty that this

government won't tinker with it again. Nobody believes they won't tinker with it again. The current subsidy, if I might call it that, is nearly 30 per cent higher than what the lending institutions are charging for mortgages today. Now that's some subsidy. The lenders will charge 11 per cent and the mortgage subsidy is in excess of 13 per cent. It's a strange thing.

And it reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of when I was at the Pool farm service centre in Outlook. As you know, the Wheat Pool is a major supplier of farm supplies throughout Saskatchewan. I had a farmer come in one day and said, I want six pails of 2,4-D, ester 128. I said, that's fine. Six times I think it was \$45 a five-gallon can we were selling it in those days — gave him the price.

And he says, well but X across the street is selling it for \$30. You're asking \$45. I said to the farmer, why don't you go and buy the 2,4-D from X across the street? The farmer says, well he's out of it; he doesn't have any. And I said, well as soon as we're out of it our price won't be \$45, we'll charge \$20 a pail once we're out of it.

And that's kind of like this mortgage protection plan for the people now. Now that interest rates are lower, the mortgage protection is higher, and there's no benefit in it to people who are renewing their mortgage today.

And as I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, the mortgage protection plan has been changed some four times. The people of Saskatchewan are saying, how can we trust this government to leave it alone? Never mind make it a workable mortgage protection plan, how can we trust them to leave it alone?

The second reason that the people of Saskatchewan would perhaps distrust the members opposite is on relating to their other major election platform, and that was to eliminate the gas tax. Now there was a 6 cent a litre gas tax in 1982, and it certainly was eliminated briefly. Then it was brought back. Then we got half of it back. And now we don't get anything back and the tax is now 10 cents a litre, which represents again a 40 per cent increase. From 6 cents a litre to 10 cents a litre, despite the promises of the members opposite that there would never be a gas tax in the province of Saskatchewan as long there was a Conservative government.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's just curious to me how after so many flips with respecting to taxation issues, that the members opposite could even remotely expect the people of Saskatchewan to believe them ever again.

Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the financial mismanagement of Saskatchewan, we simply have come to the conclusion, the people of Saskatchewan have come to the conclusion we can't afford four more years of the present government — four more years of this waste and this mismanagement, this deceit, this flip-flop with respect to taxation. We cannot afford it any more.

It's because of the waste, because of the mismanagement, and because of the lack of direction, lack of purpose of the present government, that we are now in a situation where here we are, May 10, 1991, in the Legislative Assembly trying to stop a 7 per cent provincial goods and

services tax from being passed. We're trying to stop it. Government members are so desperate for revenue that they're busy trying to impose yet another new tax on the people of Saskatchewan, the people who've said, enough is enough.

It's simply unbelievable that we would find ourselves in this predicament four years and seven months since the last election. I'd like to see the government go out and campaign, call an election and campaign and say, vote for us and we'll give you a 7 per cent provincial GST. Love to see that happen.

I heard some minutes ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member who spoke previously for Cut Knife-Lloydminster was talking about the 1986 election and how the people of Saskatchewan had favoured the government with a mandate to vote . . . and I've no quarrel, they've got more members in the seat in the Legislative Assembly right now than what the opposition has, the New Democrats. There is no question, they had won that election. There is no question, they had won that election. The member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster was saying, and the people of Saskatchewan will do that again. Well I'd like the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster to just talk to the Premier and get the election under way. It's been four years, seven months. If they're so sure, let's go.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1200)

**Mr. Trew:** — Increasingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are finding government members that are so, if I can use the word, shell-shocked from what is happening with respect to this provincial GST, they're now resorting to deceit, they're now trying to purport what the NDP position is. And I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are quite capable of stating what our position is. Our position is we are opposed to this provincial goods and services tax and we are going to do everything we can that is within our powers to prevent the passage of this Bill which is the first step towards the harmonization and the introduction of the provincial GST.

Instead of trying to sell the people of Saskatchewan on what their position is, they're busy trying to purport what our position is. And I tell the members opposite we're quite capable of speaking for ourselves, we are very clear what our position is, we're going to defeat this Bill in the Legislative Assembly.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I look at actions of the government and what has been the results. I'm not going to spend a great deal of time on this but I see food bank 1983 set up in Regina and it served some 1,684 adults and 1,970 children. And then it has simply mushroomed every year until 1990 when they served 37,000-plus adults and 36,000-plus children. A food bank, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a food bank that would be unnecessary if we had a government that could manage its own finances and would not put the taxation on the backs of regular people.



If instead of spending \$238 million in a gift to Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Washington, if instead of spending \$113 million, giving away a coal-mine that we developed through SaskPower to Manalta Coal of Alberta, if instead of giving Cargill \$69 million to build a fertilizer plant — if instead of that this government had spent some effort on paying attention to people, if this government had spent even a portion of that effort on people, we wouldn't be in a situation where they're desperately looking for more money.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I've just talked about some of the gifts, some of the largess this government has used in major corporations. I want to tell the opposite side what has happened, what the impact of welfare reform has been on the purchasing power of SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) entitlements.

Single employable people from 1981 until 1988 have lost 54 per cent of their purchasing power — down from \$581 to, in constant dollars, \$268 in 1988. Never mind using constant dollars, in dollar bills it went from 581 to \$375. For a single parent with two children, the loss of purchasing power has been some 30 per cent. For two parents with two children, again the loss has been 29 per cent.

This unfairness has been perpetrated on the people of Saskatchewan while Weyerhaeusers and Cargills and Manalta Coals and Peter Pocklington's reap the largess out of the public treasury.

One of the things that shows up too is the number of appeals of decision by the Department of Social Services. And again I compare from 1982 to 1989. And I see that the appeal to the local appeal panels has gone from 200 to 950 — more than a fourfold increase; the appeals to the provincial board from 40 to 164 — again more than a 400 per cent increase.

Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It is simply because of the largess of this government, the largess to the multinational corporations, the willy-nilly give-away of the resources of Saskatchewan, and at the same time the putting the thumbs to the regular people of Saskatchewan. Telling people your food isn't important, your residence isn't important — all kinds of money for the corporations, nothing for the people of Saskatchewan.

We see taxes being piled upon us, taxes upon taxes upon taxes. And what about Weyerhaeuser? No taxes. Heavens, they can't even begin to pay the \$238 million that they've owed us for close to five years now.

So taxes on regular people, gifts to the big multinationals. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a shame and that is why we're standing in the Legislative Assembly today, debating this Bill, and we're trying to do everything we can to prevent this yet another tax grab by a government that has seen its spending absolutely run rampant.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — We've seen the spending far outstrip the income of the government. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not because the income of the government has not grown rapidly. Quite the contrary. In the past nine years we have seen more tax grabs. Home owners have lost their \$230 property improvement grant. Two hundred and thirty dollars for a home owner may not sound like a huge amount of money. But I remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is \$230 every year — \$230 every year. And it adds up, it adds up.

Every home owner, \$230; every renter, \$115 a month. What could you do with that money if you weren't paying for it in taxes just to keep this government afloat, just to keep the deficit somewhere within reason. But instead we see a fertilizer plant being built just west of town, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We see \$69 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money being fronted, and we see more money being guaranteed for that fertilizer plant.

Now one thing that a great many people have forgotten is that this isn't the first fertilizer plant that the province of Saskatchewan, that the taxpayers, have helped to build. There was another one built in the 1960s when the Thatcher Liberal administration was in power. That facility is still standing just west of Regina. That facility, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was built as a fertilizer plant. It actually operated for three years and some months. That fertilizer plant lost money on every ton it produced, every single ton. That fertilizer plant that was built in the mid-'60s cost a fraction of what this Cargill fertilizer plant is going to cost now. The taxpayers put up, as a result, a fraction of the millions of dollars that they are putting up for this Cargill fertilizer plant.

I look around now and I see a farm economy that is in crisis. And I have to ask myself, how is it that the Government of Saskatchewan would risk nearly \$70 million of cash from the provincial treasury, \$70 million cash to build a fertilizer plant, when at the same time, the largest co-operative in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, has got not one, but two fertilizer plants moth-balled because they can purchase cheaper than they can manufacture?

So while we have plants shut down, owned one-third by Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, while we have those plants in Calgary and Lethbridge shut down, while that is happening, we've got \$70 million being invested on a pig in a poke — \$70 million of taxpayers' money that is being put out at risk, that I would be really shocked if we ever see that money back.

At the time that this government is putting out \$70 million for a fertilizer plant, giving it to Cargill, Cargill Grain which has an annual budget that is 11 times larger than the province of Saskatchewan's annual budget — I mean 11 times stronger . . . Mr. Speaker, Cargill should be guaranteeing the province of Saskatchewan's debt, not vice versa. But at the time they're spending \$70 million, we've got a crisis situation on our hands right now.

We've got nurses walking the picket line as I speak. We've got beds closed in hospitals. We've got patients turned away. We've got a major crisis, and it is all to do

with the choices that this government has made, the choices they have chosen.

Instead of health care, they have chosen Cargill. Instead of nurses, they've chosen Weyerhaeuser. Instead of the people of Saskatchewan, they've chosen their multinational friends who give them the big corporate donations to fund their PC (Progressive Conservative) political propaganda.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — And now we get it again, Mr. Speaker. Now we get it again. Now we get the people of Saskatchewan having to pay a 7 per cent goods and services tax because that government chooses to look after its corporate friends instead of the people of Saskatchewan.

That's a shame. That's why we're fighting this Bill. That's why we will fight this Bill with everything we got. That's why I'm proud to be a New Democrat.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I talked about health care, the crisis. And I just want to . . . I see a note here that talks a bit about some of this crisis. I see that the numbers of workers has declined. Percentage of health-care workers in Saskatchewan working part time has gone . . . Yes, all of the numbers have declined in every . . . it looks to me like in every year under this administration.

We see fewer and fewer people providing the services; fewer people providing the services because the funding levels aren't there. The choices that this government has made are choices not of the people but choices of their big corporate friends.

**An Hon. Member:** — Right. Who calls the shots here?

**Mr. Trew:** — The question that some might ask is: who is calling the shots here? Who is it? Is it the people? Are they saying: oh, give us a 7 per cent goods and services tax; we want to pay more tax?

I think it's more likely the banks. The bond dealers happen to be exempt from this provincial GST. Isn't that interesting? I wonder how much that cost them in political donations.

I wonder if books and reading materials are exempt. We know the answer. We know it, Mr. Speaker, because there is no shortage of people in opposition to it. We know it, Mr. Speaker, because there is an Alliance Against Tax on Reading who's done some very good work in recent times, and they have come up with all kinds of fighting. They've come up with thousands and thousands of signatures on petitions opposing this tax on reading material.

But they've also generated a fair amount of interest in the media: GST tax on learning, says U of S (University of Saskatchewan) librarian. "Don't tax reading," says an editorial from the *Star-Phoenix*, March 6. "Book Alliance to meet Hepworth," Friday, March 8. We know the result of that — no backing down at all. In fact the next

headline, March 13, "Hepworth won't back down, reading will be taxed," according to the headline. Here's from the *Star-Phoenix* April 6, "Reading made pastime of the wealthy". Well isn't that interesting — reading made now a pastime of the wealthy.

(1215)

Mr. Speaker, the alliance against the taxation on reading material has pointed out quite correctly that a full-time university student in Saskatchewan will be paying nearly \$200 per year tax under this tax that we're debating today — nearly \$200 a year. Now that's just to purchase books — that on top of tuition increases that have ranged from a low of 17 per cent to a high of something in excess of 50 per cent in a couple of the colleges, and a quota.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where is the fairness in Saskatchewan — when you see people trying to get an education, trying to improve themselves for the future, trying of course to enhance their earning ability by making themselves worth more to the people of Saskatchewan — Mr. Speaker, where is the fairness in that when we see a provincial GST imposed on students, on people who read, imposed on people of Saskatchewan. And at the same time we see the multinationals benefitting from the largess of the treasury.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal . . . or some more to say about this issue but I'd like to consult with some of my constituents, and with that I move to adjourn the debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 12:17 p.m. until 12:56 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 9

Shillington	Hagel
Lingenfelter	Calvert
Simard	Trew
Kowalsky	Van Mulligen
Goulet	

#### Nays — 26

Muller	Gerich
Schmidt	Swenson
Klein	Britton
McLeod	Sauder
Lane	Toth
Hepworth	Duncan
Hardy	Gleim
Kopelchuk	McLaren
Petersen	Baker
Wolfe	Swan
Martens	Muirhead
Hopfner	Johnson
Martin	Saxinger

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is all about choices. Choices this government could

have made, and this government chose the wrong choices at every turn.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — This Bill is talking about a tax grab, Mr. Speaker. This Bill is talking about a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax on the people of Saskatchewan on top of all of the other tax grabs introduced by the government members opposite since 1982 until now.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — The choices have been wrong. The choices have been consistently wrong. That's why we're fighting this particular Bill. We're opposed to a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax and we're going to beat it. We're going to do everything we can in the legislature to defeat that Bill.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Some of the choices, Mr. Speaker, have been to give Weyerhaeuser \$238 million, to give Cargill nearly \$70 million, to give Rafferty and the mud flats, I'm not sure how much, but many millions of dollars.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a commitment to you and to members of this Legislative Assembly here today, a serious commitment, that should I be blessed with re-election in my constituency, I am going to be pushing for the renaming of the Rafferty dam. I want it to be called Devine dam and Berntson flats, so that the mud flats can be for ever honouring the former member from Souris-Cannington, Senator Berntson. Devine dam and Berntson flats has a nice ring to it, Mr. Speaker.

That same senator that went to Ottawa, why did he leave to Ottawa in a rush? It was to pass the federal goods and services tax, the tax that members opposite said: oh, we're opposed to a federal goods and services tax. But when there's a chance for a sweetheart position for one of theirs, what do they do? Flip-flop. All of a sudden the federal goods and services tax is all right, consequences to the people of Saskatchewan be hanged.

Well we say that's not good enough. That's their way; it's not our way. Mr. Speaker, we are opposed to this Bill because of all that it represents, the wrong choices having been consistently made by government members opposite, and we will continue to fight it.

Some of the other choices, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Highways has been decimated. We've seen over \$40 million worth of Highways equipment auctioned off for a fraction, a small fraction of its value, and we are suffering the consequences daily. Members will appreciate this as this legislature adjourns in the next few hours. Members will appreciate it as they're bouncing their way home on what we call highways in Saskatchewan now. Except of course, Mr. Speaker, for the cabinet ministers who will be flying in the airplane. They don't have to endure the highways.

Mr. Speaker, the choices have been consistently wrong. Manalta Coal gets a \$113 million gift of a coal-mine. They

got the coal; the taxpayers of Saskatchewan got the shaft.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, you can't possibly continuously give away millions upon millions upon millions of dollars to the corporations, to the multinationals such as Cargill that has an annual budget 11 times larger than the Government of Saskatchewan, you can't possibly do that and still think you're going to come through with this tax. We are going to be continuing to fight that.

Mr. Speaker, time is drawing on. I wish to consult my constituents over the weekend before concluding my remarks on this. I move to adjourn the debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:05 p.m.