

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. McLaren: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, 44 grade 10 to 12 students from outside our boundaries, Mr. Speaker. They're from St. Vladimir's College in Roblin, Manitoba, and they're seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the Assembly we want to welcome all of you here. We hope you enjoy your stay at the legislature and that you find the proceedings interesting and educational. And we hope you enjoy your stay in Regina today as well.

And I would ask all members to please welcome our guests from Roblin, Manitoba.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of myself but also on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Unfortunately he's not able to be in the Assembly for the introduction of students today and has asked me to introduce the group of students from Saskatoon Riversdale. They are situated in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are a group of grade 7 and 8 students numbering 35 from St. Dominic School in Saskatoon.

The students will be assembling afterwards for pictures on the stairs, etc., and I'll take the opportunity to meet with them and answer, hopefully answer, any questions they may raise about what went on in the Assembly today while they were here.

The students are accompanied by teachers, Denis Ferré, Robert Herrick, David Dust, and Judy Harriman. I hope all members will join with you, Mr. Speaker, and with me in welcoming these students from St. Dominic School in Saskatoon Riversdale.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you someone who's sitting in your gallery. That's Kim Dmytryshyn who's the NDP (New Democratic Party) candidate in the Rosthern constituency. Kim's been very active in her community and I'm very pleased to see her here today. I ask all members to welcome her.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mediation in Nurses' Strike

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, as I understand it, Mr. Vince Ready is to start mediation in the nursing strike as of

Tuesday.

As Minister of Health, Mr. Minister, in your conversations with Mr. Ready have you instructed him to give some kind of assurances in staffing levels at our health-care facilities when he meets with both sides of this debate? I'm asking you as Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Mr. Speaker, it seems that all of the parties wanted a mediator. The nurses wanted a mediator, the union wanted a mediator, management wanted a mediator, indeed the public wanted a mediator. The mediator has been appointed. Mr. Ready will do the job that he has been contracted to do — he has wide terms of reference. We want him to go in as easily and as comfortably as he can with all sides, Mr. Speaker, and at all times recognizing the bargaining rights that the union indeed is privileged to have.

So that as a result, Mr. Ready, being the truly skilled professional that he is, highly recognized across the country, will go through his work as he must do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour did not hear the question and the Minister of Health ducked it. The fact of the matter is one of the reasons we have a strike is because of bed closures and lay-offs. Now I am putting my question to the Minister of Health, and it has to do with a story in today's *Leader-Post* where the administrator of the Davidson Union Hospital states that the central issue in this strike is "government funding of health care" — the central issue, from an administrator of a hospital, Mr. Speaker.

The story is:

Even members of the negotiating committees for SHA and (SASCH) . . . admit privately that the government mandates what they can offer at the bargaining table.

And the administrator for the Davidson Union Hospital states:

The provincial government makes the decisions, let its conscience be its guide . . .

Now, Mr. Minister, you've said that you're not involved in this strike. Will you now admit what we all know, and that is that your government from the very beginning has been a major player in this strike?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I outlined to the hon. member a number of days ago in the House and have said publicly a number of times, the complexity of the issues in health care are not unique to Saskatchewan. They are in every jurisdiction across the country and beyond the borders of Canada, frankly.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member continues on her line of questioning which says, the Department of Health in

Saskatchewan, the government, has underfunded the health-care system and that's why the nurses are on strike. That's what she said.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Now, Mr. Speaker, she quotes selectively from Regina *Leader-Post*. Today's Regina *Leader-Post* as well has a story where the president of the national nurses' union is quoted as saying, since 1988 there have been six nurses' strikes across the country and it won't be the last — something to that effect.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the point I make by raising that is that this is indeed an issue that goes across the country. Bed closures, as I've outlined in the House before . . . 2,600 beds to be closed in the Toronto area alone — in the Toronto area alone by the . . . supposedly by the government. If the member opposite's logic holds true, it must be the NDP Government of Ontario that's closing 2,600 beds.

Mr. Speaker, the issues are far too complex for the hon. member to stay on that line of questioning. It's just not accurate what she's doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, and in Ontario they had something like a 9 per cent increase with respect to hospitals as opposed to a 1.5 per cent increase here. So you can imagine what our hospitals are facing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Minister, your government's underfunding of health care is at the root of this dispute. Nothing will be resolved if Mr. Ready's efforts address only a symptom of the problem and not the problem itself, which is cut-backs, bed closures, and staff lay-offs.

Will you today make a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan that your government will undertake an immediate review of its priorities towards funding health care, so that we are not facing a continuing crisis with respect to bed closures and staff lay-offs and other matters in health care, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, this government has undertaken review of the health-care system. The hon. member was against that review. The hon. member was against that review from the day that it was announced in this House, and you will all remember it well. The day the commissioners of the Murray Commission were appointed the hon. members opposite criticized individual members of the commission. We saw it here in this House that day. They were against the Murray Commission from its inception.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, as well the critic for their . . . hand-picked Health critic of the NDP leader, says as it stands now — referring to the NDP plan — as it stands now, there is no plan. She said on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio for all citizens of Saskatchewan to hear, there is no plan there.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the NDP, can't have it both ways. She says as well in that question . . . in the question she just asked me and referred to Ontario. In Ontario they had a 9 per cent increase, she said. Is that her plan, to give a 10 per cent increase to hospitals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — New question, Mr. Speaker. The minister refers to the Murray Commission report, which he has done virtually nothing on. In fact, Dr. Murray himself says that there's been no action by the government. The government had a \$2 million study and has done nothing . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Order. I am going to interrupt the hon. member to bring hon. members to order to allow her to put her question. It's difficult when there are many voices interrupting.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, for nine years the minister has attacked our health-care system through underfunding of the health-care system. It is clear. And the people of Saskatchewan know that it's your government's philosophical attack on medicare which is at the root of this current dispute.

I'm asking you once again: will you follow the request made weeks ago by Saskatchewan nurses to conduct an immediate public inquiry into the funding and delivery of health-care services in this province, or are you afraid of what this inquiry might find out, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the nine-year attack on the health-care system that the hon. member of the NDP refers to has virtually doubled the expenditure on the health-care system in this province of a million people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Limiting of Legislative Debate

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Government House Leader, in the absence of the Premier. Mr. Minister, a short month ago when the Premier recalled the session — I have here the press release dated April 11 — the Premier went at length to say how one of the major thrusts of this session would be in fact democratic reform and a more open government.

Mr. Minister, in light of that fact how do you explain the fact that you have already used closure in terms of getting through close to a billion dollars of spending without answering the questions the public would like to have had answered? And how do you explain the fact that you, Mr. Minister, are now threatening this House closure on Bill 61? Does the word of the Premier mean nothing in this province any more or is the flip-flop that we've seen on this issue only indicative of what this government is doing in terms of closing off proper debate and legitimate debate here in this Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has inquired respecting the democratic reform agenda that this administration has attempted to bring forth to this legislature, and I would remind the member opposite that indeed this administration has attempted on numerous occasions to bring forward not only referendum and plebiscite legislation, but also legislation with respect to freedom of information.

These are reforms, Mr. Speaker, that the public all across Saskatchewan have been asking for, for some time. I say we have attempted to do this, Mr. Speaker, in light and in fact of an opposition, an opposition that one day will shut down the legislature and the next day they will say: but give us more time to debate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you talk about a flip-flop. I say that the member opposite has listened to his Leader of the Opposition very well. You've heard the ads on TV there, Mr. Speaker, about flip-flop. One day, shut the legislature down, we don't want to debate; the next day, well give us more time. Which is it, my friends?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister. In the past 84 years . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Government House Leader — new question. In the past 84 years, previous governments have never moved to stifle the debate by using closure on any of the great debates that have gone on. And we'd have long debates. We had debates on medicare, and we had people who were opposed and people who were in favour. On the potash nationalization, the debate went on and on. And members of this party now in government made their case against the potash nationalization, and I agree that they should have been allowed to. And even the former leader of the Tory Party, Mr. Dick Collver, and they'll remember that, had a filibuster personally that went on for days and days and there was no closure used.

How do you explain the fact that after only four members of this House have spoken to a very important Bill, which includes the increase in taxation to an extent never seen before, how do you explain that closure is being used on this Bill to jam it through?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has inquired again about the use of time limitations on debate. And I would firstly like to say that indeed people across Saskatchewan and I believe across this country are looking at their elected officials and asking more, demanding in fact more of their elected officials. And in fact one thing that they are saying is, we want more responsible politicians.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the rules across the country, I find two provinces, two provinces that do not have, within the written rules, limits on debate. That's Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan. I don't know much about Prince Edward Island, but I do know about Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan there has probably not been, in the 84 years that the member refers to, an irresponsible opposition like the one we have sitting across from us today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, in fact in watching this debate and watching it very carefully, I have seen, since this Bill was introduced on April 15, 20 members opposite raise it in question period, budget debate, interim supply, or the Bill itself. In fact many of them have spoken on it with little or no substance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, one thing the minister is accurate on is that he knows very little about Prince Edward Island, and I agree with him. What really worries the people of the province is that he and his Premier know nothing about Saskatchewan either. That's the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, what we have here is an incompetent government clinging to power after four and a half years, and even in their dying days, using the heavy hand of government to force through the biggest tax grab in the history . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order, order. It seems that there are several, several members who would like to put the question, but the member for Elphinstone is putting it. Would you allow the member for Elphinstone to put the question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, obviously what the government is trying to do here, as they're doing with the closure motion, is cut off the legitimate questions being asked by the opposition.

But I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that your actions here are despicable. To cut off debate after only four people have spoken, to use closure at that point on a tax Bill, is despicable.

My question to you is: why have you chosen this time, after four people have spoken, to cut off legitimate debate when thousands of petitions . . . in fact 60,000 people have petitioned this legislature to date, thousands more coming in — why do you choose now to cut off the debate?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, the member very sanctimoniously refers to the limiting of debate. And I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that it is, number one, the members opposite themselves who just late last week limited their own debate — point number one — by shutting this House down.

Point number two, Mr. Speaker, we were dealing last week with a rather routine procedure called interim supply or appropriation. The members opposite spent, I think, what would be clearly defined as an inordinate amount of time on that particular piece of legislation. And now they are saying that the government is acting with haste in limiting this debate.

Mr. Speaker, what we have failed to see in all of the debate thus far is a definitive position by the NDP. The public of Saskatchewan today is extremely confused. They know that the E&H (education and health) tax is in place but what they don't know is what is the real position of the NDP. One day the member's seat mate will be on a panel with financial people across this province saying yes, we would lower that tax rate a little bit but add it to the income tax. I'd like to know how much to the income tax? What would the rate be?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — New question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. It becomes obvious why this minister is moving closure on this Bill. The weakness of his argument indicate why they don't want to debate it here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, there's one way to resolve this question — one legitimate way. And I want to make a deal with you today. I want to challenge you, in fact, to make a deal.

I'll tell you what we would like to see, is not your word versus mine or the Premier's word versus the Leader of the Opposition. Why don't you screw up your courage and call an election and let the people of the province decide on the tax?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on the Premier's behalf as to the specific date as to when an election will be called, but, Mr. Speaker, I'll guarantee you there will be an election. There will be an election, Mr. Speaker. And I would hope that by that time that members opposite would act in a responsible manner and would unveil some sort of plan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd say, what is the members opposite's plan when it comes to health care? Well, Mr. Speaker, I could table in the legislature their plan that comes on health care. It's a blank piece of paper. And I could do the same when it comes to their agriculture policy. I could do the same when it comes to their environmental policy.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are demanding from the opposition to unveil what is their alternative, and they do not have one, Mr. Speaker. And that is despicable, despicable in these times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Order. Order. I'm going to have to interrupt hon. members. I'm

going to have to interrupt them. I'm going to have to ask your co-operation. The member for Regina Elphinstone and the member for Rosthern, I'm going to have to ask for your co-operation so that question period can continue and the member for Saskatoon South can be heard. I'm going to ask for your co-operation, all members. We can't continue if we can't hear the member on his feet, and the member for Saskatoon South should be given that right.

Funding for Universities

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. But before I do so, I thought when the Minister of Highways was holding up the blank piece of paper, he was referring to his state of mind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, for three weeks in this House you protested that there was no commitment on the part of the Premier of this province to provide operating funds for the new College of Education. But, Mr. Minister, last Friday you and the Premier announced that there would be additional funding, and that is welcomed by the people of this province.

But, Mr. Minister, they are wondering why you reneged on the promise in the first place and why you didn't provide the \$2.5 million that the Premier had promised to the U of S (University of Saskatchewan). Why did you renege on that promise?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say at the outset that there is no indication that the Premier has reneged on any promise to the University of Saskatchewan. And I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that we're very proud of our record with regard to the universities in this province. If you take a look . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we'll put our record up against theirs any time, Mr. Speaker, if they want to do that. We'll put our record in its place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — We only went something like 25 years when people in this province were asking for a new College of Agriculture building, and where was that government when they were in power in the 1970s?

But the member has asked with regard to the funding. And I think if he would have taken a little bit of time to read the information that came out — but he's generally not too interested in the facts, Mr. Speaker — it was quite clearly indicated that the reason that the funding is being provided for the two universities is because of a tax exemption which there was some dispute over as to whether or not the universities were eligible for it.

And because now of many, many discussions between the university officials and the Finance officials and the Department of Education officials, it was determined that in fact, the universities are not exempt from paying this tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — A new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you were let out to hung by your cabinet colleagues and the Premier again. And, Mr. Minister, I don't care what reason you give as to the additional funding to go to university, it is clear that the Premier made a promise of \$2.5 million for the operating cost to the new College of Agriculture. There is no dispute about that, Mr. Minister. And the Premier as again, as my colleague indicated, made a big flip-flop on his promises.

Mr. Minister, I am asking you once again: will you today announce that you will restore the funding for the graduate scholarships that used to exist in this province? And you cut the funding by over \$2 million in the budget. Will you announce today that those additional scholarship funds will be provided to graduate students?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's really something when members on the opposition talk about flip-flops, really is something.

With regard to the scholarship funding, as in the past, the scholarship money is given to the university, and they are the ones that make the determination as to who gets the scholarship. The scholarship fund this year has been cut by \$1.8 million — not over two, not over two.

The member opposite also suggesting that this is for graduate scholarships. Mr. Speaker, the determination of who is going to get those scholarships, whether they are for undergraduate students or whether they are for graduate students, that determination will be made by the university as it has been in the past.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, we can go into more detail on that in estimates so I can outline to you exactly what happens to funding you provide for graduate students. There's no doubt, Mr. Minister, you cut it last year. You dramatically cut it this year. And many of those graduate students will have to go to other provinces to get their graduate degrees and they will not be back.

Mr. Minister, I have a new question I want to ask you. And that is, the President of the U of R (University of Regina) has said that they will have to cut classes; there will be sessional lecturers that will not be hired; he will not have sufficient instructors for the College of Education for the number of students that they expect.

Mr. Minister, when are you going to as Minister of Education provide adequate funding and provide some leadership so that our students can receive their education in this province and don't have to go to Alberta or B.C. When are you going to show some leadership?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, we find that the amount of money that's being given to the universities in

Saskatchewan this year is at least as high or higher than in many provinces across this country. That's number one, Mr. Speaker. So I don't think that we can be ashamed whatsoever of the fact that we have allowed 3.5 per cent increase to the operating grants for our universities for this coming year.

The member opposite also suggests about students going to other universities across the country. Mr. Speaker, that will not be the case any more than it has in other years unless there are courses that are not offered here that students will go elsewhere to take, such as speech and audiology as one example.

I would also point out to the member opposite that tuition fees of other universities all across this country have gone up and are comparable or higher than the universities here in the province of Saskatchewan. So we don't need to be too concerned about the fact that our students are going to be leaving. Our students will be going here, Mr. Speaker. If there are in fact changes at the universities, those are changes that the administration of the universities will be making, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, there is no doubt at all that your operating funds to the universities is the lowest in all of Canada — the lowest per capita to all of Canada. Nowhere in Canada have students' tuition fees gone up 47 per cent like they have here in Saskatchewan — nowhere. And, Mr. Minister, that is directly related to the underfunding that you have provided for the universities.

Mr. Minister, I'm just wondering, since you don't have any influence in cabinet at all it seems, since the Premier has left you out to hung dry out there, when are you going to tender your resignation as Minister of Education and get someone in there that is going to support the students and support the universities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well it's interesting to know, Mr. Speaker, that if you want to compare how much money we're spending with our universities this year compared to what they were spending when they were in power, I think it's almost doubled, Mr. Speaker, it's almost doubled. The number of students continues to go up each and every year. You know, it's interesting when the member opposite makes comments about the per cent, the 47 per cent increase in tuition fees.

Mr. Speaker, an article in the *Star-Phoenix* on May 7 indicated that the University of Saskatchewan fees rank near the middle — near the middle, Mr. Speaker — in the west. And it was also indicated that some of the increases in tuition fees were 5 per cent. We never hear about the member opposite talking about that.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that with regard to the 47 per cent increase, this is in the area of dentistry and medicine. And, Mr. Speaker, in those colleges I think that many would agree that the tuition fees can be higher.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 80 — An Act respecting the Application in Saskatchewan of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order, order. Order, order, order. I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the Clerk.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Application in Saskatchewan of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 81 — A Bill to amend references to the Criminal Code in Certain Acts and Regulations and respecting Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts and Regulations resulting from the enactment of the Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c.C-46

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Justice, I move first reading of a Bill to amend references to the Criminal Code in certain Acts and regulations and respecting consequential amendments to certain Acts and regulations resulting from the enactment of the Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c.C-46.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

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 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you will appreciate since I was addressing this Bill 61 last day on Friday, we now have seen the government members opposite elevate this Bill yet another notch with the notice of motion that was introduced on Friday. Notice of motion that on Tuesday, the . . . I can't use his name, as I understand it, but the Minister of Justice to move the following motion:

That following the adoption of this motion when the order is called for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill No. 61, An Act to amend The Education and Health Act (No. 2), not more than two hours shall be allocated to debate on such order, and that at 15 minutes before the expiration of the allotted time, unless sooner concluded, the Speaker shall

interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of that order; and

that there shall be not more than two hours allocated to the consideration of Bill No. 61 in Committee of the Whole, and at 15 minutes before the expiration of the allocated time, unless sooner concluded, the Chairman shall put all questions necessary to dispose of every section of the Bill not yet passed and shall report the Bill forthwith to the House, and that the question for the first and second reading of any amendments shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate; and

that there shall be one hour allocated to the consideration of the motion for third reading of Bill No. 61, and at 15 minutes before the expiration of the allocated time, unless sooner concluded, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the order for third reading of the Bill; and

that in the case of any recorded division relating to any proceedings on the Bill, the bells shall be limited to 10 minutes; and

that consideration of Bill No. 61, pursuant to this motion, be a special order of this Assembly to be called immediately after orders of the day; and

that rule 3(3) be suspended until the completion of all proceedings on Bill No. 61.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen a government use closure on a Bill to ram a 7 per cent goods and services tax provincially down the throat of the voters of Saskatchewan, down the throat of every person who makes any purchase in this province.

We've now got closure. As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, I am the fourth speaker from the opposition side speaking in opposition to Bill 61. I stand corrected — I am our third speaker speaking in opposition. My colleagues have corrected me on that.

Mr. Speaker, when the third speaker from the opposition is on their feet, it hardly seems to me to be a fair and open government that would invoke closure at that time, and invoke closure on the biggest tax grab in Saskatchewan history. And make no mistake about it, that's what Bill 61 represents — the biggest single tax grab in Saskatchewan history.

Not much wonder that government members don't want to debate this Bill. Why would they want to debate a Bill that is nothing but an unmitigated grab, a reach into the taxpayers' pocket, and a grab for ever increasing money just to finance their incompetence, to finance their mismanagement of the provincial treasury and the Saskatchewan economy?

The tragedy of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that in passing Bill 61, in using closure and ramming it through, it is members of the Legislative Assembly that are directly hurt

the most? I think not. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the small-business people of Saskatchewan, the very electors that each of us, including yourself, sir, have gotten . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I'd ask the members not to involve the Chair in the debate.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your ruling and understand what you are saying.

Point is, even members from various constituencies, whether it be Estevan or Melfort or Shellbrook-Torch River or wherever, are all elected to deal with matters such as this taxation Bill that is before our Legislative Assembly this very day. Everyone of us will have to answer to our conscience and to our electors. Every single one of us has to be responsible to the people that were good enough to elect us to this Legislative Assembly.

I have every intention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of representing my constituents. I can report to this Legislative Assembly that on Friday after the Legislative Assembly adjourned, I had the opportunity, or made the opportunity, to talk to the small-business people in my constituency. You know, I never found a single one, not one, that was opposed to what we are doing.

I got all kinds of support. There was some — previously not falling over themselves to be seen in the camp of the New Democratic Party — small-business men who are nothing but very, very supportive of what it is that the member for Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition, and my colleagues are doing with respect to Bill 61 in our determination to see that this Bill not pass this Legislative Assembly; to see that this Bill not become law, and to see that the people of Saskatchewan are not forced to pay a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax on top of a 7 per cent federal goods and services tax.

Seven per cent federal tax is bad enough; we were certainly opposed to that tax. We remain adamantly opposed to that particular tax — contrary to government members, who indicated as the lead-up to the passage of the federal goods and services tax . . . they indicated, oh we're opposed to it; trust us, we're opposed it. We're doing everything we can with our federal kissing cousins to oppose this federal goods and services tax.

But what happens when push comes to shove? The former member for Souris-Cannington, now Senator Berntson, appointed to the Senate, to an expanded Senate, for no other reason than to pass the federal goods and services Bill on an unwilling, unaccepting Canadian public. That's the record. Nobody can deny it. That's the record of the government members opposite; that's the record of the former member for Souris-Cannington, now Senator Berntson.

Now in addition to being the good senator, he is also heading that government's re-election campaign — chief strategist. What an interesting situation we have in Saskatchewan when we have a senator, first of all before he's a senator, opposing a federal GST (goods and services tax); then suddenly he gets a job that is guaranteed until he's age 75 — and then, if I might say, a fairly generous pension after that.

And all he has to do — doesn't have to quite sell his soul, but he's got to sell everything short of his soul — he's got to vote for federal goods and services tax. That tax has now become law. Saskatchewan people are paying a federal 7 per cent GST.

If this Bill 61 comes into effect, it's the first step, as announced by the Minister of Finance in this government, it's the first step towards a harmonized provincial goods and services tax for Saskatchewan, so that Saskatchewan people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will no longer pay simply 7 per cent GST, but it will be 7 and 7, a 14 per cent goods and services tax.

The Minister of Finance, a little over a year ago when he gave a budget address, said the people of Saskatchewan have said enough is enough with respect to taxation. They told the Minister of Finance, no more of these tax increases. The Minister of Finance stood, didn't shake a bit when he looked straight at us and said, trust me on this one; this year's tax increase is the last one we're ever going to ask for. Trust us; there'll be no more tax increases. Trust us, he said then, a little over a year ago.

What's been the result? Now the biggest single tax increase foisted upon the people of Saskatchewan, yet another 7 per cent goods and services tax. Not much wonder we say shame. Not much wonder we're proud to stand up and represent the people of Saskatchewan and say no to your provincial goods and services tax. We will do what we can to stop it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Mr. Trew: — But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can't stop this tax alone. We handful of opposition MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) cannot stop this provincial goods and services tax alone. To stop this tax, we need help.

I am at this point asking the public for help. We need letters. We need letters to opposition MLAs. There's a petition campaign going around. I urge members of the public, if they agree with us, be serious about it, sign the petition. Get your neighbours, friends, relatives, anybody; sign the petition. Send them in. Call us. We're listed. Telephone . . . We are listed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the telephone directories. We're listed under New Democratic Party caucus.

I also urge members of the public to call government, particularly cabinet ministers. The Minister of Finance would be an excellent place to start. Call the Minister of Finance's office. Tell him enough is enough. Tell him, back off from this silly tax, this 7 per cent provincial GST. No, we don't want it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, we have had a number of letters already. I talked moments ago about people of Saskatchewan calling us. I have a file full of sample letters, people who have written us already. And, Mr.

Speaker, I'd like to make our file ever thicker.

Mr. Speaker, that reinforces what we are doing on this side of the House. I'm not at this moment going to read any of the letters into the record, but I am making a plea, if you like, to the people of Saskatchewan. If they agree, if they care — and I know the vast majority of them agree and care and do not want this 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax — if they agree, write us, phone us, sign petitions, carry petitions, do what you can.

We can defeat this Bill. That's part of what we're about in the Legislative Assembly. But there's two parts to the strategy. The one part in here, the 26 NDP MLAs — we'll do our bit. I can guarantee that, Mr. Speaker. We'll do our bit. The leader, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, has promised we will do our bit and there isn't one of us on this side of the Legislative Assembly that will do anything short of our utmost to see that this Bill does not get passed in the Legislative Assembly. We are committed.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 61, this tax grab — this largest tax grab in Saskatchewan history — is all about ever-increasing taxes. It's all about government mismanagement, government waste. It's all about incompetence, it's all about the corruption of the public trust, and it's about a lack of direction from the government members opposite.

We have been more than nine years since that government was first elected. The people of Saskatchewan were generous enough to give them yet a second mandate in 1986, some four years and seven months ago. I don't begrudge the government its second mandate; they won it in a fair election. There are some people that would disagree with me about that, but I say to them, no the government won that election in a fair election.

Subsequently, they've tried gerrymandering the boundaries, tried that, got into all kinds of trouble. It's now before the Supreme Court of Canada, now before the Supreme Court of Canada. And what a shame that we would now be four years, seven months into the mandate, into the second term of a tired government, and a government that can't call an election because they don't have electoral boundaries that'll be recognized in a court of law. What a travesty. What an tragedy. And the people of Saskatchewan are the ones that suffer. Not the sitting MLAs, but the people of Saskatchewan are the ones that suffer.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that this Bill 61 is all about taxes and mismanagement and incompetence. I think it's also about choices, the choices this government has made over the past nine-plus years. The choices it has made, many of those choices — the vast majority of them — have proven to be the wrong choices.

Very soon now the government is going to be going to the people of Saskatchewan and saying: well you know we've made a few mistakes, made a few mistakes, learned our lessons, and now we're ready to start listening. Now we're going to listen to you people. We'll do what you want.

I can hear it all now. I don't know how you square that circle, Mr. Minister of Finance, member for Weyburn. How do you square a circle that says . . . when you say you're going to listen to the people, when the people are overwhelmingly opposed to this Bill 61? They're overwhelmingly opposed to your 7 per cent tax grab. How do you square that circle? How do you tell the people of Saskatchewan, well we're listening, we're listening. Oh but please ignore this biggest tax grab in the history of Saskatchewan, just ignore that one little, tiny thing. Ignore that little, tiny thing. Other than that, you have my word, we're listening, the member for Weyburn says. Other than this one tiny little detail, other than the biggest tax grab in Saskatchewan history.

And would that tax grab . . . Why is it so necessary, Mr. Speaker?

I want to refer to some revenue to the Saskatchewan government. Revenue from 1981 from all sources, including transfers from other governments, revenue was \$2.663 billion. By 1990-91 — nine years later — revenue was \$4.278 billion. So we've jumped from two billion six to four billion two in nine years. An unprecedented leap in revenue to the treasury of Saskatchewan.

But as importantly as the size of that overall increase, is to look at where that increase in taxation came. And I look, Mr. Speaker, at . . . corporation income tax went from 93 million to 143 million. But individual income tax at the same time went from \$511 million in 1981-82 to 896 million — just shy of \$900 million or representing a four-ninths increase. Mr. Speaker, that's where the bulk of the money has come from, is from the people of Saskatchewan.

At the same time we've seen sales tax . . . Remember the sales tax promises of 1982 — vote for the Progressive Conservative Party, they said then, and we'll eliminate the 5 per cent E&H tax. Well I'd have to say that they eliminated the 5 per cent E&H tax; the sad part is they replaced it with a 7 per cent E&H tax, which represents a 40 per cent increase. And that is reflected, Mr. Speaker, by the fact that the sales tax went from \$317 million to \$530 million in that same time frame -- certainly a 40 per cent increase.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see the taxes on people having escalated much faster than taxes on corporations. We see oil royalties having gone from in 1981-82, \$532 million to \$242 million in 1991-92.

An Hon. Member: — And what's the price of oil?

Mr. Trew: — And the member for Thunder Creek says, and what's the price of oil. I would have thought as Minister of Energy you would know that the price of oil has been higher in every single year under your government than it was in any single year when the former NDP administration was in power — higher in every single year under your government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — But the revenues, less than half — revenues less than half. And I would have thought that the minister

responsible would have understood the very basics about his department. Not much wonder we are in trouble, Mr. Speaker. Not much wonder we are in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stick with oil production and revenue for just a minute because I think it portrays one of the areas where this government has made a choice; this government has made a choice that has largely proved to be a wrong choice. It's one of the choices this government made on the road to getting more than a \$5 billion deficit in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in 1981 the oil royalties collected were \$532 million. And that has dropped — in 1989 it was \$254 million.

But interestingly, I get this out of . . . from budget *Estimates*, in other words, documents presented by the government opposite. What has been done here, I'm taking the royalty structure as it was in 1982, and if that had been left, the value of the forgone revenue to Saskatchewan tops \$3.8 billion between 1981 and 1989 — \$3.8 billion in forgone revenue, Mr. Speaker.

Now you can certainly argue that there's an argument to be made for some incentives for new drilling. I would never argue that there is any argument to be made for infill drilling where you know there's oil. With respect to the oil royalties that have been foregone . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the Minister of Finance would do better to listen than to chirp. You've had your opportunity to speak on this, and I'm sure you will wind up closing debate. Maybe not — maybe not. Maybe you will withdraw it by then. Certainly that's much more likely if you'd spend more time listening to the people or if you'd spend some time talking to people in your constituency.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where there's been three point . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. It seems that there are two people giving their comments at the same time, one official and one unofficial. Let us give the official member an opportunity — the member for Regina North. Other members will also get their opportunity.

(1500)

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, in addition to those foregone royalties, what we have seen by mismanagement under this administration for the past nine years, we've seen nine successive deficit budgets, having gone from a surplus of \$139 million in 1982 to a debt of more than \$5 billion today.

The interest costs on that, Mr. Speaker, have gone from 44 million — and each year it has gone up and up and up — to the 1989-90, \$523 million interest to service the deficit.

And as the Premier said some nine years ago, deficits are nothing but deferred taxes that must be paid by future taxpayers. We say the future is now, but we've got to get that government out of the way because they're obviously incapable of presenting a balanced budget. I would suggest it is impossible.

And I don't know why, after nine successive tries, that at

the 11th hour, as time is running out on this mandate, I don't know why the people of Saskatchewan would even start to believe government members when they say, ah but this time, this time is going to be different; this time we're listening; this time we're going to have a balanced budget.

Why would they believe you that you're listening? Why would they believe that you're going to have a balanced budget? We have heard that promise made successively under . . . There isn't a single Finance minister that has been in that position in the Progressive Conservative government, there isn't a single Finance minister that hasn't said, we are going to balance the budget. Usually they say within four years.

Well four years becomes five years becomes six years. At nine years, huge deficit this year, something like \$363 million projected deficit — and the costs keep mounting.

But it's this kind of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, it's because of this mismanagement of the provincial treasury, this mismanagement of the public trust, if I may call it that — it's because of that that we are now debating Bill 61 which is An Act to amend The Health and Education Sales Tax Act. It's all about choices and it's all about the wrong choices having been made.

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers of Saskatchewan have been asking some simple questions. One question that taxpayers should be asking themselves is: who have taxes increased the most for? Is it (a) oil companies, (b) people earning wages or salary, or (c) farmers?

And the answer is (b), people who now are paying an additional 2 per cent flat tax on all their income, 40 per cent increase on the E&H tax that went from 5 per cent to 7 per cent. And now we're debating that very Bill that will make a 7 per cent E&H tax, a 7 per cent goods and services tax, so that the government can collect many, many . . . several hundreds of millions of dollars more out of the pockets of the people of Saskatchewan.

Home owners have also lost \$230 a year in the property improvement grant that they used to get every year simply for paying their taxes. Renters have lost \$115 annual renter's rebate, and that is nothing more than a tax increase. All Saskatchewan people who pay a gas tax are now paying 4 cents a litre gas tax more than they were in 1982.

And farmers have seen their taxes rise; municipal and property, education taxes have just sky-rocketed because the government opposite has chosen not to keep up with inflation with respect to revenue sharing. Instead they have off-loaded the tax burden as much as they can on the local school boards, on the local municipal councils. Because of those actions the local taxpayers, the property owners, have seen their tax rates sky-rocket, absolutely sky-rocket, while the off-loading is taking place.

Another question that the people of Saskatchewan would do well to ask themselves, Mr. Speaker, is which political party has used deficit budgets. Which political party has used deficit budgets? Was it the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) under Tommy Douglas,

later to become the NDP? No. No deficit budgets there.

Was it the Liberals under Ross Thatcher? I believe one year there was a small deficit, paid off the very next year. Ross Thatcher and the Liberals paid off his deficit, one small deficit, paid off the very next year.

Was it the Conservatives that used deficit financing? Yes, Mr. Speaker, yes. Nine for nine. They have a perfect batting record. Nine deficits out of nine budgets, but they say, oh but we've changed. Oh but trust us. Oh we've changed, they say. Oh isn't that interesting. How can a leopard change its spots? After nine years of being a leopard, a leopard shall remain a leopard to the death.

Mr. Speaker, we see a provincial deficit that has gone from a surplus to a debt, and because of that we're seeing this tax grab Bill, Bill 61, before the Legislative Assembly at this moment.

It's interesting that the now Premier of the province, even while he was Premier in 1983 said, and I quote: Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you can afford to mismanage it and still break even.

Well the question then, Mr. Speaker, is if you can afford to mismanage it and still break even, then what else have they done? What else have they been up to? You can mismanage it and break even. How could you possibly run up such a huge deficit?

Mismanagement's okay. You can do that and still break even, according to your leader, the Premier. You can afford to mismanage and still break even. The question then becomes, what else have you done? What else?

And part of the what else, Mr. Speaker, you can see in the SaskTel annual report; in 1988 annual report, they show a dividend to the province of Saskatchewan, of \$237 million — \$237.721 million dividend taken in 1988.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we see in the 1989 report, under the same statement, the five-year record of service, where I got the statement just previously, again, 1988 they show a \$237.721 million dividend. And in 1989, they took a \$70.113 million dividend — that in 1989.

But what happens when we come to election year? 1990 SaskTel annual report: we look to the same five-year record of service, and we see in 1988 — remember this is 1988 — that in the '88 SaskTel annual report and in the '89 SaskTel annual report, it says the dividend was 237 million. In the 1990, the dividend reported for the year 1988 was only 70 million — 70 million.

An Hon. Member: — What?

Mr. Trew: — Seventy million. Where did the other \$168 million go? Now, Mr. Speaker, that was one of the questions I was asking the Minister of Finance before they moved closure on the interim supply Bill.

I think it's a legitimate question for me to ask on behalf of my constituents, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. Where did the \$168 million go out of the SaskTel annual report? Where did it go? It appears in the

'88 and '89 report, but not in the election year report. Where did \$168 million go? A very legitimate question and a question, Mr. Speaker, for which I never got a sniff of an answer from the Minister of Finance. Not so much as a sniff. And yet shortly after that, they move closure on the interim supply Bill — the Bill where they're asking for over \$800 million of taxpayers' money.

Don't begrudge the government the right to have an interim supply Bill. But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the government has every obligation to answer legitimate questions posed to it by the legitimate, elected opposition in the Legislative Assembly. All I want to know is where \$168 million went with respect to SaskTel.

I was not at that time questioning the Minister of Finance about the \$30 million accumulated deficit that Saskatchewan Transportation Company has built up, but I can tell you that that is part of the overall mismanagement scheme of the government opposite. They've taken a company that had a \$938,000 accumulated surplus, ran it up to a \$30 million deficit, and that is why we're now faced with a government trying to force closure on us on a Bill respecting a provincial goods and services tax.

It's an admission, Mr. Speaker, of the government members that, well whoops, we can't manage the economy of Saskatchewan. We can't manage a relatively small operation like Saskatchewan Transportation Company. We can't seem to manage it without a \$31 million turnaround, but by gosh, we're going to make the people of Saskatchewan pay.

We're going to make them pay by imposing a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax so we can cover up some of this other mess — the \$168 million I just referred to in Saskatchewan Telecommunications and the \$30 million that they've now accumulated as a deficit within Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder that fair-minded people on this side of the Legislative Assembly would be questioning the government in its insatiable appetite for ever escalating moneys from the people of Saskatchewan. You've got to learn to live within the government means.

I've heard our Finance critic describe it as . . .

An Hon. Member: — Describe it very well.

Mr. Trew: — And describe it very, very well, I might add, Mr. Speaker, that when you're having some difficulty balancing your cheque book at the end of the month — I shouldn't say balancing, but when you find that you have spent more than you had income — everyone tends to think, well gee, if I only had 10 per cent more income everything would be fine. I could be out of this problem.

The problem is that this government has taken a 10 per cent increase every year, a little better than that, for nine years. Revenue is up 93 per cent in the nine years the government has been in office. Revenue to the provincial government up 93 per cent. So that's like a 10 per cent increase in taxes every year for nine years, and yet we

seem to be further and further from a balanced, surplus budget — further and further every year.

Is the problem that the government doesn't collect enough tax revenue or is the problem that the government doesn't manage its resources well to begin with? Is the problem perhaps that the government ministers don't have a handle on their departments? I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is the problem.

You can never, ever convince this MLA, the member for Regina North, that with a 93 per cent increase in revenue that somehow that hasn't kept up with inflation. Inflation's been running at roughly half that rate since this government came into office — I'm talking the total inflation and I'm talking the total tax increase. So they're collecting by every measure more tax dollars in total now than ever before, and while that is happening they're still running ever-escalating deficits.

We are saying enough is enough. You people have got to not go back to the well again. You can't go back to the people of Saskatchewan and ask for a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax simply to pump hundreds of millions of dollars more into the provincial treasury to cover up your incompetence, to cover up your mismanagement, to cover up the waste and the arrogance that this government has shown the people of Saskatchewan for nine years.

It's got to stop somewhere, no better time than right now. Withdraw. I'm asking the Minister of Finance to simply do the proper thing, withdraw Bill 61.

Campaign on it, if you like, when you call the election which must in any case, as I understand it, be within five months now. If you must, campaign on that. Say, re-elect us. And I'm saying: re-elect the Conservative government and we'll give you a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax. But you can run on that.

We certainly aren't going to run on that on this side of the Legislative Assembly. We are doing everything we can to stop the passage of Bill 61. That's where we're at and we're determined we can do it. So determined that I think it's going to happen. But it's because that's what people want, Mr. Speaker.

(1515)

But I've said it before, 26 MLAs on this side of the Legislative Assembly cannot do it alone. We need the help of the people out in the public. We need petitions signed. We need letters written. We need telephone calls. I hope that as I'm speaking people are telephoning the Minister of Finance who is in the blue pages in the Regina telephone directory. I suspect he's in the blue pages of most telephone directories. I think they left the cabinet ministers in.

And I urge people to call the Minister of Finance. I urge people to call MLAs on this side of the Legislative Assembly. I urge them to write letters, sign petitions, do what they can. Phone the member from Wascana and tell him, so what. Tell him, so what. Tell him, this is what: I'm opposed to the provincial goods and services tax. What's

your stand? Say, I'm opposed to this. What's your stand? Ask the member from Regina Wascana. Find out where he really stands. Let's see how tough he is on a provincial goods and services tax. Let's find out how determined you are to ram that down the throats of your voters — the small-business operators and the families in your constituency and around Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have to smile but it's with some difficulty that I do it. The member for Yorkton says, well they like the tax credit. Mr. Speaker, the best news this government has with respect to the provincial goods and services tax is the tax credit for the people with the lowest incomes. The people with the lowest incomes will get a tax credit.

A family of four earning the magnificent sum of \$25,000 a year will get \$400 tax credit. I'm sure they're just jumping up and down with joy at the prospect of paying close to \$1,300 a year more in taxes so that they can collect the \$400 tax credit. I'm sure they're just elated with that. And I sure hope that members opposite will talk about that.

Well I apologize to the member for Yorkton who tells me he was talking about businesses. Weyerhaeuser may like it. But I have a letter, Mr. Speaker, that is from — well the member from Melville, whatever nomen that cabinet minister is going under these days — but a letter from the member from Melville talking about the impact of the provincial goods and services tax. And he uses an example. I'll pick one on page 18 of his letter, tax savings for restaurants.

And they show that by gosh, if a restaurant buys — I thought I saw a vehicle in here, but I don't see it — well an industrial oven, they can get a tax credit on that. They buy fridges and coolers and they can get a tax credit on that. And there's a list of other things.

But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that restaurants don't buy an industrial oven every year. They buy it and the industrial oven will last for — I don't know, but I would assume that an industrial oven would be very heavy duty — should last for 10 or 15 years in most restaurants. Certainly it would last more than one year, certainly more than one year, or else we would have all seen industrial ovens being put in much more regularly.

The same thing can be said with respect to fridges and coolers. And interestingly, Mr. Speaker, in this letter they showed that fridges will cost \$20,000, so that'll amount to a great tax saving because they get reimbursed for the tax. Restaurateurs that I have talked to, to a person, are adamantly opposed to this provincial goods and services tax. They are saying, it's wrong. It is going to be hitting the people of Saskatchewan hard.

When their customers, the restaurateur's customers, don't have the money because they've had to spend the 7 per cent GST in all of their other purchases — including now used cars, including realtor fees, including legal fees, including clothing now, including dog and cat food, pet supplies, things that have not previously been taxed provincially — but when they're spending their income on that, they've got less disposable income for discretionary spending. And to a large degree eating out in a restaurant is discretionary spending.

Now we all think we have to do it from time to time. But if push comes to shove, you know people go to the food bank before they go to a restaurant when they're absolutely flat broke and have no food in the house. People go to the food bank; they're certainly not going to the restaurant to buy a 20 or a 30 or a \$40 meal for themselves and their friends, plus a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax on top of that.

In this letter I was referring to, they show the long-term impact on the economy, and it is going to, it says, result in economic growth and job creation; growth due to harmonization, the change in the real gross domestic product. And it shows everything as positive growth.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely astounding that we have witnessed the federal goods and services tax introduced. And right after it was introduced we see Canada go into a recession. This is, if not the worst recession, it is certainly the worst one since 1981-82. I believe it is very close to being a larger recession than the one that Canada had in 1981-1982. Right after the introduction of the federal goods and services tax, we go into a recession.

Now what's the Minister of Finance's recommendation? That in Saskatchewan we choose to double the recession. Let's go in and have a harmonized provincial goods and services tax, too. It isn't good enough that Saskatchewan has enjoyed such limited growth for nine long Tory years.

That's not bad enough for the Minister of Finance. He wants to see that the hurt lasts a lot longer. So he looks around, digs into his bag of tricks and says, I got just the thing. I got the thing that'll make the people pay and pay and pay. Every time they open their wallet, their cheque-book, they'll be giving me 7 per cent, he says; 7 per cent to finance my deficit, he says; 7 per cent to finance the waste, the corruption, the mismanagement of government members opposite; 7 per cent tax all because the wrong choices have been made. All because the wrong choices have been made.

Mr. Speaker, I've touched a bit on the wasteful spending and financial mismanagement of this government. And you know people have been asking members on this side of the Legislative Assembly for quite a while now, where has all the money gone? Where has it gone? I have a list here of some of the trips that cabinet ministers have taken during the first eight years of the present Progressive Conservative administration. And I see this list.

They've gone to places like Dublin, Ireland; New York; Ottawa; Hong Kong; Rapid City, South Dakota; Vancouver; Atlanta, Georgia; Helsinki, Finland; Reno, Nevada; Athens, Greece; London, England; Cairns, Australia; Edmonton, Alberta; Brasilia in Brazil; Montreal; Fredericton; Washington, D.C.; Phoenix; Miami; Port of Spain; New Orleans; Zürich, Switzerland; San Francisco, California; Saint John, New Brunswick; New Delhi in India; Jackson, Mississippi; Beijing, China; Grand Falls, Newfoundland; Chicoutimi in Quebec; Palm Springs, California; Geneva, Switzerland; Cleveland, Ohio; Thailand; Columbus, Ohio; Manila in the Philippines; Denver, Colorado; Oakland; Colorado; Honolulu, Hawaii; Frankfurt, Germany; Galway,

Ireland; Siegen, Germany; Banff, Alberta.

I have another page, Mr. Speaker, and I didn't read every name on that one, but I've got another page. The Minister of Finance says, and why were they there? Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what the people of Saskatchewan have been asking us. Why were they there? I wonder why the first minister of Highways was in Hawaii. Why did he go to Hawaii in the middle of winter? I bet you he was going to see how the Hawaiian government builds its roads. I'll bet that's what he was there for and it had to be done, gosh, darn it, it had to be done in the dead of winter. Yes, "Diamond" Jim Garner in Hawaii, checking out how to build roads. Yes. Well it took him two weeks I'm told, to check out how they build roads in Hawaii.

Now that confirms, Mr. Speaker, what we have known on this side of the Legislative Assembly for some time. That is, government members are awfully slow learners. It took two weeks to learn how to build a highway in Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, we see waste and mismanagement. We see no-cut contracts. We raise the prospect, or the reality, of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan president Chuck Childers getting an annual salary and benefits worth \$740,000 a year, last year. Subsequent to that we have found out that as usual we read . . . got our documents as usual, we were low. The number was greater than \$740,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, how is it that a government could have its choices so mixed up — \$740,000 for one person to head the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, \$740,000; less than \$700,000 to feed the hungry children of Saskatchewan. And there's an awful lot more than one hungry child.

Mr. Speaker, that is why people are asking: where has the money gone and how could any government have its priorities so wrong? How could anybody be so out of touch and out of step? How could we witness \$740,000 for that and less than \$200,000 for SCIC (Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation) in foreign aid?

Mr. Speaker, we have a government that has cut back on everything that relates to people. Every single thing that relates to regular people in Saskatchewan, this government has cut and slashed and hacked, except for our taxes which have escalated. As I pointed out, the total take of the government is up 93 per cent in nine years.

(1530)

And it seems to me we've got misplaced priorities. We've got employment contracts with the top bureaucrats, Mr. Speaker, that are obscene. We have employment contracts that put the largess to a very, very limited, restricted number of the chosen few. And at the time we have that going on, we see government grants to the worthwhile work that SCIC does in fund raising . . . The Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation was set up in 1974-75 and the idea of it, Mr. Speaker, was not that government would take the lead but government would match the generosity of the people of Saskatchewan.

In '74-75 the voluntary fund raisers of SCIC raised just under a million dollars. Now the provincial government did not match it in total that year because they didn't know what to budget for, but the next year the provincial government funding was up \$1.1 million. The fund raising escalated, the private fund raising — I have the graph before me — and it just went up every single year to 1989 when it topped \$6 million in donations from private individuals and some small corporations, some corporations in Saskatchewan; but \$6 million voluntarily donated for international aid — \$6 million that should have been matched by the provincial government. Instead we see a provincial government that in 1981-82 was matching just over \$2 million annually and then that dropped off with the election of the present Progressive Conservative government.

This year the total is \$200,000 — one-tenth of what it is, not counting inflation. So it would be less than one-tenth of what it was in 1981-82. My colleague, the member for Moose Jaw South, asked when in the world will the people get a government that is as good as the people? He was asking questions about this when the people donate over \$6 million and the government donates a paltry \$200,000.

So they've got no money for the very poorest, destitute, desperate people of the world; not even a pittance. They've got \$200,000 for the people of the world that are in the worst shape possible — the people of Bangladesh, the people on the Horn of Africa, the people in the Middle East, political refugees, people who are starving. And yet they've got \$740,000 for one person — a year! — on a five-year, no-cut contract. Five years of pay whether he does a lick of work or not.

That is some of the mismanagement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has led us to this Bill 61 today — the mismanagement and the abuse of government members opposite of the provincial treasury, the lack of any semblance of caring about where the real hurt is, a lack of caring and a lack of compassion about people.

This Bill is partly about patronage, Mr. Speaker. It's about Graham Taylor to Hong Kong.

We all remember the former member for Kindersley. Kindersley, by gosh. Now Kindersley — who's the sitting MLA for Kindersley now, I wonder? Oh and there isn't one. And what has it been now? — some 16 months, 17 months since Graham Taylor resigned to take a very nicely paying . . . or I'm sorry Bob Andrew. Nineteen months, I'm told — 19 months since Bob Andrew took a cushy job in Minneapolis. Nineteen months that the Premier and the government have refused to call by-elections. Nineteen months, two budgets, the people of Kindersley have been without an elected representative. We say that's a shame.

The constituency of Kindersley, the constituency of Indian Head-Wolseley, the constituency of Souris-Cannington, and Turtleford should have elected MLAs, should have somebody here to speak up for them respecting Bill 61 which is the biggest single tax grab in Saskatchewan history.

But why don't they have sitting MLAs? Because the government can't screw up the courage to call even a by-election, much less a general election. Can't even call by-elections because they know they'd lose them, too. And that's a shame.

Well what else? We've got Graham Taylor having gone to Hong Kong, Graham Taylor, the former MLA for Indian Head-Wolseley. That constituency been more than two budgets now without an MLA.

Bob Andrew to Minneapolis; we've got Paul Rousseau, the great mathematician, the former MLA for Regina South, in London. We got Larry Birkbeck, the former MLA for Moosomin, to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board. If memory serves me correct, it's something in the range of \$50,000 a year.

Paul Schoenhals was appointed to the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and I understand has moved on. Gordon Dirks to the Department of Education — Gordon Dirks, the former MLA for Rosemont, defeated by my colleague. The gentleman sits three desks over from me.

And we have Jack Sandberg to SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation); we have Keith Parker to Liquor Board; Ralph Katzman to Highways; Louis Domotor, SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation); Tim Embury, part of Coopers & Lybrand study for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan).

We have Myles Morin in Labour; we have Bud Smith, the Gaming Commission; we have Gord Currie in Whitespruce. And I have referred earlier to the Senator, the good Senator Berntson, former MLA for Souris-Cannington, the seat that remains vacant because the government refuses to call a by-election or a general election. So the people of Souris-Cannington have no voice in this Bill, this Bill which represents the biggest single tax grab in Saskatchewan history.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, it has gone even beyond the patronage to defeated Tory MLAs. It goes beyond Tory cabinet ministers that resigned because they're tired of taking the heat day in and day out, and they want a nice retirement job where they can be out of sight, out of mind, but still get a nice, big pay cheque. But you know, it's gone way beyond that.

We have a situation where the Premier's office is tracking student job applications. Now, Mr. Speaker, that was raised in this Legislative Assembly. I raised it a year ago that student summer jobs was being somehow politically manoeuvred and that summer jobs were going disproportionately to members on the government side of the House where there was a Conservative MLA.

And I raised the spectre of that being very, very undemocratic, very, very unfair — unfair to the students, to the future of our province. And I maintain it is very patently unfair that this would go on, and yet it's happening again this year. And when it came to light this year, the excuse was well, you know, we just like to monitor and make sure that each constituency gets the same number of student hirings or a very similar number.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, isn't it interesting that . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The question before the Assembly is Bill No. 61, An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act, and I've asked the member to be more relevant to the question before the Assembly.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Students who are working in the summer will be buying restaurant meals. Students working in the summer with summer employment, have to eat. Students have to pay rent, students have to buy houses . . . or pardon me, buy automobiles or some form of transportation, and as such they will be subject to this Bill 61, 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax.

And in addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to these students being subject to paying part of the biggest tax rip-off in Saskatchewan history, in addition to that, they're being double penalized where government MLAs and cabinet ministers have access to a list of those students who are getting summer employment while not one on this side of the legislature were told about it, were asked about it, were said, well gee, do you want us to monitor the situation to see that your students get a fair shake in your constituency? Not one of us on this side was asked.

And yet virtually every MLA, I'd be surprised if every single one of them on that side, doesn't know about this tracking of student job applications done right out of the Premier's office, according to the March 14 *Leader-Post*. And I invite you and others to read that. Young people are very, very upset, to say the least.

You know, January 1 this 7 per cent goods and services tax is going to also go into effect on every used vehicle that is sold in Saskatchewan. Up until now with the . . . one sad little incident where the government members opposite tried to impose the sales tax on used vehicles but had to take it off because people wrote to them, people called them, people signed petitions, and we in the opposition opposed. Eventually the government listened and took that used-vehicle tax off. And it happened because people were adamant about being heard. They said, this is unfair; you can't do it.

Anyway, up until — with that one minor exception — up until now, vehicles have been taxed one time at 7 per cent. They paid the E&H tax when the vehicle came into Saskatchewan, whether it was new or used, but you pay it once. And then if you sell the vehicle, you don't have to pay the E&H tax or the new owner doesn't have to. But under this tax grab, every time a vehicle changes ownership, there's going to have to be 7 per cent E&H tax paid.

Well isn't that an interesting little thing. Who do you suppose it is that primarily buys used vehicles? Is it government MLAs? Is it George Hill, the president of SaskPower? I bet you he goes around regularly buying used vehicles — junkers, because that's all he can afford. On a hundred thousand dollars-plus a year salary, he can probably only afford a five hundred dollar or a thousand dollar used vehicle.

Of course the answer is self-evident. It's the young people

starting out that need their first set of wheels that are going to buy a used vehicle first. Many of us continue to buy used vehicles, but as you get more established in life financially, it becomes more a matter of choice. But I can tell you that for the first vehicle I ever got, it had to be a used one because that was the only thing I could even remotely afford.

Under this Bill 61, this legislation, I would've . . . or vehicle purchasers would pay a 7 per cent provincial GST on a used vehicle. And when they sell that vehicle, whoever buys it from them would also pay a 7 per cent provincial GST.

So here we are again, attacking the people who can least afford it with this used-vehicle tax. And that's part of why I am opposed to it. I have no objection whatever to paying a 7 per cent sales tax one time on a vehicle and then it's done. The government can tax a vehicle once. Government taxes a television set once. Now under this legislation, used furniture is going to also be taxed, GST paid, used clothing.

(1545)

There's going to be a disproportionate tax on the people who can least afford it, and that's part of why I'm so adamantly opposed to it. This Bill 61 is the beginning of the most unfair and regressive tax imposition on the people of Saskatchewan that we have seen in certainly recent history, and I suspect even longer than that.

Mr. Speaker, we see a government that has chosen to do a number of things for nine long years. They've gotten into trouble in the purchase of some Eagle buses. That matter is before the courts right now. There's a judicial inquiry that was struck down. There's an Ernst & Young report that has been promised for nearly a year and a half now. Supposedly that's to be referred to the courts and it would be improper for me at this moment to refer beyond what is obviously established public knowledge.

But it's this kind of goings-on that have led a tired, old government to look for a solution to their financial problems. They're saying, well you know we've tried so many other things. We're open for business and gee, that didn't seem to work. And then we were just hoping for business and that didn't work any better either. We tried buying business. We gave \$238 million to Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Washington to take a pulp mill that we'd already bought and paid for.

Now government members are still saying that that was a wonderful deal, but I don't know how it is that you could convince any . . . let me refer to the pulp mill as a farm. How do you convince any farmer that it makes good sense for them to sell the farm and not get paid for the farm? Somehow it just doesn't quite seem right.

If there's any farmers in the government caucus that want to sell me their farm or their business on those terms, I can tell you that sight unseen I will take it. You name your price. You don't ask me to pay for it — no money down. We'll have a nice little paper deal that says your farm or your business is worth \$238 million. But if I get the same terms as Weyerhaeuser got, I don't have to give you a

penny.

I don't think I'm going to get a single taker from any cabinet ministers or MLAs on the government side and nor would I expect to. I have a great deal of disdain for what government members are doing with respect to the public treasury, but I don't for two seconds think you're that stupid. I don't believe it.

I think you're doing the wrong thing. This government has been about the wrong choices for nine solid years — nine wrong choices now culminating with a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax; nine years of the wrong choice; nine years where yet again you've shown the people of Saskatchewan, you've shown us you are incapable of making a proper choice.

You say we're listening to people, but just please ignore this little detail. Please ignore the fact that we're having the biggest single tax grab in Saskatchewan history. Other than that, we're listening to you. In other words, we have a government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is listening to the people when it's convenient for the government to listen. But no other time — only when it's convenient to listen will they pretend they've got their ears open.

If people are saying, gee what fine people you are, what fine fellows you are, you're doing a wonderful job, you're all ears. Yes, yes, yes. Lap that up like a puppy in his dog food at his supper.

But when people are saying no to a provincial goods and services tax, what are they saying? No, we've got to have this 7 per cent more, the 7 per cent solution. Got to have this 7 per cent solution because we're not prepared to tackle our spending priorities. We're not prepared to get out of the trough. We're not prepared to end the dealings that we've had.

And besides that, you never know when Guy Montpetit might come back and want a few more million dollars. So we've got to have that source of revenue so we can go back and deal with good old Guy Montpetit. Maybe next time the other half of you that didn't get to fly in his plane or ride in his limousine, maybe the other half of you will get to ride in it or fly in it this time.

But those are the choices, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have led us to this Bill 61, that have led us to this 7 per cent goods and services tax.

You talk about waste. There's over \$27,000 to buy a Citroën for Paul Rousseau in London, England. That was legislative order for return no. 209; that's where that can be checked out. Seventeen thousand four hundred and twenty-three dollars in expenses run up by the Premier's office at Regina's Ramada Renaissance Hotel in one year. Now isn't that interesting — more than \$17,000 run up at the Ramada Renaissance in one year according to *Public Accounts* 1987-88.

Now I could ask what in the world the Premier's office would need to spend \$17,000 at the Ramada Renaissance for in a year. Or I could ask what the Premier's office ran up \$19,368 at Regina's Ramada Renaissance Hotel in one year in *Public Accounts* '87-88

... Well really running up expenses out of the Premier's account ... out of the Premier's office.

Or what about the \$45,000 paid to the former PC Member of Parliament, Stan Korchinski, to advise the Devine government on how to lobby the Mulroney government — \$45,000 from a defeated Tory MP to tell a sitting Tory cabinet minister and Premier how to lobby Brian Mulroney.

Now I don't know about you, but I always thought that the Premier and Brian Mulroney were just as thick as peas in a pod. I thought they were real tight together.

So why would you need to spend \$45,000 to tell the Premier how to talk to the Prime Minister when they're already cousins, already so close together that ... It reminds me of a joke, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I absolutely cannot tell, but any of my friends who would like to hear it can approach me when I'm not in the Legislative Assembly. But it has to do with the Premier and the Prime Minister and their relationship. I'm sure most of us have heard some of these stories.

But, Mr. Speaker, I've got a list here of money that has been spent. The list number 18 is \$1,343,495 for the advertising and public relations bill for one eight-month period that SaskTel paid to Roberts & Poole, an advertising agency associated with the PC (Progressive Conservative) Party — legislative order for return no. 12.

Now SaskTel is a monopoly. SaskTel clearly has some legitimate advertising to do, but when you have a monopoly on long-distance service, on local telephone service, it hardly seems to me that you need to spend \$1,343,000 in one eight-month period just for that advertising of a Crown monopoly.

Or the very next one, number 19 on my list of 50 — \$212,000 as a research grant to Supercart, the development of a plastic shopping cart which the company never produced. And that's in the Science and Technology annual report '86-87 — \$212,000 to Supercart. And if the Minister of Finance wants us to get into the Supercart debate again, we can.

The point is — and I can't come back to it often enough, Mr. Speaker — these are the choices of a tired government that it has made over nine successive years. Nine years of choosing the wrong things; nine years of the wrong choice and now we get the results. Now we get a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax being rammed down. We have the situation where closure is being used.

There's a notice that on Tuesday the Minister of Justice is going to move closure on this very Bill. I'm the third speaker that the opposition has put up — the third speaker on this Bill. And we're already into closure.

Government members are muttering away, as I'm sure you have every right to be muttering, because clearly you don't understand. You clearly cannot make a definitive statement that says, yes, I'm listening. Yes, this provincial GST is going to drive business out of our province. This is going to devastate the border communities. Go down to Maple Creek, the town of Maple Creek. Go to Maple

Creek and just ask the small businesses there. Try and find the manager of the Robinson store that I'm told earlier today — I hope I've got the right store — closed their door after quite a large number of years in that business in Maple Creek.

The member for Rosthern is very impressed with the large number of years. As the member for Rosthern might appreciate, I'm not from the town of Maple Creek. But I want to tell you what your government's nine years of wrong choices have done. You're driving small businesses into bankruptcy. You're driving other businesses to pull up shop, close their doors before they have to go into bankruptcy, and that is the record of nine years of the wrong choices. Small wonder that on this side of the House we are opposed to this provincial GST.

And we're not alone, Mr. Speaker, not at all alone in being opposed to the GST. There's an alliance on tax on reading that has been in opposition to us . . . opposition to the provincial goods and services tax. They've pointed out that for the average university student it's going to mean something like \$200 a year in additional textbooks. And the list of what it will do goes on and on.

An Hon. Member: — You're right. This speech is bringing tears to my eyes.

Mr. Trew: — Well I'm pleased to hear that this speech is bringing tears to the Minister of Finance's eyes, because it's the first thing to bring tears to your eyes that anybody has ever seen in a long, long time.

And it's time you should be feeling sorry for the people that you are hurting with this tax. You should feel sorry for the single people that are working in the restaurant business who are going to have their hours cut back or who are going to be laid off in one stroke because of your provincial GST.

You should be sorry, Mr. Minister of Finance, that . . . I talked about SaskTel and the 1990 annual report earlier in my speech. I talked about the missing \$168 million that the Minister of Finance would not speak for.

But there is something else that shows up in the 1990 annual report that you would be interested in. That shows that for 1990 they declared dividend of \$46,000,873 — that's for this year. For the year ended, they show retained earnings at December 31, of \$38.880 million. But then you go to note 6 on page 25, dividends, and they say:

During the year, a dividend of \$38,880,000, based on 1989 earnings, was declared and paid to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan. An additional dividend of \$46,873,000 based on 1990 earnings, (in other words, the current year) was declared for payment in 1991. Based on this declaration, a dividend of \$40,000,000 was paid to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan on January 14, 1991.

(1660)

So we've got a situation where at December 31, SaskTel had retained earnings of 38 million, and 14 days later

they paid a dividend of 40 million, nearly \$2 million more than what they had 14 days earlier in retained earnings.

All this to finance a government that has mismanaged the Crown sector, has mismanaged the economy, has mismanaged the treasury of Saskatchewan for nine years — has mismanaged it so desperately they've stripped the Crowns like SaskTel; they've stripped STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) of its assets; they've sold off and privatized Sask Minerals and a great many other things — PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company), Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan — and at the same time they've let the debt accumulate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, now because they've sold off so many of the assets they're saying: well gee, there's two choices. We can either stop the corruption, we can stop the waste, we can stop the patronage, we can stop the mismanagement, or we can tax.

Well true to form, the Progressive Conservative government members opposite did the thing they're best at. They introduced a 7 per cent provincial goods and services tax; then they introduced closure on it. Now they want to ram this Bill through with very little debate.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we are united in opposition to the passage of this Bill. And if people agree with me, they will be calling our offices, calling the Minister of Finance, calling the member for Regina Wascana — call his office, call all MLAs' offices on the telephone. We're listed in the telephone directories. They will be writing letters and they will be signing petitions.

An Hon. Member: — Why don't you have them send money while they're at it?

Mr. Trew: — The member from Melville says, why don't they send money while they're at it. I'm not sure whether he's referring to send money to your government. I think they would not likely want to give you any more money to squander and to waste. I think the people are saying enough is enough, end this — end this. Don't pass this provincial goods and services tax, this first step, Bill 61. Stand up and be counted. Don't run the economy into ruin. And that's what people are telling me increasingly.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I had the best visit I've ever had with small-business people in my constituency. They're good people; I've had many good visits with them in the past, but this time they are just as united as can be in opposition to this tax.

They want to see an election. They want to see the government opposite turfed out. They want to see a return to sane investment, sane spending. They want to see a government that taxes fairly. They want to see a government that is in tune with the people of Saskatchewan. They want to see a government that will not hinder the small businesses throughout our province.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was in a realty office in my constituency and I took the petition in. I wasn't sure how anxious they would be to be offering this petition, but quite an astounding thing happened. I was just delighted. I went in with a couple of copies. The

gentleman I was talking to said, oh can't you give me a dozen? I can get you lots of names, people who are opposed to this provincial GST. Give me a dozen pages, he said. I'll fill them up. Give them to me. I'll do the work for you. I'm opposed to this provincial GST. So I sat down and talked with the gentleman. We must have talked for about 20 minutes.

I don't think there's a government member opposite that could sit and talk with a small business for 20 minutes without getting kicked out because the small businesses are so fed up with the mismanagement. They're so fed up with the waste. They're so fed up with the corruption and the patronage and the choices that have been wrong. They're fed up with the Weyerhaeusers and the Cargills and the Rafferty-Alameda mud-flats. They're fed up with all the wrong choices.

And they're fed up with always being the scapegoat. They're fed up with always being the ones to pay the taxes. They're fed up with Cargill getting a \$238 million gift, you might as well say, because they haven't paid 1 penny on the interest on the principal of that \$238 million — not 1 penny has Weyerhaeuser paid on that — Did I say Cargill? I said Cargill and I apologize to the people of Cargill for saying that it was 238 million. It was 238 million Weyerhaeuser got on the purchase of the PAPCO mill. Other than that misnomer of the name, confusing Weyerhaeuser and Cargill, what I said was accurate.

People of Saskatchewan are fed up with Weyerhaeuser getting that kind of a gift. People of Saskatchewan are fed up with Cargill getting \$70 million gift to build a fertilizer plant, knowing full well that this is not the first fertilizer plant built at taxpayers' expense in Saskatchewan. And I'll bet you most government members didn't even realize that.

This is the second fertilizer plant built in Saskatchewan at taxpayers' expense, the first one built in the '60s when Ross Thatcher and the Liberals were in office. Cominco was the operator of that fertilizer plant which still stands about 3 miles west of the airport, of the Regina airport.

That fertilizer plant was built for a fraction of the cost of this Cargill plant but it still lost money. It still lost money at a time when interest rates were much lower. This fertilizer plant, you do the figuring and there's a total of \$370 million invested, going to be invested in the fertilizer plant.

It's going to have to have earnings of \$40 million a year just to pay the interest on the investment. That's going to require either an astronomical amount of fertilizer be produced there — in which case you ask, well where is it going to be sold? — or it's going to require an astronomical price per tonne of fertilizer that farmers will have to pay. Or it's going to require a massive bail-out, continued bail-out by either Cargill or this government. And if that bail-out wasn't necessary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nor would this Bill 61 be necessary.

If the choices that the government members had made were the proper choices, we wouldn't be in a situation of spending \$70 million in cash out of the provincial treasury, government members choosing to gift that to

Cargill — Cargill that has an annual budget 11 times larger than the budget of the province of Saskatchewan. Cargill should be financing the province of Saskatchewan, not the other way around. Cargill should finance us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, as I'm winding down my portion of this debate — because I know that some of my colleagues have things to say on this Bill 61 and have, in fact some of them have a great deal to say — I just want to voice my strongest concern for what is happening to our democracy in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen in the past week, we've seen closure used not once, but we've seen closure used twice by government MLAs. Twice they've used closure and it is absolutely unprecedented since 1905 when Saskatchewan became a province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will find nowhere in all the records from 1905 to 1991 till today, nowhere will you see closure having been used two times within a week. Nowhere from 1905 till today will you have seen closure used on an interim supply Bill like it was last . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I've allowed the member far-ranging latitude on the debate. Order, order. I'd ask the member for Saskatoon Nutana to be quiet when the Speaker is on his feet. Order. The member for Saskatoon Nutana wants to interrupt, but the Speaker is on his feet; members are to be quiet.

I've asked the member to keep his remarks to the Bill that's before the House. I'd ask him to make his remarks pertaining to Bill 61.

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, on Thursday evening of last week, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster was engaged in the very same debate on the provincial goods and services tax. That member engaged in a very far-ranging debate on a variety of subjects, Mr. Speaker. If it was good enough for the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster to debate a number of different items, why isn't it good enough for the member from Regina?

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is Bill No. 61. I'd ask members to make their remarks to Bill No. 61 which is before this legislature.

An Hon. Member: — What about the point of order?

The Deputy Speaker: — Point of order is not well taken.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now we see closure being used for a second time on Bill 61, second time within a week — closure on this Bill which is the biggest tax grab in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. It is the first time that closure has been used in Saskatchewan history on a tax Bill, first time ever on a tax Bill. And small wonder that the government has to use closure on a tax Bill. It is very unpopular to everyone except the Minister of Finance who was just clapping like a trained seal because he thinks closure's

the way to go. Naturally he doesn't want to talk about this Bill 61; he doesn't want to talk about his record; he doesn't want to answer for where all the money has gone. No, the easy way out is to use closure. Let's jam this down the people of Saskatchewan's throat. Let's just shove it to them, the Minister of Finance says. Let's just get at it.

Well we say get at it, too. You tell your buddy, the Premier, to call an election. Fight an election saying elect us . . . you say, elect us, and you can impose a provincial GST. You can impose Bill 61. If you get re-elected, I won't oppose it. Because you won't get re-elected and you know it.

This is a last, desperate act out of a desperate administration. It is a government that is tired, it is worn out, it is for ever going back to the people, for ever escalating taxes. This is a government devoid of new ideas, devoid of any economic game plan. It is a government out of touch with the people, out of touch with small businesses, out of touch with not only Saskatchewan but out of touch with the world.

It is a government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has no more mandate. Four years and seven months into its term, and it's using closure. Well maybe from this point of view it's understandable to use closure. They know their time is running out. They've got less than five months left and they've got to get this Bill through. We're determined to stop this Bill, and by gosh, we're going to stop this Bill with the support of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — That's why we're getting letters, we're getting petitions signed, we're getting phone calls. That's how we're going to defeat this Bill, with the support of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

I hesitate to compare this to anything previous, and I don't think it can legitimately be compared with anything previous. This is unique. This is closure for the first time by a tired government on a tax Bill. We're going to be doing everything we can to defeat it.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have much to say on this Bill. I have regretted the need to stand up and voice my views. I would have thought that with all the money spent on polling, that the government would have known the people of Saskatchewan are adamantly opposed to a provincial GST. If their polling doesn't tell them that, their polling isn't worth anything.

Never mind polling, I want to talk to the people of Saskatchewan. I want to ask them for their support. Help us, help the member for Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition, help my colleagues and I as we defeat this Bill. Mr. Speaker, if this Bill 61 ever comes to a vote in this Legislative Assembly, I'll be voting against it. You can count on that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1615)

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I

don't want to take a great deal of time . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Why is the member of her feet?

An Hon. Member: — I was on my feet first and you had my . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I called for the Minister of Energy and Mines . . . Order. I called first to the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I won't take a long time because the opposition during this particular debate has said that they haven't had enough time even though at some times they shut this House down for no good reason at all. But I do want to set the record straight about a few things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we've just been subjected to a couple hours of sheer nonsense on debating this particular Bill.

Number one, were there sales taxes under previous NDP administrations? Yes. There were sales taxes on most everything in this province. There were sales taxes on gasoline. There were sales taxing on clothing, on children's clothing. There were sales taxes on everything except hamburgers under previous NDP administrations. To hear the member from Regina North stand for the last two hours you'd think there was never a sales tax in this province under an NDP administration. Well there was, on most everything. Sales tax had been a fact of life in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a heck of a long time.

Number two, did the NDP recommend that harmonization take place if there was a federal GST? The answer is yes. The member from Regina Centre is on record a number of times, both in this legislature and outside, as saying that very fact. In fact I would just quote from the *Leader-Post* of May 10, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the member from Regina Centre was speaking:

. . . under an NDP government, the second phase of harmonization — which would see the provincial sales tax added to services — won't come into effect (until) Jan. 1, 1992 as planned.

I mean, he waffles all over the place. But one thing is a fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he's recommended harmonization. Once again, in the *Leader-Post* on May 8, he says, "harmonization . . . itself isn't a bad thing."

And we have the NDP's favourite tax crusader, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one Kevin Avram in the *Star-Phoenix* on May 7, '91: It appears that the NDP's leader's "refusal to take a stand on the PST is a signal that he will keep the tax if his party forms government."

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we've established the fact that there have been sales taxes for a long time in this province, we've established the fact that the NDP are in favour of harmonization, are on record in a number of situations in recommending it, why do we have to sit and listen to the drivel from the member from Regina North for the past two hours saying that they're totally against it?

Now obviously he isn't in tune with what his party's

Finance critic, his party's leader, and the people that recommend policy to the NDP Party are saying. Now would an NDP government remove the provincial sales tax from all goods?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Not at all. Not at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's much evidence to say that that party over there would not remove a darn thing, that they agree with harmonization.

Now a few facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If you are going to have a federal goods and services tax and you have a current provincial sales tax, which Saskatchewan has always had, if you're going to have a goods and services tax, should you take the provincial sales tax and harmonize it with the federal goods and services tax?

Everyone across the piece is in agreement that that would be a wise move for a number of reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Instead of having two tax systems, you have one tax system. You don't treat different commodities differently. All items are treated fairly and the same. Consumers only have to deal with one tax. Businesses no longer have to keep record of two different tax systems and have an administrative cost saving. Business now gets all its tax inputs back, lowering the cost and prices and increasing the opportunity for job creation.

Farm fuels have never been taxed, either provincially or under harmonization. And now all farm inputs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are either tax free or 100 per cent refundable.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under harmonization — and this point is also agreed to by all parties — is that people on lower incomes benefit by having harmonization occur, that all families under \$24,999 will now have family tax credits available to them and will be better off financially.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is a province of resources. This province has been blessed with many kinds of resources, those that we mine and drill and pump out of the ground, resources that we grow in our rich agricultural soils.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a province that has to market its resources in a world-wide economy. We're a long ways from tide water ports. Transportation has always been a big element of Saskatchewan people being able to create jobs, earn a living, and build our economy.

Under harmonization of the provincial sales tax and the federal goods and services tax, it is estimated that approximately \$320 million is spent by Saskatchewan's resource sector companies on goods that were formerly subject to E&H tax. Therefore, by simple deduction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these companies would have their inputs reduced by approximately \$22 million, making those companies and resources better able to compete interprovincially, internationally, expanding the resource base in this province and securing jobs in the resource sector and indeed adding to it.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those numbers may not sound very significant to members opposite, but to companies in Saskatchewan, and I think of potash where 2, 3, 4, \$5 a tonne difference, f.o.b. (freight on board) Vancouver, makes the difference between sales of tens and indeed hundreds of thousands of tonnes, that is a big deal. That's a big deal to the people that work in the mines. That's a big deal to Saskatchewan because of the amount of royalty revenue that we take from potash.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can take all of those resource companies across the piece and apply the same principles to them. In other words it's good for those businesses in Saskatchewan to have a harmonized tax structure.

The other thing that it does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it takes the greatest resource that we have in this province, and that is the resource of our land and the people that work that land to produce food for Saskatchewan and Canada and the world to be able better to withstand the international commodity wars and the difficulties that nature has thrown upon us in the 1980s.

Besides helping us with deficit reduction, besides helping us create jobs in the resource area, harmonization means that this province, this government has the money to put into the stabilization of agriculture enough funds so that our agricultural sector will stay alive and functioning and well, and employing people and keeping farm families in Saskatchewan on the farm. That's what this does.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — That's what this Bill, as presented by the Finance minister, does for this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And these are the points that the members of the opposition should be talking about, not all of the gibberish that we've heard from members opposite in this particular debate.

Get down and talk about the issues that are involved in harmonization of the E&H with the federal goods and services. Talk about the issues that are relevant in this Bill, and not all of the other nonsense that we hear from members opposite. And then maybe members opposite, if they'll talk about the Bill, maybe then the members opposite would have a legitimate beef about limit of debate and time spent in this legislature.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's absolutely incumbent upon the members opposite as we go through this particular Bill that they lay out to the taxpayer of Saskatchewan and indeed to the voter of this province where they stand on these issues of significance. Where is their plan? What are they going to do if the New Democratic Party should ever form a government in this province? Come clean with the folks. This question is important enough that I don't believe any political party should hide its true beliefs from the people of this province until the wee days of an election campaign.

They are standing in their place and saying, phone our caucus office, phone members opposite, phone the Minister of Finance about your feelings on E&H. And yet that party over there is scared to tell the public of

Saskatchewan where they are going to take them on this question. Any party that pretends that it should be the government of this province and is scared to let the taxpayers of this province know where they stand on these issues I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does not deserve the time nor the credibility that members opposite are demanding.

Stand in their places, come clean on these issues, talk about resources, talk about manufacturing, talk about diversification, talk about what harmonization, the effect that it has on these areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do not stand and bore this legislature with the drivel that we've heard so far from members opposite. Come clean, come to the point, talk about harmonization, and tell the public of Saskatchewan where an NDP government would truly stand. And don't hide.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Because that's all we've seen from them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the course of this debate, is hiding. Hiding in deceit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't want to take up any more valuable time in this legislature with more remarks. But in summation I would say it's clearly on the record where this government stands on harmonization. It's clearly on the record where members opposite have stood on this. But for their own narrow political purposes they would mislead the public of this province that they would take it off. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they never have in the past and they never will in the future.

So I say, stand in your places and come clean with the folks and debate this Bill the way it should be. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Atkinson: — Before the member takes his seat I want to know if he'd entertain a question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order, order. Will the member entertain a question?

(1630)

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much. I'd like to ask the minister the following question. Mr. Minister, we have heard your government's attempts to justify this E&H tax. I'm interested in knowing as a minister that has some economic portfolio in this province, what the economic impact is going to be on the businesses and the labouring people of this province as a result of the extension of the provincial goods and services tax.

And, Mr. Minister, will you table your study, because surely you have not introduced this tax without undergoing an extensive economic analysis of the impact?

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, obviously the member opposite wasn't listening to my speech as I gave it. I mean the benefits have been pointed out by the Minister of Finance in many forms in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. It's \$260 million to businesses all across the sector in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — It's child tax credits to families on lower incomes in this province.

So obviously members opposite, as I said in my speech before, Mr. Speaker, don't want to listen to the facts as presented by the Finance minister. They simply want to go on deluding members of the public in this province that they would change things significantly. And they will not.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance has laid out our plans on harmonization. I say to the member from Nutana, lay out your plans for the taxpayers and the voters of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, before the member takes his seat again, I'm wondering if he'll entertain another question.

The Speaker: — Will the member entertain a question? Yes, the member said he will.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the member would share for us a detailed analysis of the study that his government has done with respect to the food and beverage industry. And if he could table for us the analysis that would show that there is going to be in fact a positive growth in that industry in the next couple of years, because frankly, Mr. Minister, nobody in this province believes it but yourself. Could you table that study?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, there are many benefits to Saskatchewan business because of harmonization. I am not the minister responsible for the food and beverage industry but I'll repeat for the member's benefit, if he would like, about the resource industry about which I do have a lot of responsibility and I'm very familiar with.

The resource industry in this province spends approximately \$320 million on goods and services that would be subject to E&H. Now that's a lot of money. A benefit that would be back to those resource sector companies in this province of which that member has a lot associated with his riding. When you get into the timber business and people like Weyerhaeuser, is approximately \$22 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Now if you're rolling pulp and paper through that mill and you're rolling paper on a roll there, and you're exporting that paper to Tidewater or to eastern Canada and you have significant transportation costs, then the E&H that would be associated with the production of that paper means that paper is transported cheaper to the market-place and you have a better chance of owning the market-place than you did before.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — Now I would think, Mr. Member from Prince Albert, that if you were associated with a resource industry, you would find that very significant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — One question. Member for Saskatoon South, or Saskatoon Centre, I mean. I'm sorry. Member for Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Smart: — Saskatoon Centre, Mr. Speaker, a constituency that I'm very proud to represent here in the legislature.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. Order, order. Is the hon. member, is she . . . You're speaking? And he's finished? Okay, I missed that. Okay, fine. I just wanted to make sure everything was going according to the way it should be. So the member for Saskatoon Centre is recognized.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Thunder Creek has just spoken about coming clean, and I find that an interesting observation from a member of the government caucus, a caucus which is so deep in a mud hole at this point in time that they are covered with dirt, and they will never get clean.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — And they have done it again in spades, both with this legislation and with the threat of closure that they are bringing in on our debate in this legislature.

And I am appalled at what this government has done in the last few months and in the years since 1986. So are the people of Saskatchewan appalled. They find this government vindictive, deceptive, inhuman, and they are waiting for a chance to throw this government out of office if they'll ever get the courage to call an election.

To bring in closure after such a short term of debate is the sign of a government that's afraid of the voice of the people. They will not speak in this legislature at any length to defend this legislation and they will not speak to the people of Saskatchewan. They're afraid to go out of their own doors to speak to the people of Saskatchewan. If you were not afraid to go out and speak to the people of Saskatchewan, you would know that this is a very, very unpopular piece of legislation.

And your move to force closure, to muzzle the Legislative Assembly, the move to muzzle us from speaking to this legislation is the act of arrogant bullies that are afraid to hear what we have to say. You don't want to give us time to reflect the will of the people, as we are doing so competently in this legislature, because there are a lot of points to be made about this legislation — a lot of points.

This act of closure is undemocratic as was the move in February when the minister by press release put out a

notice that he was going to enforce this tax. That was legislation? That was taxation without representation, Mr. Speaker. That is an issue that people have fought for hundreds of years to ensure that that does not happen. And here in Saskatchewan we've had again taxation without representation for the first time. And that is wrong. That is wrong. That is undemocratic just as this closure is undemocratic.

Just like the government members opposite will not hear the people, they will not respect the people, they don't respect the legislative process. They believe that taxation without representation is the way to go — that they could ram this tax down the throats of the people of Saskatchewan on April 1 and not even bring it in and mention it in the legislature until April 22 in the budget speech.

For those reasons, I condemn this government opposite. I say that they are operating in a very underhanded way, a very deceptive way, a very destructive way, and it is a way that the people of Saskatchewan are deeply offended by. And they are waiting and waiting and waiting to show you just what they think about this government's moves. And they will show you loud and clear when you get up the courage to call an election.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 61 has an innocuous title. It's called An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act. But what it is is the biggest tax grab in the history of Saskatchewan. The Minister of Finance is responsible for that and he seems to be very pleased with himself for doing that to the people of Saskatchewan. I hope the members of Weyburn get a chance to show you what they think of that very soon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, this legislation initiates a huge tax burden on the backs of the people of Saskatchewan. And it is a regressive tax. It is especially hard on those who are least able to bear that tax burden.

It's hard on the students of the province, and I represent many students in this legislature. They are already hurting desperately by this government's underfunding of the education system. The students are being forced to pay higher tuitions. The students have seen patronage in the summer jobs, when all the members opposite in the government side were asked to recommend students for summer jobs and none of us on this side of the House had that opportunity. You're socking it to the students in this province and you're hurting them badly.

You're hurting the single people in this province who are not eligible for tax credits. And they are finding it very difficult to keep up with the high cost of living.

You're hurting the families of Saskatchewan, young families who are having a hard time to afford the housing and the essential services that they need. And now they're facing taxes on things like children's clothing and other taxes that make their costs go up.

You're hurting the women of this province, and I'll have more to say about all these groups later. You're hurting

the women of this province. Women earn only 66 per cent of what men earn, and yet they have to pay this tax equally with the wealthiest people for the goods and services that they need.

And you are hurting the seniors of this province, the people on fixed incomes who are finding it more and more difficult to cover their costs.

A constituent said to me on the weekend that this government is nickel and diming them into the poor-house. The taxes that they have to pay on the supplies that they buy and the services that they need are putting them further and further behind in terms of their disposable income — less and less money to spend on the things that they need. And the costs are going up and the people are getting squeezed.

It's a vindictive government, Mr. Speaker. It's a deceptive government and it's an undemocratic government. And on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon Centre, whom I've been proud to represent in this Legislative Assembly, I'm condemning the PC government for imposing this unnecessary, unfair, and inhuman tax burden on the people. And I am condemning the government for being so cowardly that they bring in closure on the debate.

And I am asking the people of Saskatoon Centre and the people all across this province to continue to show your opposition to this 7 per cent sales tax. Get the petition from your New Democrat MLAs. Get the petition from our New Democrat caucus office. Get the signatures from all the people around the province. We know that about 90 per cent of the people of this province are opposed to this tax, and we know that we can get lots of signatures if we take the petition and get out there and let people sign it.

Let people phone these MLAs opposite, these government MLAs, and give them an earful. I'm sure their ears are already ringing from the words that the people have had to say to them about this tax. And I encourage them to keep on phoning because this group opposite, these members opposite are a very demoralized looking lot. And if the people can give them an earful about how they dislike this tax and what they think about closure and your bullying tactics, then I'm sure that the people will have at least the satisfaction of having told you. And we urge them to phone us as well and let them know about their support for what we're saying.

Mr. Speaker, people are disgusted and fed up with this PC government's increased gouging of those who are already fighting to survive on lower wages which have been a result of this government; reduced unemployment insurance, a result of the federal PC government; severely reduced revenues from their small-business enterprises, particularly now with this tax coming in; and those on social assistance and those on fixed incomes.

That is a large part of the population of the province, Mr. Speaker, because what this government's policies have done, the PC government's policies have destroyed the middle class. I hear this once, I hear this all the time when I'm out talking to people. The horror of the fact is that you've destroyed the middle class, that many, many

people are falling in what they're able to buy with their money. And a few people are getting very wealthy from the patronage of this government opposite and from the contracts that they've been able to get with this government opposite. But most of the people are hurting, are hurting badly, and are slipping into lower incomes and into poverty.

There are very negative effects of this Bill. And the people are deeply angry at the PC government and at the Minister of Finance for daring to impose this tax even before it was introduced in the legislature.

(1645)

Our New Democrat caucus and New Democrats across this province oppose this legislation, we oppose closure, and we oppose the PC government's plans to impose even more provincial sales tax in 1992. Our New Democrat caucus will fight this legislation every step of the way and we will do everything we can to try to stop it.

We will not support this kind of brutal taxation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — We are clear in our opposition to this tax now and we are clear in the future. And opposition, as I said, to this tax grab is strong all across Saskatchewan. And this Tory government is ramming this tax down the throats of people even in spite of such widespread opposition. And because of this tax and because of all the moves you've made since 1986, your support has dropped like a stone. And you know it and that's why you can't stand up to defend this legislation.

We know that rural Saskatchewan, which you say you're trying to protect, is being dealt a body-blow by this tax burden. And saying it in those terms is very clear, Mr. Speaker, and it's very understandable to the people in the small towns and communities across Saskatchewan who are reeling from this provincial tax. The farmers have to pay it as much for their personal things as anyone else. And the tax is unpopular with them as it is with everyone else.

The small businesses are screaming about it. And people are demonstrating their opposition by refusing to shop. They're demonstrating their opposition by taking their businesses over the borders, and they are demonstrating their opposition by leaving this province. And I've heard it many times, people saying that if the PC government get in power again they will be leaving this province. What a stupid plan for economic recovery, Mr. Speaker, this tax represents. Some recovery this is, gouging everybody who loves this province and wants to stay here.

And I think the only good thing you can say about this tax is that it has really generated and focused the opposition to the government opposite. It has really focused opposition to the PC government. And they haven't got a hope of surviving a provincial election. And that's why they're afraid to call the election because they know they're going to lose and they're going to lose badly.

In spite of their rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, the PC government opposite has not stood up for the people of Saskatchewan, and the people know this. And the PC government is claiming that the revenue from this tax will be used to support farmers. As well as the fact that the farmers are opposed to the goods and services tax as much as anyone, people know that the Tories' support for farmers is hollow.

The inadequacies of the GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs and the ineffectiveness of the PCs' so-called third line of defence are obvious. There may be investors who are farming the GRIP for easy money, but our family farms are destitute. And farmers are still hurting and they're going under all over this province.

And people ask me how I know this, representing the seat of Saskatoon Centre. I have farm land in the Kinistino constituency. I have many friends that are farmers. Many people in the cities are connected to people who are farmers. And many people are talking about the phrase "farming the GRIP".

People with money are going to be able to make more money, but the farmers are hurting. And that's because, Mr. Speaker, the Tory philosophy is to support agri-business, agri-business enterprises, not agriculture as it's practised in Saskatchewan. Your philosophy, the PC government philosophy, is to destroy smaller farming operations. The PC government philosophy is to sweep farmers off the land, not try to help them.

And this is wrong substantively because research has shown that everywhere globally, the smaller operations are more productive. Smaller farming operations are being promoted by progressive people as the creative way to develop sustainable food resources for the benefit of all. But the Premier and his PC government do not believe this, nor do they support farmers. In fact, the Premier has spent his years as an agricultural economist attacking small farming operations, and he condemns them for not being efficient. And I ask: efficient in whose terms?

The Premier and his PC government opposite are hand in glove with the federal Tories in wanting to destroy agriculture in Canada.

You are working hard to hand our farms over to large corporate interests. You just have to look at the agricultural policy of the federal government to know that they are supporting this development of corporate farms, and you have done nothing in any of your moves to counter this move from the federal government or to bring in anything that would protect the smaller farmers.

This tax grab is not about helping farmers. This tax is about helping the PC provincial government paper over its waste and mismanagement. That's the purpose of this tax. It's about providing more money to whatever wheeler-dealers can get the ear of the Tory government opposite. And there have been many wheeler and dealers who have made their way into the province and benefitted from your largesse before they leave the province.

This tax is about finding more money for more scams like GigaText. It's for finding more money for more patronage. It's for finding money for more high-priced consultants to rearrange the Tory images.

It's about more money, more money, more money. It's about squeezing the people, Mr. Speaker. It's about squeezing them harder and harder and squeezing them until they drop. People are being taxed to death and buried in debt, as we have said many times in this province, in this legislature. And that's the Tory ideology all the way.

We've seen this, as I've said, for nine years under the PC government management of this province, or mismanagement as it should be more aptly called. And for the people of Saskatchewan, it's been a horrible nightmare.

But now, Mr. Speaker, we can see that the bad dream is nearly over, and people are awake and they see a choice — a very clear choice — ahead. And I feel certain that that choice will be a New Democratic government for the people of Saskatchewan, a government that will represent and respect peoples' hard-earned dollars. A government that will make a commitment not to squander our precious resources. And a government that will respond to the will of the people.

The people oppose this tax. They oppose your lack of respect for their hard-earned dollars. They oppose you for squandering their money. They say call an election and let the people speak. And they will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this tax is unacceptable, unfair and inhuman, as I've said already.

Mr. Speaker, there are a great many points to make about this tax. And I want to take my time to make them as clearly as I can do so, so that the people of the province can understand, as you know they already do, all the dimensions of this tax.

I want to turn to this issue of harmonization. And I want to reflect on the fact that while the member from Regina North was speaking, the Minister of Finance said he had tears in his eyes. Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought immediately that those were crocodile tears. They're crocodile tears. He has no feeling for the people of this province and he has consistently been deceptive for the people.

First of all, in speaking to this legislation, to this act to amend the Education and Health Tax Act, which as I said has a very innocuous title for what it really intends to do, the minister said that he had established in May, 1990 a provincial advisory committee on the GST — that was the federal GST — which was comprised of individuals from all sectors of our economy.

The role of the committee, the minister said, was to assess the impact of the GST on Saskatchewan and to recommend the best way of responding to federal sales tax reforms. Now the committee, the minister said, recommended that we consider harmonizing our sales tax base and administration with the GST to reduce the

confusion, duplication, and frustration that would result from two sales tax regimes.

Now what they were referring to in May of 1990 and June of 1990 was the E&H tax that then existed, and the goods and services tax which was coming in on all . . . a wide, wide range of goods and services.

And what was happening was that the people collecting this tax were charging for their services, like on our telephone bills, the charge for our basic service and our long-distance calls; or the electrical bills which you will see have the charge for our electricity; our charge for water. And then they bring in the goods and services tax at 7 per cent. And then they add that up, the total for the services and the 7 per cent tax, and then they tax the tax. They tax the total added amount and add in the provincial education and health tax.

So people were paying beyond 14 per cent. They were paying more than 14 per cent. People are still looking at their utility bills and at their telephone bills and saying, if the goods and services tax is at 7 per cent and the provincial sales tax is at 7 per cent, why aren't the two figures equal? Well the two figures haven't been equal since the goods and services tax came in because people have been paying a tax on the tax. And that's what they understand now and that's what they're opposed to.

So the point of harmonizing was to put it at 7 per cent for the goods and services tax and 7 per cent on E&H tax on the items that have the E&H tax at that point in time.

And what this government has done is taken the words of that advisory committee and used it to spread this tax everywhere, to bring it in on what we had the E&H tax on already, to expand the E&H tax with this legislation, and to bring in more in January of '92. And you're saying that the people are in favour of harmonization. I'll bet you didn't tell that advisory committee what plans you had in place when you brought in that committee to advise you what to do. They were advising you how to get around . . . they were advising you not how to get around, because I'm sure you would have wanted to do it anyway, but they were telling you about the tax on the tax and the value of harmonization was to prevent that.

But instead what does this government do? It expands the education and health tax base to parallel the GST as it applies to most goods. And effective in April of this year — with taxation without representation — that E&H tax was extended to include clothing, back to adult clothing and footwear, children's clothing; reading materials; non-prescription drugs; snack foods; restaurant meals; residential electricity and natural gas consumed off the farm; tobacco products and yard goods. So they used that advisory committee as a shield to give the public the impression that people in the province had advised them to do this.

An Hon. Member: — Hog-wash.

Ms. Smart: — That is hog-wash as one of my colleagues has said. That is the kind of deception that the Minister of Finance has practised as I have watched him in this legislature since 1986. That is unacceptable to the people

of this province, Mr. Speaker.

I want to refer you to what the Minister of Finance said when he was minister of Education in 1987. In 1987, this was the kind of consultation that Minister of Finance did when he was minister of Education — the same kind of twisting of words and of using of groups of people that is unacceptable to a democratic government.

In 1987, he cut the library budgets by 10 per cent. And then, when the libraries hollered and yelled because they couldn't manage on a 10 per cent cut, he gave them a book grant of \$500,000 — a one-time grant, for books only. And when I questioned him about this and how it had thrown the libraries into chaos, he told me he had consulted with the people of the province in the library systems about this 10 per cent cut and the \$500,000 increase. And I asked him to define what he meant by consultation.

Mr. Speaker, you're looking at the clock. I see it's nearly 5 o'clock. I beg leave to adjourn the debate and I look forward . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no.

An Hon. Member: — Just keep going.

Ms. Smart: — Just keep going? Well, I'll call it 5 o'clock because I want to speak at 7.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.