

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE
(BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand here tonight to debate the budget for this year and to finally get a chance, Mr. Speaker, to talk to the people of Saskatchewan, and through you to the people of this Assembly, for a few minutes about a government that is finally after many, many months of being in government, finally having the courage to come forward and show what they really think should be happening and show the people what they are going to do to the future of this province through their philosophy and through their direction as government.

We have to admit, Mr. Speaker, that a long time back we started to contemplate that we would likely be getting some pretty heavy hits in this budget, but I don't think anybody ever really seriously contemplated the blow that Saskatchewan has taken. It's the most amazing thing that we could have so many things forgotten or put by the wayside in such a short time.

All through the last election we heard people talking about axe the tax; 4.5 billion is enough for a province this size; we wouldn't need any more; we wouldn't have to tax any more. All we would have to do is clean up the management, fire a few folks, replace them with a few of our friends and everything would be hunky-dory.

Well they didn't axe the tax and they didn't stick within the 4.5. And the whole thing has become a ridiculous joke, a ridiculous joke that's being played on the people of this province, the taxpayers of this province, and the young people of this province who used to think, I think, in terms that maybe they would find a future in this province but who now have to look very seriously at taking the advice of those that say, go west young man and young woman; head for Alberta as fast as your feet will take you.

And that almost has to be the kind of thing that we would tell them, except that we know that that wouldn't really solve the problem for those of us that have to stay. But just because things are difficult for us, have we the right to ask them to remain in a province that is doomed to the grey days ahead? And I seriously think not. I seriously think not. I think the faster they get out of this province, the better for all, because at least they can save themselves. The young folks of this province have very little future in this province any more.

Four years of misery is all they can look forward to. For example, Mr. Speaker, I'll take you to a few of the specifics of not only those things that are included in the

budget, but also some of the things that should have been there. But coming from the budget we now see some flyers coming past our desks about individual programs.

Programs, for example, like the Highways program; a decrease in spending predicted. After all of the rhetoric we heard last year about the pot-holes and the mismanagement in the highways, and not having the highways built and reconstructed, now we have a decrease in spending. When the rest of the budget is expanded to almost 500 . . . over \$500 billion, the Department of Highways is being given even less money than it had last year when the NDP (New Democratic Party) criticized the programs that were being done there.

Will this become the minister of pot-holes? I don't know. Probably it will. Or will he become the minister of gravel roads? Because now we have a flyer going past our desk today from that very minister's office that tells us he's going to be going back to tearing up the hard-surfaced roads and putting them to gravel. Many of the highways in our province, they say, aren't used enough, the numbers aren't high enough to warrant using them as oil-surfaced or hard-surfaced roads. So we're going to tear them back up.

Now I have to admit, sir, that if you have to do some things to save money, you may have to do things. But to say in one breath that you're going to do it one way and in the next six months turn totally around, completely flip-flop, is an inexcusable way to treat the whole situation.

The budget increases by over \$100 million, and the minister of pot-holes hasn't got the courage to stand up to his colleagues and argue for a little money to build some new highways and to put our contractors to work. Not only don't we put our contractors to work, we don't put our young people to work.

How many jobs are created every year, Mr. Speaker, by the Department of Highways when they put on some construction projects? Many, many jobs are created and these are the jobs that our young people in the universities and the high schools can quite easily take in that seasonal type of employment.

Those are the kind of jobs that are not going to be there for them this year and won't be there in the future with this government, because they have no plan for young people and they have no plan to provide jobs that young folks can make a few dollars so that they can go back to school, to go back to university, or to go back to whatever they do in fall. They may as well go to Alberta and get their summer job over there, because at least over there they have some plans and projects going.

We talk about health and we've got a situation, Mr. Speaker, on our hands right now where I understand 17 hospitals and related types of hospital care facilities have received written notice that they're either going to be shut down or terminated as of the last few days. Health care projects that had already been started are going to be put on hold.

And where are these health care facilities? Well, sir, we haven't quite been able to find out for sure what the whole list is yet but the few that we found seems to direct us in the direction of an attack on rural hospitals and rural health care. And that concerns us deeply, Mr. Speaker, because of course the rural people have a hard time getting to hospitals in some areas. You take the area south of my constituency, and I'm going to talk about the Shaunavon constituency for a minute even though I'm not the elected member there.

But you take a hospital system in a town like Eastend, Saskatchewan. The town is probably, oh, I'll have to guess at about 75 miles from the Alberta border and likely about 40 miles from the American border. And it sits right in an area of the province then that has no hospital care around it until you go to Shaunavon or to Swift Current or to Gull Lake or to Maple Creek.

That leaves a square down there probably just about 100 miles square with only one hospital facility in the centre of it and that would be in Eastend, Saskatchewan.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, being a young man bucked off a bronc at the Alberta border down at Consul, Saskatchewan and having your leg broken, the trip you'll have now when you can't stop at Eastend if this hospital happens to be closed down and shut up?

Suppose there's no longer a health care facility there? A trip to Shaunavon where you will find reasonably good health care, I can assure you of that . . . but many times we do find that in those small towns people have to be loaded into ambulances and taken on further.

If for example the bone happened to go through the leg, as I have heard on occasion these things happen, then you're going to be faced with a situation where it's after a hundred-mile trip in the back of a half-ton or somebody's van, if you're lucky enough to have a neighbour that has one of those. You'll then be chucked into an ambulance and taken off to Regina or Saskatoon if you happen to be lucky enough to still be alive.

This is a very major problem, Mr. Speaker, for the people out in our area and I think probably we echo the sentiments of a lot of rural folks. The reality is there's a lot of places in Saskatchewan where you drive for miles and miles just to see some more miles and miles.

But there are some folks out there and they're extremely important to the province and they're extremely important to the welfare of the rural fabric and the production of the goods and services that keep this whole machine of Saskatchewan running.

The whole economic machine of Saskatchewan is based on a couple of key industries. Unfortunately for those folks in this government, agriculture still happens to be one of them. But they've pulled the pin on agriculture. What do you see in this whole budget for agriculture except cut-backs and withdrawals, and attacks on the health system in rural Saskatchewan, and attacks on the highway system for outlying areas because they don't happen to have enough vehicles to keep the road travelled enough to warrant maybe staying with the hard

surfacing?

It's just an amazing thing what this budget has done to the rural people of this province and the things that it predictably will do if we don't have someone in this government sit back and take an honest-to-goodness look at what they're doing to the people in this province. We have got to somehow jog their minds and jog their souls and jog their consciences because we have no other recourse with a government that has a mandate for another four years. We must somehow get through to them the need of rural people and the need for people that live a long ways from facilities and from services.

We can see a situation developing, Mr. Speaker, where not only will we see a loss of those facilities out in the rural areas, but now we've lost the FeedGAP (feed grain adjustment program) program, just as an example. The FeedGAP program being cancelled means that a lot of people that fed a few head of cattle before will no longer be able to justify keeping those animals. The economics is so narrow in the cattle business today that you're going to see a situation where folks that are on a very marginal position of economics will just simply quit. They won't raise those animals any more.

Now talk about the cattle business being tough in what some folks have referred to earlier today as being reasonably good times. What about people that are right on the line like the pork producers? Pork producers have a habit of running on the economic line closer than anybody that I know of in agriculture. I have nothing but admiration for the folks in that industry because they really do have to have an economic plan that works, and a calculator with a new battery.

And when you throw something at them like \$13 a tonne loss on their feed, you automatically put the entire industry into a tail-spin.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to have devastating effects all through the industry. And it won't stop on the farms and the ranches and the feedlots and the piggeries. It's going to stop right on the doorstep of Moose Jaw and Saskatoon because you're going to end up having no animals produced enough to keep your packing plants open.

Where are the jobs, I ask you? Where are the jobs for the people of this province and the people of this great rural area? Where are the building and the economic plans that were supposed to be built into this first budget as we heard all through last fall's election, and for the two or three years before? How can you promise people jobs when you kill the basic fundamental industries out there that are going to eventually create the jobs?

If you don't want to talk about pigs and cows and slaughterhouses and things like that, think for a minute about the petroleum industry. You've increased the tax on royalties and it doesn't sound like much. You've gone from 2 per cent to 3 per cent and it sounds really quick. But if you think for a minute, that's a 50 per cent increase in the taxes that these folks are paying.

Already we've got a situation south of Leader where 56 wells have been cemented off and capped this spring

alone. We can't for sure identify that the people who were doing this are identifying it with the government, their need to close these wells down. We can't for sure say that this budget is the contributing factor. I would rather say, Mr. Speaker, from what we understand of the owners, it's a little bit like the straws that go on a camel's back in the old story — one more straw after one more straw until the poor camel's back will break.

And in the petroleum patch you've got a situation where the economy is so fragile these days, that only one little bit more tax is going to kill the whole industry. Just as a little bit of a FeedGAP program may destroy the agricultural feeding industry, you now may destroy the petroleum industry in this province.

And you will say, well that's okay because these guys are all a bunch of rich guys that came in here, shouldn't have been taking all our natural resources and making all that money anyway. But where's the economy to that? Where is the thinking to the future of what that creates, what that wealth does for us? Where do the jobs come from?

Again, Mr. Speaker, I point to the rural areas where an awful lot of rural people, especially in my area, have gotten jobs over the years. They work on the farms, and when the farms can't make their money the best diversification you could have was to get another job on the side. Those jobs from the petroleum industry are the jobs that were available, in many cases. And they've been the cash flow, the cash money that have kept those farms running, have kept those farm families in rural Saskatchewan. And some of those jobs are still going to be there with companies like Saskoil.

But if you don't encourage and in fact, through your budgeting, discourage further expansion of the industry, if you kill the goose that laid the golden egg, you're not going to get the golden egg. You're doing it here with agriculture; you're doing it with petroleum. You're destroying two basic, fundamental industries that could create jobs down the road in the future.

This is not a one-step process. It takes time to build an industry that will generate jobs over the long haul. And so when you see people evacuating from an industry, or leaving the province in fear of whatever it is, whether it be the tax base, whether it be the philosophy, no matter what the reason, if they're gone, they're gone, and you lose those jobs and you lose that fundamental base.

You can talk about things, Mr. Speaker, like rural development. And here again, you talk about a government going totally wish-wash on what they've been saying and flip-flopping on what they've advocated. And they talk about figures like 7.4 per cent reduction to the rural areas, and you hear all kinds of panic stories that have people not sleeping at night about how they might be going to lose their job next, and all kinds of fearmongering going on out there. And the NDP have been doing that since the last election and they can't even get over it now that they're in government.

(1915)

And so then they come up with a figure like 7, 4 point per

cent . . . 4 per cent. And the other day in question period the minister admits that it's not 7.4 per cent; it's a floating rate. We've been trying to find out for sure what a floating rate means, and we still haven't really been able to find out. He says anybody can get access to this information, Mr. Speaker, but I still haven't been able to find it. And I've asked for that information to be delivered here, and I'm waiting to see it. And I'm sure that sometime we will get it. But the reality is that we have municipalities reporting to us that anything from a 20 per cent to a 44 per cent reduction in the money that they have to use.

Now talk about down-loading, and talk about the criminalness of people down-loading their tax burdens. And we hear people talking to us in this Assembly about how upset they are with Ottawa for down-loading. And here they turn right around and do it to the municipalities.

And property taxes in rural Saskatchewan will have to go up not only to provide the services for rural municipalities, but what happens with our hospital systems and our school systems? As all of this down-loading comes into play, Mr. Speaker, these monies now have to be transferred to the local property owners in our communities.

How long can they stand that before they go broke, throw up their hands, and also leave the province? How many motor graders will have to be parked in the next year or two with this kind of reduction in funding to the municipalities? How many jobs there are going to be gone because the rural people are going to say — just like the Department of Highways said up at the top of my page — we're going to now have to start cutting back and tearing up the hard-surfaced roads and putting them back to gravel. In the countryside they may say those back roads won't be graded any more and then somebody else has lost his job because that machine will be parked.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, what about the fellow that sells that very motor grader? What happens to his business when nobody needs to buy one any more because they're not grading the roads?

You've killed the incentive of the whole economy. The economic base of this province is being destroyed. Every time you destroy a fundamental job in society, there are some formulas. And I can't quote all the exact figures, but I think all of the people have heard them before. You have this spin-off. For every real job you create there is either 7 or 10 other jobs that are created around it through the system of our economy. That especially holds true in towns and cities. Once you create a job in the oil patch, for example, you may create six more jobs in the town or the city as a spin-off from that economic benefit.

We've talked, Mr. Speaker, about all of these things that are going to hurt us. And then we come around to the very basic thing that nobody in this province, I think, ever dreamt that even this government would have the nerve to destroy and take away from the common people, and that of course has to be our Saskatchewan Pension Plan. And I couldn't stand here tonight and speak to you, sir, or to anyone else without taking a few minutes to talk about the great tragedy involved in losing this plan.

One person I talked to suggested to me that on the basis of this plan we should do several things. We should amass class actions against the government. He suggested we should walk out and ring the bells for 18 or 20 days. This is how seriously these people take this matter.

Eighty per cent of the people in the plan were women in this province — the very people who this government claims to champion; the people who are poor and don't have access to rich plans, good plans, big funded programs; the very people who have no other recourse than to depend on a small program set up within their own province, set up in such a way that it was funded and did cost some money to the government. But also a program, Mr. Speaker, that could quite easily have been modified without those expenditures being guaranteed every year. You could have reduced the amount of the matching grants. You could have consulted with the folks out there. You could have talked to the farm wives and to the people who were mostly involved in this program — small-town folks with small businesses. Single parents, in many cases, were the people who were depending on this program.

I know of many people — and quite a few of them have called me — and they're very upset and very disturbed, Mr. Speaker. And I am upset and disturbed for them, because in reality, here was a program that gave them a chance to build a little something that they could call their own for their retirement and their old-age days; something they could take some pride in and say that, we built this ourselves with the help of the government. We didn't just go out and ask for an assistance package; we didn't just go out and ask for welfare. We actually did some planning and some working with it and we helped ourselves to build a future, something for those days of retirement ahead of us. And they could take pride along with all of those folks that happen to be fortunate enough to live in a big city and work for the government and have their big pensions put away by some big organization like that.

And it just isn't happening out there, Mr. Speaker. And what happens now when you take this program away? Well you've got some very real and fundamental things that are going to happen right at the outset. You're going to lose, of course, the 16 or 17 jobs that were immediately affected and of course that's got to put some problems on to at least one town. And of course it sends a message to everyone else that works in the government sector and that is, maybe you're next. Who knows whose job the hammer will fall on next when these sort of things can happen?

And of course you've got the spin-off effect of not having people any longer taking pride in themselves and if they do they may start to look wonderingly at other options. And of course, here again, we may see people simply say, it's time to move; maybe we have to leave this province and go somewhere else. Is that the message, Mr. Speaker, that we really want to send to Saskatchewan people? I seriously doubt it. I seriously doubt that this government really thought through what they were doing when they decided to put in all of these programs in this budget that so seriously destroy the chances for people to stay in this province or to justify any argument to stay here.

We have got in the past few days a whole lot of things that people are worried about, and it's little wonder. We have got everything from farmers having problems with the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program being torn apart to the fact that we can't get tourists in.

I want to talk just a minute, Mr. Speaker, about the comments that were made the other day in this House with regard to how Rural Development, through Rural Development — not Rural Development — the Parks and Renewable Resources was going to having a turnaround in this province. They suggested that day that we were going to have a turnaround because they were going to get rid of the PST (provincial sales tax) from last year, and this year it wouldn't be on, so now the tourists would be coming to Saskatchewan. That was, I recall, one speaker in particular, that dwelt for quite some time on the very fact that now that we had that gone, we would suddenly see a turnaround in our tourist industry. Well I hope it happens. But now that you have got an 8 per cent tax instead of a 7 per cent tax, I rather seriously doubt that I see where the attraction is for anybody to come a-hustling right on over here to spend 8 per cent on everything that they buy, instead of the 7.

We have got at least a couple of things that are positive. There's talk about spending some money to grow some trees, seedlings, and to replant them out in the areas that have been harvested. And that is good news. We will admit that there are some good things even come out of this budget, and if that happens that will be good. But let's take a look, Mr. Speaker, a little closer, at Parks and Renewable Resources and the job that they can or can't do in this budget. The job that they can't do, of course, is to attract real numbers of people. And without real numbers of people, what have we missed here, Mr. Speaker? Again, we've missed the golden opportunity as a seasonal employment for our young people.

In this province we have a long history and tradition of employing young people through our parks systems. We find them jobs in that seasonal work and it helps them to supplement their incomes so that they can go back to schools and universities in the fall.

We don't have 5 cents showing in this budget for extra things that might help. For example, I myself have suggested to the minister in charge that in parks like the Cypress Hills Provincial Park, if they would plant a few more fish, and we've even offered to find them supplies of those very fish . . . He hasn't even had the courtesy to go out there and find out how many fish could be put in there or what job opportunities could be spun off as a result of bringing old men and their grandsons to the park for the weekend or for the summer to do a little bit of fishing.

We can't get these fellows, Mr. Speaker, to take us seriously when we talk to them about reducing entrance fees to the parks or coming up with some kind of an organized sports program or some kind of a thinking approach to how to run our parks so that we can actually attract tourism into our province.

All we can hear is 8 per cent instead of 7 per cent is better than the PST. And that doesn't make a rational argument,

in my way of thinking, to try to attract people to our province for tourism and the tourism season ahead.

I suppose we may see some fancy, glitzy advertising that'll cost a small fortune, but the real, basic, fundamental things that would attract people are the things that spend the dollars providing some jobs in the park for young people where they'd cut some grass, keep the golf courses in good trim, and attract people by having a real attraction, something that the people can be proud of, and proud to spend their time and their summer holidays on.

That in fact brings me back to the idea that was mentioned the other day. And I was absolutely astounded that someone in this Assembly would suggest that people shouldn't golf in Saskatchewan any more, that helping to build golf courses was entirely a waste of money. Now my father might agree with that line of thinking because he didn't see any sense in chasing little white balls around.

But a lot of folks these days don't have to work as hard physically as he did. And the fact of the matter is that if you don't have to work physically hard at your job, you have to have a place where you actually get out and follow a little white ball or something else, just as a good excuse to keep your health in order, to get a little exercise. So I think we have to take a look at building some of these programs, doing some of these things, and we have to have a new thinking on this budget and the approach.

Now I'm not saying, Mr. Speaker, that that can't still be done, because there's a lot in this budget that leaves room for specific identification. For example, there are large blocks of money being spent in here that are not clearly identified as to where they are going, and we will be searching hard to find out where that is and we'll try to encourage the ministers opposite to spend some of the money on those fundamental things that we need.

It's going to be a long summer though, trying to figure out where everything is going in this budget. The reality being, again as I said before, close to \$5 billion worth of money being taken in and claiming, of course, that they're doing so well by taxing us extra hard. And then we find here \$517 million as a deficit still showing at the end of the day, at the end of the books.

And isn't that the most astounding thing you ever heard, Mr. Speaker? From a government that said they were going to balance the budgets, who spent the last seven months, or six months, absolutely doing nothing else except criticizing the former administration for having deficits, and saying how good they were going to do it and how great they were going to be at solving this problem, and they've come up with a bigger deficit even than what the last administration had, after taxing everybody right to the hilt.

And I mean this is a tax grab. This is the most unbelievable tax grab that I've ever seen in my life and I've been around here for a couple of years — paid a few taxes too in my time.

Well the other day, Mr. Speaker — just to wander a bit

into a bit of a different subject for a minute so that folks don't get totally bored with what's going on here — we talked about . . . the other day about Mr. Bourassa's visit here. And that of course is important to us, because the whole economy of this budget isn't going to be worth a dime or anything else if we don't have a country left. So I think we should talk for a minute about Mr. Bourassa's visit to Saskatchewan and the importance of it. Our Premier, of course, certainly did place some importance on it. He took the time out of his day to visit with Mr. Bourassa.

But it makes me wonder, Mr. Speaker, now that we've placed some importance, and we've seen this government actually placing enough importance to spend the day with the Premier from Quebec, it makes me wonder, sir, if we are now going to see that action from the plebiscite that we voted on last fall.

We had a plebiscite that asked whether or not the people of this province wanted to voice their opinions through a vote on the constitutional issue. And it was very much heavily in favour, that vote. And I think it is now incumbent upon this government to bring that matter before the people of Saskatchewan, within the next few months, as this particular issue unfolds. Open and honest government would dictate to me, Mr. Speaker, that that's what you would have to do. You would have to have the courage now to go to the people and put it to a vote and ask them before you make a final decision.

And I say with all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, that all three of those plebiscites that were taken last fall are extremely important to the people of this province. And all three of them should be dealt with with a considerable amount of concentration and effort at achieving the goals that the people have pointed out that they want to have achieved in the direction of our government and of our province.

(1930)

With constitutional issues, we're going to be talking about many things that will affect our province. The native land claim settlements that we've been talking about for the last little while are obviously going to be necessary to be dealt with, but what we're going to have to consider is that it's going to cost some money. We're going to have to consider this, Mr. Speaker, and it's going to have to be dealt with in our budget. We've got to know, as a taxpaying public, what kind of plans the government really has for spending our money in these areas. If we don't find those things out, how are we to know where this money is all going to go, and how are we to trust the government to stay within its \$517 million deficit that it's predicting for this upcoming year? Maybe that will go up to a billion or two.

We've got to have some answers, and clear answers, as to what our direction is and where we're going to be going in the constitutional talks and those areas in those talks that will eventually, inevitably cost the taxpayers of this province a lot of money.

Talking about a government saying something that makes them responsible to what their policies are and to what their budget is going to be, we listened, Mr. Speaker, with

some interest to all of the rhetoric that went on about the number of program cuts that we were going to see and all the dollars that they were going to save. And I guess we had to admit that the reality would be that if you're going to make \$4.5 billion enough to run the province, you'd have to cut back somewhere. You'd have to take some programs out.

So let me just run down a little quick list here of the programs that have been cut. And I've got a bottom line that makes this a punch line here, and I want you to watch for this. We got the Saskatchewan Pension Plan right off the start. And we're going to save, according to the *Leader-Post*, program cuts — and it's published right in their paper on May 8 — \$11.6 million; the mortgage protection plan is going to save \$2 million. I was surprised that it was that high because mortgage rates have been going down, and that plan hasn't been as important in the last few months as it used to be when interest rates were 15 and 18 and 13 per cent and all those other wild figures that we went through in the '80s.

We've got the optometric service program, now that's down here for 4.6 million. We've got the Law Reform Commission's grant is \$55,000. We've got the Crimes Compensation Board is \$874,000, and the Indian heritage trust fund is \$167,000 — that's supposed to save. And we've got one here that's unknown, Saskatchewan Diversification Corporation. Special economic diversification projects are supposed to now be cancelled and save us \$279,000. Counselling and assistance for farmers is going to save us \$1.8 million.

Why, you would have never thought that awhile ago, would you, when they were talking about how expensive this program was supposed to be — the program that used to go out and guarantee farmers operating loans so that they could continue to operate their farms when the banks would no longer fund them. A courageous act by a courageous government and taken away under the guise of the GRIP program supposedly going to protect it and bring some banking . . . bankability to the program and then they take away that program as well. But anyway they've gotten rid of an expense of \$1.8 million.

We've lost the FeedGAP program, which incidentally only cost \$2.8 million to keep our feeding industry going in this province. You would have thought it would at least have been a billion dollars the way they hollered about how expensive it was.

Farm purchase subsidies, \$3.5 million; grants to farmers' markets, \$75,000. Now wouldn't you know that they'd have to pick on the little old grandmothers that might go to town and try to sell a cabbage or a dozen eggs? Then they take that program away from farmers as well. This is just about the most unbelievable thing you ever saw.

Municipal economic development capital grants, \$2.6 million going to be saved there. Agricultural-horticultural society grants, they're going to save \$271,000 by taking that program away. Purchase of bulls for breeding in community pastures is unknown but the program has been scratched. The local government innovations program is unknown. The Saskatchewan fossil fuel and energy research program is \$97,000. University research

grant is \$4,000. Random information support survey, \$20,000 will be saved there. Abandoned mines, remedial action — whatever that means — is going to save us \$66,000. Ecological reserve program, they're going to save \$57,000 on that one. Operation quickstart, that was a program to start people up, that's \$200,000 going to be saved there. Assessment and placement centre at Kelsey, \$100,000 is going to be saved there. University of Regina credit conversion is \$250,000 saved, and the seniors' heritage program is going to save \$10.9 billion.

Now if you were adding this up, you will find out that we've now got a grand total of \$42.5 million of which almost 11 million came out of the seniors' heritage program alone. And that's a lot of money, no question about that.

But here we are with a government that said they're going to make . . . \$4.5 billion is enough to run the province on. They're going to make the necessary cuts; they're going to save the management. They're going to do everything right. They're going to cut out the waste. And they've managed to come up with \$42.5 million. And imagine that, they had to have another \$100 million worth of taxes on top in order to come with the \$517 million deficit. And that was supposed to solve the problem. Mr. Speaker, I don't know where these guys bought their calculators. There is something wrong with the plan in this process.

This budget would cause all this hurt to all of these people and save \$42 million that we can identify. And we haven't done anything, Mr. Speaker, except to take a few people out of their jobs. We haven't really contributed to the deficit problem. In fact, we've increased the deficit problem. We've . . . two years ago, the deficit was 365 million somebody said. Now it's 517 million. And this is supposed to be again a great big bonus for Saskatchewan people, something to make them feel good about paying their taxes over.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my colleague alluded a little earlier today to the real attack in the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, for example, as being the number one on that list, the real people being hurt there were the women.

And I refer you to the *Star-Phoenix*, which I never before read very much because I don't come from that part of the province and haven't had access to it. But it's quite interesting to see how papers in the rest of the province refer to things. And in the *Star-Phoenix* on May 11, 1992, here's the headline: "Women Losers."

"The Issue: End of Saskatchewan Pension Plan," and "The Solution: (it says) Should have been salvaged."

Now the demise of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan and the loss of 16 jobs is certainly a serious blow.

Now, Mr. Speaker, even in the *Star-Phoenix*, which has not been given a lot of credit a lot of times for seeing the things that happen out in rural Saskatchewan, even in that paper they see the reality that women are going to be the losers because 80 per cent of that program was bought, purchased, owned by the women of this province.

We have other papers that allude to the tragedy of just this

one program. And I think it's important that we dwell here because we're setting a trend with this government of what they're going to do in our province. After all, this is their first budget.

As they go now, beware, they will go further later. I absolutely assure you that the trend of the future of this province is being set and we will have a future in this province. It will be an NDP future, and it's not going to be a very bright one.

We've got people like Don Curren here, the provincial editor of the *Leader-Post* talking about lay-offs. And in his commentaries he refers to Mr. Johnson. He says that the employers were stunned by the announcement. That's pretty heavy stuff to be putting in a newspaper in an editorial.

"Angry. They were disappointed and angry," he said. "They've only been employees for a year and a half, so they felt betrayed."

Kindersley Mayor Darla Dorsett said the closure would be devastating for the community.

This is a small community town of about 5,000 people — absolutely devastated.

"I can't think of anything worse that could have happened today," (she quotes) Dorsett said. "In fact, we're outraged and actually shocked."

The plan office had an annual payroll of \$550,000 for that small community. What a tragic loss for a rural community to lose that kind of economic base.

... citing a Dec. 9, 1991 exchange in the legislature when Community Services Minister Carol Carson said the government did "not intend (and I quote) to move the pension plan out of Kindersley."

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the papers are going to print that kind rebuke, then surely we must discuss it in this Legislative Assembly. Surely the members opposite will agree that if all of the people who print our media, and who participate in it, are shocked and dismayed and worried, then those of us who are elected and paid good wages to be here, ought to take the time to discuss the problem, ought to take it seriously. And perhaps ought to admit that some things aren't always done exactly right, and maybe some people should even consider eating crow and backtrack a little.

We talk about the attack on rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It not only comes through the budget highlights, but it comes through all kinds of other things. And I want to emphasize the list from May 7, another *Leader-Post* list. And I'm sure the members opposite will be interested to know how the media handled their budget. It says, quite simply:

TAXES

10% increase in personal income tax

Education & Health Tax (sales tax) rise to 8% from 7%

And you could go through this so quick it wouldn't even sound like it mattered much. But here's the next one:

Gasoline and diesel tax increases by 3¢/litre

I don't know if that's the biggest tax grab on gas there ever has been but it must be one of the highest I've ever seen. After all, we used to buy our gas by the gallon and now it's by the litre and we're going 3 cents a crack at that. It used to be 3 cents on the gallon and we'd almost have an uprising in the province. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, what that's going to do to the bottom line of the farm community? Let's just discuss that for a couple of seconds.

You now have a new plan again, and I think farmers must be just about fed up with plans and programs any more. But here we got another one. Now you can get \$900 back for a whole year, but that's a maximum, a cap. Six hundred dollars for the balance of this year, I think, is the way the thing is written up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid there just aren't very many farmers that are going to be able to do their harvest without hitting the cap in that one season alone, because the fuel consumptions are pretty high at that time of year. So that does in fact mean that most likely there's an economic loss directly to just about every farmer in this province, in this budget, with this one program alone.

Agriculture has never seen a hit like this from a government as long as I can remember. And we had people that actually campaigned for this government, claiming that they were going to do better for agriculture. They were not only going to get more out of Ottawa, but they were going to do more for the people here themselves.

What have they done, Mr. Speaker? They've hit them with higher taxes. I'll go on down this list just for an example. We've got a tax on cigarette increase by 77 cents a pack. Now for me I don't care about that because I don't smoke but for those folks that do, that has to come as quite a shock. In fact I wouldn't be surprised that a lot of them would likely consider quitting and I kind of hope they do because then we'll save some money in the health care area. But it is a tax, Mr. Speaker, that encourages so many things to happen.

We worry about cross-border shopping. We talked about that at all kinds of lengths last fall. It was a major issue all last summer. What's going to encourage people more to go to Manitoba and Alberta or to the United States to shop for cigarettes and alcohol and all those other things that people naturally go to buy in other places? When you stick an extra 77 cents a pack on to cigarettes at one crack, you almost guarantee that people are going to flood out of the province to do their shopping. What would keep them here? Where would be the incentive for folks to shop at home in a budget like this, from a government that just a short time ago said they were going to solve the problem of cross-border shopping? Well they've really solved the problem, haven't they?

I could make a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, at how they

probably will solve the problem but I don't think that would be very parliamentary. So I am going to go on to the health plans. Just take a look at what this government, the defenders of health, are doing.

The prescription drug plan — the cost is to increase for most residents. Well in this particular itemized statement by the *Leader-Post*, that's a pretty polite way of putting it because the reality is that it goes up to \$380 per person. Now, in fact, I don't think that most people take that many dollars worth of drugs each year. In fact, I rather doubt that there will hardly be anybody left that will in fact use the drug plan. It's almost an elimination of the whole project, the whole plan.

We came up with a sophisticated plan that we had working well with pharmacists using health cards used for identification, for drug control all through this province, and the whole plan is being dashed into the rocks, destroyed in one fell swoop by one greedy government.

(1945)

The eye examination charge for all but low income families, Mr. Speaker, and seniors and children under 18. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, what happens to folks who are misfortunate enough or have the problem of contracting a disease like diabetes — a disease that affects certain parts of the body, the eyes for example. These folks have to have their eyes checked once or twice a year I understand. Isn't it amazing that the champions of health care would force the sick into the highest cost categories of all of our province. Taxing the sick and the needy seems to be the new call word for this government.

The fees are increased, it says here, for chiropractic services. Now I've heard a lot of debates, Mr. Speaker, about whether or not chiropractic services are good for some people or not good for other people. But they have been recognized as being good health approach. And I have to tell you that I've used the services myself and I honestly believe that they helped. I think it was good for my health. And yes, my colleague says that's a wellness model because you went in and got your body sort of tuned up so that it would function better.

But not only that, we got a good bit of advice from that chiropractor at the same time. They talk about good diets and good approaches to health. They talk . . . In fact my chiropractor talked to me about the chair I sit in in this very Assembly. And he said to me that if we don't sit with a proper chair, when you sit for very extended periods of time you will experience back problems. And he said you've got to be careful about this sort of thing. Not only having the chiropractic treatment to help you is important, but it's also important that you use the proper chairs, that you use the proper diets.

These folks provide an excellent service in counselling in a wellness model. And this very service is now going to be discouraged, not eliminated because the folks are still there providing the service, but people are actually discouraged from using it because it's taken out of the plan.

And it's our job, Mr. Speaker, to point out for the members of the government the things that are wrong in the budget. And even though we know that balanced budgets are important and that good fiscal management's great, and you have to have that all, you've also got to point out the drawbacks that are going to be caused when you take some of these things away. When you start out by saving \$42 million out of a 4.5, now gone to \$5 billion budget, and call that your waste and mismanagement control, coming up with a \$517 million, at the end of the day, deficit, and you say that all this is the good stuff, then we have to have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to stand in this Assembly and talk to you about why things like chiropractors are important, why it's important to have your eyes checked.

Now this particular article is fair. It does go into some of the benefits and I think that's important. And some of the benefits they list out of this budget is a 35 per cent increase in funding for child hunger programs. And I couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker, with a program. It's unfortunate though how figures can be twisted to make them look really big and impressive and important, because 35 per cent of a whole big pile would be a whole big bunch of help. But in reality, if you have 30 per cent of nothing, you've still got nothing. And you've taken 35 per cent and used that figure to make a small increase in help for these folks that are hungry, these child hunger programs, you've tried to blow it up into a great, big-looking help package, when in reality it's not very much money.

But we're happy, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the government for at least doing this much in this important area. And we would encourage you to try your very best to continue along the line of searching out the hungry children and actually helping them in more than just feeding them. We also have the child tax reduction for low income families increased to \$250 from \$200 and while I don't suppose \$50 buys much, it's certainly got to be better than nothing.

And I applaud the government also for doing that. And I'm happy that they're doing that. These folks that find themselves in misfortunate situations do need a little extra help sometimes, and this is an excellent way to do it through the tax system.

Twenty-one per cent increase in grants to child care centres. We haven't, Mr. Speaker, been able to find out yet where exactly that money will be spent or how, but I am sure that it will help some folks and we're glad to hear that somebody's getting some benefit out of this budget because it sure won't be the farmers or the rural people of this province.

Benefits increased to low-income seniors, plus 20 per cent increase in home care funding. Now I suppose that might be an offset for the senior's heritage program or something like that, but certainly this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, would never say anything against our seniors and we certainly hope that the government has done some research.

And we will be pressing them to show us where the research has gone, to show that this money for seniors is

being spent where it actually will come to them, and not be eaten up by the bureaucracy that was supposed to deliver the money to them.

We find so many of these programs, Mr. Speaker, over the years, eaten up by bureaucracy, eaten up by middlemen. It's the same old thing, when a farmer like myself talks about these things, I always think back to the farmer that sells a cow, and he only gets maybe \$500 for the animal. And yet the guy goes to the butcher shop, pays \$1,000 for the meat. And, of course, where did the money go, and everybody always talks about that — the middlemen get it.

Well, here again, we have that problem in government spending. The bureaucracy seems to eat it up, so I really, truly hope, Mr. Speaker, that the seniors of this province will in fact find the use and the benefit of this money coming directly to them where they most need it. And when we find out where that is, we're going to share that information with the folks as best we can.

We're going to have increased allowances and transit assistance improvements for the disabled. And I think that's great. In fact I was, Mr. Speaker, speaking to a gentleman right here in the city of Regina one day, who works in one of the local stores, and I'm not going to mention which one, but he happens to have a child that's disabled and he said that it was a real tragedy that they were about to lose their bus service that was going to transport this child and others like that around the city to be able to get to and from different places to try to break the monotony that goes into their lives when they can't find transportation that will accommodate their wheelchairs and that sort of thing. So another thing that I'm happy to see in here is that particular approach and that particular plan.

The northern food allowance has doubled to \$50 a month, and I'll have to admit, Mr. Speaker, that I'm not just too sure how that program works either, but I'm sure that if it helps people, that we will support it when we find out the details of the bottom line of how that program is going to work.

So long as the people that are supposed to get the money eventually get it, that's all we say that we want to be sure of in those areas.

Then the budget highlight on this sheet goes on to agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And they talk here about the farm fuel tax exemption replaced by the annual rebate which I discussed with you a few minutes ago. And they see that just as a comment in passing, when in reality it's going to cost the agricultural industry in this province millions of dollars this year and next year. And on it goes, along with the loss of the FeedGAP and all these other things. They then mention the feed grain adjustment program being eliminated, and I have alluded to that as well.

The deficit for 1992-93, operating deficit of \$517 million. Now isn't that an amazing figure? From a government that said they were going to balance the budget, bring in higher taxes, clean up the mess and do it all, and here they have got this massive deficit on their hands. Well we've

got some more figures here that allude to how the spending is going to be done compared to the 4.9 billion of 1991, and now it's 5 billion. We've talked about those figures so I think I will go on.

But it does say one other thing and that is the question of Saskatchewan savings bonds. And I have to say that in fairness, Mr. Speaker, I think that's probably a good idea too. I think the reason I would think it would be good might differ somewhat to the reason why the government finds itself bringing the program, but nevertheless I suppose the result is the important part.

Myself, I see this is an intelligent approach to strategy, to sell bonds within your own province and keep the interest money in your province to the people who invest from within your province. Obviously some of the seniors have put away some money for their retirement. They are investing that money and that's a good thing. If they can invest it at home, draw the interest and the interest money stays here, it sort of revolves around in a circle and keeps coming back into our provincial economy. Some of that money will be taxed back away from them as income, and it all helps.

I suspect perhaps though that the fact that the government had to go to New York with hat in hand and beg somebody to borrow them some money to keep the things going at home here through special warrants, because they didn't have the courage to bring in their first budget, and those kind of things, might have had more to do with the decision why the government of the day has come up with this plan.

But like I said earlier, I suppose the end result is more important than the motives that forced them into doing it because it is a good program and I hope that they will be fair about it. I know, of course, that economies only work if they do work this kind of program right. If they don't offer the right amount of interest, obviously the people won't buy the program.

I seriously hope, Mr. Speaker, though that at the end of the day that we do have enough people left to have a tax base in Saskatchewan.

I've gone through all of these budgetary highlights and in order to get a grip on the situation then you have to take a more detailed look at how things are going to work. And the more you study the situation, Mr. Speaker, the more I'm convinced that there won't be a tax base left in Saskatchewan for very much longer.

There is in this budget one thing very important that is missing, and that is a development of an economic base. There is no plan in this budget to develop an economic base of taxpayers. The agricultural sector has been going downhill for the last number of years. We've had the need in our society to develop safety net programs to save agriculture as an industry. The recession world-wide can't be blamed on Saskatchewan and I don't blame the recession on the NDP any more than they would blame it on me, but it's a reality and it's brought down our tax base, Mr. Speaker.

And the rural people with no taxable income, of course,

are not now paying the taxes necessary to contribute to the load of providing the services that a provincial government provides. We then set up safety net programs. The federal government and the provincial government got together and it's unfortunate that we come to that point in our society where we need that kind of thing.

We should in fact, Mr. Speaker, be getting a fair price for the product that we grow and sell as agricultural producers. The people that eat food to live should pay a fair price to the producer, but that hasn't been working in our system so we've set up these programs. And none of these programs is going to work totally or 100 per cent, but we have to at least admit that we need them and be grateful for getting them.

And as I said before in this very Assembly a few days ago, no matter how much money you get it's never enough. But the reality is that we are getting some, and as a farm community we have to be grateful to those folks that have done something to save our industry.

We have a GRIP program that was somewhat less than perfect I'm told. I never had occasion to collect very much from it so I didn't get a chance to put it to the test. Having grown a bumper crop last year eliminated the need for that.

This year we found people, though, saying that with the new program delivered, and I don't happen to be one of them so I happen to have to go out and talk to the folks that this really affects, a lot of people have had to go out and get operating loans based on their GRIP program that they signed up for. Those operating loans, Mr. Speaker, were called in for reassessment when the old program was scrapped by the new administration.

I've had farmers come up to me and actually tell me this is a fact. I've talked to bankers who have said, yes we did call those people back because the new program does not guarantee the same amount of dollars available to the farmer at the end of the year. Without that guarantee, Mr. Speaker, the banks will not guarantee as high a loan. Nobody said that they wouldn't guarantee any loan; they won't guarantee the same amount of a loan.

In many cases, the amount of money that they will now guarantee is not enough to run the farm operation. And therein comes the crunch because if you haven't got enough money available to finish the year's work, why would you be foolish enough to seed a crop that you will never have enough money to be able to get harvested? And the banks won't go with that. They simply say that's it; you're shut down. And so they've called in these loans and they have reassessed them, and they've talked to these people and many of them have delayed their seeding. Some of them haven't even bothered to go out and seed a crop yet this spring because they're waiting to try to find out where they can get the security for their loan.

The counselling and assistance for farmers program is gone. The '91 GRIP program that was supposed to replace that program is gone. We now have a program that banks say they can't give as much money on, so the

bottom line is that there isn't enough dollars available for some farmers to exist.

(2000)

And yet we have the Minister of Agriculture refusing to tell us how many people are being foreclosed on over the last few months. Or was he embarrassed perhaps, Mr. Speaker, to let us know a figure that we'd already found out for ourselves.

Well, we've got a lot of problems here, Mr. Speaker. Now we've got the government saying that we're going to bring back a dental program for our schools. And I just heard that yesterday and today, and it's interesting because it poses some very interesting questions. In our budget do we see anything that refers to this directly and how it's going to operate? No, it's handled in a very loose and evasive way. We don't know if this is going to be funded from this budget or if it's going to be down-loaded on the school taxes.

Will the schools simply be deemed to have agreed through legislation to take on the fiscal responsibility of providing this program? Perhaps they will be deemed to provide a dental program, and the taxes on farm land and businesses will have to go up, of course, to pay for that. If this money is not accounted for in the budget, Mr. Speaker, who is going to pay the bill? Somebody is going to have to pay for this program. And I wonder who exactly that's going to be?

We talked a little bit about AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) the other day, Mr. Speaker, and the members of this government became rather excited. I don't blame them. I guess if somebody kept reminding me of the biggest boob I'd ever made I'd probably be a little excited too. The loss again of thousands of jobs down the road.

If you recall as I started to speak earlier this evening, Mr. Speaker, I alluded to the general trend that this government is taking us in the province and in the future in this province — the general trend of not providing a tax base, a general trend of providing no jobs for young people with no economic plan and no job creation plan. I believe that the Minister of Finance, in fact, alluded to the fact that this budget would lose 2,000 jobs he estimated . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Something to that affect.

Now if he, by his own admission, has drafted a budget that will cost jobs, and we throw away programs like the AECL that could have provided hundreds of jobs predicted, perhaps thousands down the road as you generate this thing further, what are we saying to our young people, Mr. Speaker? One of the members opposite said the other day, well if we need the power, we got lots now; we'll build something when we need the power. Well has anybody ever stopped to consider how long it takes to put a power project into place, something that will in fact produce power?

Do you think, Mr. Speaker, have they considered for a minute that even if you build a nuclear power plant and you had it producing power that you didn't need, that it would be all that hard to sell the power to the Americans

until you needed it? Whatever happened to the idea of preparing ahead for the problems of the future? Whatever happened to the old philosophy of seven good years and seven bad years, and in the good years you prepare for the bad years? What are we going to say some day when we suddenly find ourselves alone in the dark? We're going to say, well we'll hook up a wind charger some place or we'll burn a little more coal. But if you haven't had the planning and the project built, I don't think it's going to work.

There's lots of room for a lot of these other programs, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't want to down-play, seriously, the approach to seeking out wind generation and coal powering and all of those things that go along with water generation. But the reality is that we live in a world that does have nuclear energy. We live in a world that has hundreds of plants around the world and we also live in a world where if one of those plants in the right place happens to blow up, we will be just as seriously affected by that as if we had one in Saskatchewan. If the plants in Ontario blow up, will that not affect the economy of Saskatchewan?

I ask you the question, Mr. Speaker: if you have these all around the world and we're the only ones without it, then are we not perhaps sleeping through the best game in town? We've got a chance here to build and create jobs for the future for our young people, to build the economy base of this province. And remember I spoke to you earlier about the need to build an economic base, because without an economic base you have no taxation base. Just simply taxing people more and more and more is not the way to generate wealth.

The way to generate wealth is to expand your tax base and take less taxes from each segment of society and allow those segments to grow. And that is the direction this government has to go if we want to save this province from a total evacuation of all of our people. Everyone in this province that I talk to talks about going to Alberta for a job. I've heard people say, if I didn't have my house paid for, and if there was a market, I'd sell it. You surely, Mr. Speaker, have to know there's a lot of farmers that would be ready to sell out if anybody had any money.

I've even had one of my colleagues suggest that we could tow the farms to Alberta, and another one suggested to me that we should slide the border over. It would be easier, maybe, to slide the border over. But somehow, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about this budget, we have got to convince this government that a big tax grab is not the only way to solve the problem.

I want to refer, Mr. Speaker, to an example that shows you how you can work to develop an economy without increasing taxes. In a municipality, if you have an oil well dug under the rules of the past administration . . . and Lord only knows where it's going to go with this new administration, so I won't allude to that. But with the past administration, and the rules that were there, if an oil company dug an oil well in your municipality, the revenue generated from the taxation on that well — the assessed value being set, and the revenue — equalled the amount of taxes from one quarter section of land. So in effect, every time that you encouraged a petroleum

company to dig an oil well and bring it into production, you increased the tax base of that municipality by one quarter section of land, in kind. That's important, because that's the development of an economy.

Those municipalities that are fortunate enough to have the oil revenues and the oil patch in them found their economic base growing. As a result — and this is purely simple economics — those municipalities, even in spite of inflation, could keep up the same amount of services without increasing taxation. They could leave their mill rate the same for their people, not increase their taxes, and yet generate enough income to overcome the effects of inflation and still provide the same services.

Think about that, Mr. Speaker. Can that kind of philosophy, that kind of system of economic developing a base, a bigger tax base, can that not work for a provincial government in the same way? All you do is magnify it, make it bigger, do it on a larger scale. Instead of bringing one oil well into the province, bring 2,000 in. Instead of bringing in a couple of generators, you build a nuclear power plant. Can you image the taxation that would come from a project like that? Imagine the wealth. And the risk, Mr. Speaker, can't be any more here than it is any place else in the world.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've talked a little bit about how we used to think about things being so much better in Alberta, and we've talked to people who said, if things are so good in Alberta, why don't we just do it that way? And I'm sure they have some problems over there, but the best advice that people can get now, it would seem, Mr. Speaker, is to advise people to follow their friends and go to Alberta. Unless we see this government make some major turnarounds in the very, very near future, that will happen; that will happen.

It's amazing what you see in our local media these days, Mr. Speaker. We've got another one here and it says, now a tax on a tax. And just after we heard, axe the tax, and 4.5 billion is enough, and the deficit can be controlled by alleviating a few of the mismanagement problems, and now we've got a budget with \$517 million predicted deficit after the biggest tax grab in the history of this province to fund it up to \$5 billion. And I wonder what we're going to be saying about waste and mismanagement when we find out where this money really is going to be spent, Mr. Speaker.

Because the budget does not detail where a lot of these dollars go. We do have an allusion here, or the plan that alludes to the fact that we're going to provide \$28 million in additional funding for the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, of course, and it says it's going to be increased to \$28 million . . . increase by 28 . . . up to 230 million. That's a 14 per cent increase. So there's one thing at least where it's identified.

And we're happy, Mr. Speaker, to see that identification. And we want this government to identify more carefully many and all of the other things that are related in here.

I want to allude to the things in agriculture, and there's one little thing at the bottom here that makes me wonder. And it says, "examine alternate forms of financing such as

community-based land trusts.” Well it smells an awful lot like land bank to me. But I suppose we’ll come up with a new, fancy word for that one.

But I would wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the ranchers and farmers of this province might not watch very carefully when that line is interpreted into whatever it’s supposed to mean, because it certainly starts to smell like land bank to me.

We’re establishing a six-year lease-back program for farmers to transfer land from lenders and settlement of debt — who transferred their land to lenders. These people will now will get six years to lease it back. And I’m not sure if that’s going to help or not. I guess we’ll have to wait and see. The unfortunate part is, Mr. Speaker, that if a program like this, replacing all of the other programs, happens to fail in the end, then six years down the road we have gone so far that there’s no turning back, and those people that are in economic trouble will truly have lost everything.

It is not a plan to save farms. It does not address the fundamental problem of the debt out there that needs to be paid off. In fact, they go so far as to say that they’re going to even develop the voluntary farm debt mediation process that allows lenders and farmers to resolve financial difficulties at an earlier stage. Well I say to you, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, that the early stages of a debt crisis in agriculture went by two or three years ago. We’re a little late for early stages in this problem. There are no early stages left.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that you have gotten a pretty good idea of the reasons why I’m not going to support this budget. I think you realize that there are many shortcomings in it. And I think if I’ve done that I’ve made my point. And I thank you, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and fellow members of the legislature. It gives me great pleasure to stand here today in my address to the budget speech.

Mr. Speaker, when the voters of Saskatchewan gave us a mandate last fall, it was a mandate for change. There was a message that was being sent loud and clear. And that was that they wanted a different direction for government. They wanted a government that was going to be fiscally responsible and start to put the house in order — honest. Mr. Speaker, that’s what we are attempting to do. And the budget is a step in that direction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, we have to get this deficit under control. It’s a must. It’s a monster that must be taken down and wrestled to the ground, Mr. Speaker. The interest on that deficit is \$760 million, Mr. Speaker. And that is the third largest expenditure in the budget. And if it’s allowed to continue it’s going to escalate right out of control. It’s something that we must do right now — take control.

Mr. Speaker, there are many commendable ideas and measures in the budget that I would like to address. But two in particular are important, I believe important and connected. As part of our mandate for change, the budget speech announces that this government will restore the Saskatchewan spirit of community and co-operation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2015)

Mr. Roy: — And it will use this spirit to help in it’s aim of bringing about economic recovery. The budget shows in detail how we will together rebuild Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I applaud the idea of co-operation as outlined in the Premier’s Economic Action Committee. I’m in favour of streamlining the myriad economic development programs left over from the Tories into one Economic Development bank.

I’m relieved to see The Community Bonds Act amended to avoid further fiascos like Trinitel, and I too . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — And I too am encouraged by the efforts being made to attract business and industry to our province — efforts like Piper. I’m encouraged that 700 companies are thinking of relocating or expanding their business in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I think this demonstrates quite clearly that this government is creating an atmosphere positive to enticing business to come to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — But Mr. Speaker, as we all know, real economic recovery and real community co-operation will be spearheaded by our small-business sector — the sector that has created 80 per cent of all new jobs since 1982; the sector that most directly mirrors the ups and downs of our economic life; the sector that asks for the least from government and, over the past 10 years, the sector that has been most overlooked by the previous administration.

If economic recovery happens, and I’m confident it will, then once again our small-business people will lead the way, quietly and efficiently.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — I’m therefore delighted to see this budget recognize the contribution small business makes to this province by reducing the small business corporation income tax from 10 to 9 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — It’s the nature of the small-business person to be self-reliant. It is their survival that demands efficiency. It is their character that ensures that they will hire within the community, buy within the community and

contribute to the prosperity of the community.

Especially in a constituency like mine, Mr. Speaker, small business provides a barometer for the health of the community as well as providing leadership and maintaining that health. And, Mr. Speaker, there are signs, preliminary signs, that the health of our province and our small-business sector is coming out of the critical stage.

In fact, investment dealers of Canada have predicted that Saskatchewan is probably going to . . . is positioning itself to be one of the best places to invest anywhere in Canada, but it's all predicated on one very important factor, Mr. Speaker, and that is we clean up this mess, and get this deficit under control.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — All members will have heard the recent news that housing starts are up substantially. These figures show one thing, Mr. Speaker. They show that attitudes are changing. They show that where before there was gloom and surrender, now there's confidence. They show that Canadians are coming to where they believe the economy will improve, and that is going to be Saskatchewan once again. They might even show that some of Saskatchewan's children, now 10 years older, are finally going to come home. They show that people are responding to this new government and what it represents. They show that people are eager to be a part of our mandate for change.

And leading the way will be our self-reliant, quiet, efficient, small business — hiring Saskatchewan people, buying Saskatchewan goods and services, and enhancing Saskatchewan life, but with a smile on their faces for the first time in years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, like more than a third of the constituencies in this province, Kinistino depends on agriculture for its prosperity and for its identity. It may be statistically fair to say that Saskatchewan is becoming more urbanized. The movement from the farms and the small towns and the cities is happening all over the world, but for some time to come agriculture will remain the economic, social, and cultural backbone of this province.

I'm proud to represent the people of Kinistino and I'm deeply concerned for their welfare, Mr. Speaker, because of the current farm revenue crisis, a crisis not of their making but a crisis none the less. I'm proud as well to be a part of a government that seems interested in doing something to help people through this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are self-reliant, they're honest, hard-working, and let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that they resent being labelled as getting hand-outs.

And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the GRIP changes we made — and certainly we've heard a lot about it — but let me tell you that we put a committee together to look at the concerns of the GRIP '91 program and that committee came back with some recommendations that we felt were

fair and reasonable in addressing some of the major problems in the '91 program. And I'm telling you that overall I think farmers are supporting this change and are going to carry forward.

Responding to the crisis in agriculture takes no less of an effort than solving our constitutional dilemma, no less of a commitment from all involved. The Government of Saskatchewan has responded; the Government of Canada is sitting on its thumbs. Members opposite voted down a \$500 million resolution to bring aid to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has a responsibility to Saskatchewan agriculture. Sixty-three per cent of the funding for agriculture has been cut. Mr. Speaker, this cannot continue. The responsibility is with the federal government. We're asking them for aid. They promised a third line of defence, Mr. Speaker. We want them to come through with this third line of defence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I was appalled, I was appalled this weekend to hear federal Agriculture minister, Bill McKnight, respond to Saskatchewan's budget and saying that the Saskatchewan government was abandoning rural Saskatchewan and farmers. Let me tell you who's abandoning rural Saskatchewan and farmers. It's the federal government and Agriculture minister Bill McKnight that's abandoning the farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, we did our part. The federal government is reneging on its responsibilities, Mr. Speaker. One could make some pretty good guesses as to why the federal Tory government is no longer interested in helping the farmers of Saskatchewan. One could argue that there are some reasons having to do with political expediency and upcoming federal elections. Some might argue — I don't.

M. le Président, ça me donne un grand plaisir de me lever ici aujourd'hui pour répondre au discours du budget dans ma langue maternelle.

Notre gouvernement, M. le Président, dans le discours du budget, nous donne un plan pour la province et aussi nous faire réaliser comme société que c'est impossible et irresponsable de continuer à dépenser des fonds au niveau courant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Quand les voteurs de la Saskatchewan nous ont élus, ils nous ont confiés un mandat pour change, M. le Président. Il faut prendre le bull par les cornes. Il faut commencer à réaliser qu'on ne peut plus continuer à dépenser des fonds et d'être efficace; c'est notre première responsabilité.

Mr. le Président, il faut pas avoir peur de change. C'est important de l'accepter et aussi le diriger. Le défi est gros, mais notre gouvernement a décidé d'avancer et de travailler avec tous les secteurs de notre société pour

développer et réaliser les changes.

Mr. le Président, trois-quarts du budget est dépensé dans les domaines de santé, de l'éducation, des services sociaux. Alors c'est naturel que le gouvernement va regarder à ces régions pour les plus grosses compressions et changements.

Prenons comme exemple le système de santé. L'année dernière on a dépensé 1.6 milliards sur les besoins médicales. Si on continue, si on ne fait pas des ajustements, on prévoit une augmentation de 200 millions dans 1992.

M. le Président, c'est impossible à continuer à mettre des fonds à ce niveau-là. Il faut faire quelque chose. Alors Mme. la Ministre nous a sorti avec un plan. C'est un change d'attitude. C'est basé sur l'idée d'empêcher la maladie. Aussi c'est basé sur l'idée des centres communautaires.

M. le Président, c'est une vision; c'est un plan pour le futur. Notre gouvernement regarde au futur et dit, on va prendre le contrôle puis mettre les contrôles dans le système.

M. le Président, c'est aussi un plaisir pour moi de m'être debout ici ce soir et parler pour les francophones dans la Saskatchewan — très important pour moi. Et je remercie la législature pour me donner cette opportunité-là.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand here today to reply to the budget speech in my mother tongue.

In the budget speech our government, Mr. Speaker, gives us a plan for the province and also makes us realize that as a society it is impossible and irresponsible to continue spending at the current level.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — When the voters of Saskatchewan elected us, they gave us a mandate for change, Mr. Speaker. We have to take the bull by the horns. It's time we realized that we can't keep spending and that we must be efficient; that's our first responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, we can't be afraid of change. It's important to accept it and to take charge. The challenge is great but our government has decided to move ahead and to work with all sectors of our society to develop and realize these changes.

Mr. Speaker, three-quarters of the budget is spent in the areas of health, education, and social services. So it's natural that the government is going to look to these areas for the largest reduction and changes.

Let's take the health system as an example. Last year we spent 1.6 billion on medical needs. If that continues, if adjustments aren't made, we forecast a rise of 200 million in 1992.

Mr. Speaker, it's impossible to continue that level of spending. We have to do something. So the Minister of

Health gave us a plan. It's a change of attitude. It's based on the idea of preventing the illness. It's also based on the idea of community-based centres.

Mr. Speaker, it's a vision; it's a plan for the future. Our government looks to the future and sees that we have to take control and put controls on the system.

Mr. Speaker, it's also a pleasure for me to be able to stand here this evening and speak for Saskatchewan francophones — it's very important to me. And I wish to thank the legislature for giving me this opportunity.)

Mr. Speaker, many years ago the great Indian chief, Chief Seattle, said, we did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. Now, Mr. Speaker, that statement can obviously apply to our modern concern for our environment and what we have done to it. And in that regard I am pleased to see the efforts outlined in the throne speech to speed the healing process of this fragile earth, our island home. But this quote also reminds us that on this earth, we all exist together, people of every race and creed. The web is small, the strands are fragile — and we can mess it up in more ways than one if we are not careful.

My constituency, like many others, has within it a number of reserves. Unlike no other constituency in Canada, mine holds the place of the last shots fired in anger on Canadian soil. I'm talking of Batoche, Mr. Speaker.

And my constituency has a number of Metis people living on their ancestral land. These people, Mr. Speaker, both treaty Indians and Metis people have heard enough talk. And I need not go into our inept history of dealing with aboriginal people in detail. It is time they be given their due and it is time they are allowed to become partners in the economic advancement of our province. Co-operation and community apply here as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — I'm therefore both happy and hopeful to see the specific commitments to address historic wrongs. And more to the point, Mr. Speaker, we should all be pleased with the attitude revealed in these commitments.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great pleasure to have spoken here tonight. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak tonight about the fiscal situation of the province in terms that Saskatchewan families can understand. And to talk about the province tonight as a bit of a family or a provincial household.

As the previous speaker, my colleague from Kinistino indicated, this government was elected on the mandate for change and a mandate to clean up the mess left in the public household. As we travelled the province over the last number of years, in opposition and during the election campaign, many of the people who said to me, if I ran my household or my farm or the small business the

way that the PC (Progressive Conservative) government ran the government, I'd have nothing left to show for my efforts. I'd be bankrupt. There'd be nothing left.

And were they right? Well of course they were. We all know that. The province is basically bankrupt now. It was run into the ground by the previous administration. And there isn't very much left now; the cupboard is really bare.

It's almost as if an ordinary household started to live off the line of credit at the bank or the credit union. And once that line of credit is exhausted, well you turn to your Bay card and you start to charge things on your Bay card. And then you go to your Eaton's card when your Bay card is all charged up, and then you turn to Simpsons, Simpsons-Sears. And when you can't charge anything more on your bank line of credit or on your Eaton's card or your Bay card or your Simpsons-Sears card, what do you do? Well it's been known, Mr. Speaker, that people will turn to their gasoline credit cards and start to buy groceries at the Petro-Can convenience store or at the Esso station. And that's exactly what we've had here in Saskatchewan with the government opposite, utter and total fiscal irresponsibility.

So we inherit a situation then where we have one enormous mess to clean up. We have 10 straight years of Tory deficit budgets, a total accumulated deficit of \$14 billion. And what's to do about it? Well the very first thing we're going to do, Mr. Speaker, that we promised in the election campaign and that we are doing in this budget, is restoring fiscal and financial integrity to the province of Saskatchewan.

(2030)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Common sense financial management — what we're doing is we're beginning to tear up the credit cards and the spending and put the brakes on the enormous debt that this province has inherited. And that began back in the 1991-92 budget when, after taking over in October, the provincial government trimmed expenditures by 60 or \$70 million and began to reverse, already then, with the previous government's budget that was never passed. But we began even then to trim expenditures and to reverse the projectory of provincial spending in a downward fashion. And we've continued that in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

People should know, the public of Saskatchewan should know, that after health, which is the first largest expenditure of the public treasury, at one point \$5 billion, that's about a third of the provincial budget, then comes education at about a billion dollars, second largest expenditure of the public treasury. The third largest expenditure is interest payment on the public debt. That's not any payment on the principal, that is just payment on the interest, Mr. Speaker. And so this year we are paying \$716 million worth of interest alone just on the public debt.

Now what an irony, what an irony, Mr. Speaker, for us to have inherited this situation from the previous

government. And I say it's because the Progressive Conservatives don't believe in government even when they assume office. I say they don't believe in government. My leader has said this on a number of occasions. They don't believe in government even though they assume public office. Basically I maintain that the Progressive Conservatives run for public office to get government off the backs of people and to get their own pockets lined.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — My colleague says, they don't believe in government and they prove it every time they get there. And they certainly have done that here in Saskatchewan with the enormous deficit that we've inherited. How else can we explain it? They haven't governed for the benefit of the public or the people of Saskatchewan. They've governed for the benefit of themselves.

And here are just a few examples of that, Mr. Speaker. The premier had an office not here in Regina in the Legislative Building alone. He had to have an office in Saskatoon and one in Regina — and Prince Albert, rather. Three offices for the premier. Well I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan we started to tackle that. There is one Premier's office in Saskatchewan for the Premier of Saskatchewan this present day. We've cancelled the office in Prince Albert, saving \$150,000 a year, and we're going to be taking steps to unload the obligations we have for the Premier's office in Saskatoon as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Another example of the Progressive Conservatives governing in the interests of themselves and not the people of Saskatchewan is that they had the largest cabinet in Saskatchewan history, a million dollars worth of money going in to salaries for back-benchers as cabinet ministers and legislative assistants. And we've saved a million dollars right there, Mr. Speaker.

Another example of their governing for themselves was all-expense-paid retirement villas for former Progressive Conservative cabinet ministers like Bob Andrew and Graham Taylor and Paul Rousseau, in Hong Kong and Minneapolis and Zürich. And we saved taxpayers not a million dollars there in getting rid of those three offices, those three trade offices; we've saved taxpayers \$2 million there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. We can talk about \$1,500 a year in free liquor for cabinet ministers or a thousand dollars a night, a thousand dollars a night for the premier to stay in European hotels. What Saskatchewan person would do that with public money? There's only one, the former premier of this province governing for himself. Or which premier of this province would countenance a retirement or a severance package for George Hill, the former president of Sask Power Corporation, for \$1.3 million? Who would be party to that kind of rip-off of the public interest?

Mr. Speaker, I want to say tonight to the people of

Saskatchewan that New Democrats believe in government. We believe that we need government to do some of the things that we can't do for ourselves, like to provide health care, hospitals, highways. But more than that, Mr. Speaker, we need government to help us to be our brother or our sister's keeper, to provide services for our brothers and sisters that we can't ordinarily provide for ourselves on an individual basis. We believe that we have a collective responsibility to one another as New Democrats.

And that's why, in this budget . . . And it's not just cutting back on expenditures across the board, public expenditures, but we're providing for those who are most needy. This is a budget of restraint but it's a budget of restraint with compassion.

There's a 35 per cent increase for child hunger funding, Mr. Speaker, in this budget. That bespeaks public priorities, governing for the people of the province and not just for oneself. That's a 25 per cent increase in the child tax credit to help those lowest income families — up to \$250 per child annually. Grants for child-care centres have been increased by 21 per cent. When is the last time we heard about that happening in Saskatchewan?

An Hon. Member: — 1982.

Mr. Koenker: — It was probably 1982, as my colleague says. Home care funding increased by 20 per cent to \$38 million a year. This, Mr. Speaker, is a budget of restraint but restraint with compassion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And one small item, but one item that bespeaks our commitment to compassion is the restoration of the northern food allowance, being doubled to \$50 a month. I know it doesn't affect large numbers of people here in Saskatchewan, but anybody who knows anything about the importance of the northern food allowance for the province and the people up there, knows that this is one of the right priorities, a priority of compassion, Mr. Speaker.

Twenty million dollars, Mr. Speaker, for more family support services like counselling for teenage mothers and family violence programs. And don't we need that, Mr. Speaker. Isn't that the right priority for this province — a priority of compassion? And that, Mr. Speaker, is the way we're going to rebuild this province and protect those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the experience of these last number of years in some terms that I think ordinary Saskatchewan people can understand and relate to. I want to say that what has happened in this province these last numbers of years is very analogous or similar to a break and entry.

What we have had is a government come into Regina and sort of come into the public household and loot and plunder and destroy what it has found. It's almost as if any of us going home tonight, if we had gone out shopping or

gone out to a movie or something, were to come home and find the doors of the household open, the picture window in the front of the home shattered, with the wind blowing in, maybe the rain. We walk inside and the entire household has been trashed — trashed, Mr. Speaker.

The wall unit, with the stereo and the television set perhaps, has been overturned. The television and the stereo of course are gone. They've been taken. The VCR (video cassette recorder) is gone. There are enormous holes that have been punched into the walls for no reason at all. The rug has been set on fire, didn't burn down the whole house but that's been trashed. You step into the kitchen — the refrigerator has been overturned. There's damage everywhere. The liquor is all gone, as my colleagues are saying. And basically, Mr. Speaker, the house is in shambles.

And that's pretty well analogous to what we have found upon returning to office as the Government of Saskatchewan.

What is some of this damage that's been done? I think, Mr. Speaker, of Rafferty-Alameda. What starts out as a \$49 million project in the former premier's home riding of Estevan, an election project, turns out now to weigh in at a \$159 million, Mr. Speaker. That is trashing the province of Saskatchewan, the public household.

With a golf course, a 21-hole golf course that isn't even completed, that has over a million dollars worth of irrigation equipment with no water there to irrigate with. That's trashing the public household, Mr. Speaker. And if that golf course is built, Mr. Speaker, how much do you think it'll cost to maintain it on a yearly basis? A half a million dollars? A half a million dollars to maintain a golf course down at the new Mainprize Park in the former premier's constituency, when children are going hungry and there's no money to keep hospitals open, Mr. Speaker. That's trashing the public household.

A lavish clubhouse, the foundations, the concrete footings of which are there at the new Mainprize Park for everyone to see. That would cost \$2 million if it were to be completed. These are the right priorities of a Government of Saskatchewan at a time when there is 10 consecutive deficit budgets? No wonder we're in trouble, Mr. Speaker. The public household has been trashed.

I'll give you another example, Weyerhaeuser corporation getting a lavish, sweetheart deal for one-sixth of our northern forest, for the Prince Albert pulp mill, the Saskatoon chemical company, and the Big River saw mill, on the strength of a promissory note for \$236 million. A promissory note that they will pay some day off in the great beyond. If and when they make a 13 per cent profit they will repay the people of Saskatchewan \$236 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, what do we have to show for that repayment schedule? Absolutely zero. Nothing.

(2045)

I say, if the former premier had even had a repayment schedule of let's say a million dollars a year, we would be \$5 million less in debt today than we are right now. And we'd still have 231 years to go in repaying that promissory

note, not calculating interest. That's trashing the public household.

And then we could talk about Joytec and GigaText and all the other hare-brained schemes that this province have seen; the privatizations, the megaproject mentality. And, Mr. Speaker, what do you do? What do you do when you return to your home after being out for an evening at the show or shopping or whatever, and you come home and you find that it's been vandalized and you've been victimized?

Well I suppose the first thing most people would do is start to break into tears and bemoan their fate. The next thing they do is they call the police. Then they take a deep breath and start to try to set things back in order. And you don't start to set things back in order by going out that very night, out to Woolco or Zellers, and try to buy another television set or another VCR that's been stolen. You probably start by trying to set up the refrigerator, plugging it in and see if it still works. And maybe then you go out to the garage and you see if you can find a hammer and a sheet of plywood, or some plastic or something, maybe even cardboard, put that over the plate glass window to keep the rain and the wind and the cold out for the evening.

But you know something, Mr. Speaker, this is just a little bit of a detail. It's almost like going out to the garage, that the garage has been victimized too.

An Hon. Member: — They stole the garage.

Mr. Koenker: — They didn't quite steal the garage; the garage is still standing. But when it comes to the Crown corporations that are an arm's length from government — just a little bit away from the ordinary operations of government much as a garage is away from most homes — you go out there and you find that it's empty, that all your tools have been swiped. Maybe your car is gone too. And that's exactly what has happened with the Crown corporations. We're basically holding an empty bag there. The very instruments that used to pay for a child's school-based dental program for children, and the prescription drug program that we've enjoyed for so many years, for things like the SAIL (Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living) program that have enabled us here in Saskatchewan not to impose premiums on medicare, those very Crown corporations have been vandalized as well.

So what do you do? Life is never going to be quite the same. We know that. If you come home and you find your home vandalized, if you've been victimized, but life goes on. And you turn to the task of rebuilding.

Now where does this leave us then here in Saskatchewan? Well the leader of the Liberal Party would basically have us rebuild the province in economic terms by turning to the nuclear industry and throwing what little money we have, if any, into the nuclear reactor — \$1.2 billion, if they build it on time. This is her brilliant scheme, as shared in the provincial election, for economic development here in Saskatchewan. That's what we need at this time, the leader of the Liberal Party says, a nuclear reactor. We can do. I say, Mr. Speaker, we

can do without a nuclear reactor. We must do without a nuclear reactor at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And it's part of that whole megaproject, megabuck, megadeficit mentality that we see in both the Progressive Conservative and Liberal parties together, Mr. Speaker. And this government says, those days are gone. It's time to start paying the bills and forgetting the frills.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — It's time for us to face up to reality, Mr. Speaker. And the reality that many Saskatchewan families are experiencing these days is the days of steak and lobster are pretty well over. The days of hamburger are here. Who said hamburger? Who said hamburger? Maybe we're talking about macaroni and cheese for the province of Saskatchewan. Who said cheese? Maybe, Mr. Speaker, we're talking here in Saskatchewan for these next few years of living on a diet of macaroni. And if we're lucky, with a little bit of margarine, not butter — butter's too expensive. Little bit of margarine and a little bit of salt and pepper.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that there are people sitting in this Assembly right now, and there are people across the province of Saskatchewan who have lived on that diet. They may not have enjoyed it, but they've lived on it. And maybe they're the better for it too, in some respects — not that it's the way we want to live.

But the day will come, Mr. Speaker, when we can put cheese onto the macaroni, not a lot of cheese, a little bit of cheese. And that's what we're doing now with this budget, putting a little bit of cheese onto the macaroni, so to speak. Putting the money where it needs to go to those who are most helpless, most victimized by the previous administration and most in need of help. There's a little bit of cheese for those people, Mr. Speaker. And it's a new day for them here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And the day will come, and it won't be that long before we'll get the hamburger, Mr. Speaker, we'll get the hamburger. And you can do a lot with hamburger; you can make spaghetti, you can make meatloaf, you can make hamburger. Oh, you can make all sorts of things.

An Hon. Member: — Chilli con carne.

Mr. Koenker: — Chilli con carne, somebody says. And we could have a pretty good life here in Saskatchewan as we leave the macaroni times behind and we get to the hamburger times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And somebody says, Mr. Speaker . . . somebody here says, what about the steak and the lobster?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say there was a time here in Saskatchewan when Saskatchewan people fed every night on steak and lobster. There was a time here in Saskatchewan when Saskatchewan people enjoyed steak and lobster every night. We had the finest health care program in all of North America. We had the largest highway system in all of North America and a top quality highway system at that. We had a school-based dental program that was adding a new year of Saskatchewan citizens to the base of dental care in the province each and every year, year after year — that was steak and lobster, Mr. Speaker.

We had a first class university system, Mr. Speaker, with no limits on access quoted on university entrance, Mr. Speaker. And that was steak and lobster. We had an economy, Mr. Speaker, in which people worked. They went to work, they didn't have to rely on welfare, Mr. Speaker, and that was steak and lobster. And, Mr. Speaker, we had a province in 1982 where there was not one food bank, Mr. Speaker, not one food bank.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — And that was steak and lobster, Mr. Speaker. But we don't have steak and lobster now because we've been victimized and we've been trampled on.

So it's time to face reality. It's time for people . . . yes, it's time for people across this province to lower their expectations across the board, to live a bit differently, to reorient priorities. And that's what this budget is doing — reallocating the money where it's needed most to rebuild this province and to try to hang on and pull together for a better day.

And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by sharing a letter that I received this past week, a letter from a former constituent. And it's one of the most thoughtful letters I've received in recent years and I've been in this Legislative Assembly now about five years.

I talked to the family who wrote the letter earlier this evening to ask permission to read it in the legislature and they told me it was very difficult to write. They didn't even know whether they should send it or not.

But they sent it to the Premier of the province with a carbon copy to myself and to three other ministers of the government. And it reads like this, Mr. Speaker:

Dear Mr. Romanow: I'm writing this, my first letter to a political figure, in response to the numerous disclosures of "perks" and mis-spending of public money by corporate and Government officers. I began this letter after reading comments by Mr. Messer and Ms. Bryant regarding annual costs for vehicle expenses. I first telephoned Mr. M. Koenker, my former M.L.A., and I believe he made verbal representation to various Cabinet Ministers.

My intent in writing to you is to try to bring into focus the view as seen from the "average" Saskatchewan taxpayer. Our family income (one

wage earner) is \$42,000 gross, approximately \$25,000 net, from an average 45 hour week. My wife, a trained teacher, has chosen to stay at home and raise our twelve year old daughter. Our only performance bonus comes from overtime, which must then be balanced by a loss of family time. All my benefits (medical, group insurance and pension) are included in my hourly salary which is often legislated at a sub-inflation rate percentage, (even zero).

We have always prided ourselves in paying all our bills on time, and if we have emergency expenses, we have gone without in other areas in order to pay back the loans which are always necessary. We do not smoke, drink or gamble. Our vehicle is of the 1970's vintage, as is our dwelling. Quite often, we feel penalized for trying to live responsibly. A holiday in our own Province is not always possible. Our daughter, a talented violinist, is quite capable of being accepted into the Youth Orchestra next year but with the fees and fund-raising necessary, it looks to be out of the question.

Our income, which we can do little to increase, has not kept pace with increased costs, and asking for 1% here and there on top of the 25% we now pay in Income Tax is not realistic. You, Mr. Premier, must use the mandate we gave you, but use it fairly and wisely. This government has an opportunity to set new standards in personal & Corporate restraint, after the scandalous behaviour of the Conservatives who have essentially left us as a "public in poverty." If you lead an overburdened electorate by example, you may restore some faith in our government representatives.

I will not harp on the "perks" except to say that the hefty salaries each executive receives, should and must be enough for all their expenses. Fleet vehicles should be sufficient for each of them. The Corporate logo may remind them as to who is paying the bill.

We realize that it will be a difficult task to remedy the damage done by those now sitting in Opposition. Their political tactics are obvious, made even more deplorable by their apparent lack of conscience. Perhaps when Mr. Devine returns to the Legislature, he will face some hard questions.

The fact remains however that we, as average citizens, feel financially overwhelmed, and a cavalier attitude in certain levels of government only increases the sense of frustration — hence this letter to the office of the Premier.

In you, Mr. Romanow, the Province now has an eloquent and dignified speaker. We wish you well in the difficult decisions that must be made in the months ahead.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2100)

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that in my view, this letter exemplifies the best in Saskatchewan people. Their willingness to sacrifice and to do without and to work hard and to put their values straight, to not spend more than they take in, to pay their bills and to be concerned about the public treasury and the course of public leadership.

I believe that we owe this family and thousands of others across this province what they are asking for and that is leadership, Mr. Speaker. Leadership not just politically but morally as well; leadership by example from the highest levels of government. And that is what we intend to do, Mr. Speaker. This is what Saskatchewan people are asking for — for leadership, for honesty, for openness in government, for fairness, and for good stewardship of the public purse. And we who have been placed in positions of public trust, Mr. Speaker, have a deep and abiding responsibility not to betray the trust that has been put in us.

I want to conclude by saying, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatchewan, that we intend to honour the public trust that they have put into us. With this first budget we have a first step toward a new tomorrow and toward restoring to Saskatchewan a government that is as good as its people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few moments tonight to speak on this important subject, on the budget, its effect on the people of this province, most importantly the kind of direction that this budget signals for the next four years of our mandate, and what it means as we begin to turn the corner and to try to create the kind of society that we all want to build.

I want to take a few minutes first of all, Mr. Speaker, to elaborate some thoughts and some comments that people have made to me concerning precisely this issue.

On October the people of this province rejected a vision of Saskatchewan society which put the needs of the greedy before those of the needy. In October those representatives of a political philosophy which said, it's mine, it's only mine, maybe my family's, maybe my family but nobody else — those who advocated that type of political philosophy, those in the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, were rejected because their vision of what this province should be was soundly, soundly rejected given their record of governance since 1982.

Mr. Speaker, that vision that they promoted, which they used every trick of the trade, every tool of government that they could to try to change the nature and thinking in philosophy and psychology of the people of Saskatchewan was a failure, Mr. Speaker. They said there is no way; the people of this province said there is no way to the PC way. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that they will

be saying that for many, many years to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — I say that, Mr. Speaker, because since October of 1991, between October of 1991 and today, each and every day goes by, the people of Saskatchewan see the results, the results of that political philosophy of putting the greedy before the needy. They have seen it, Mr. Speaker, in a whole series of political policies, of governmental policies put in place from '92 which are now bearing fruit.

In 1982 they put those policies in place. In 1992 they're beginning to bear the fruit. It's a bitter fruit, Mr. Speaker, it's a fruit filled with worms, it's a fruit which is rotten and it's a fruit that unfortunately the people of Saskatchewan have all that is left and have to discard and begin to plant anew.

Mr. Speaker, that fruit, that fruit as be seen to be preserved I guess since we're on a dietary analogies tonight. We see in the kind of preserves that have forced this government, that have forced this government into taking the actions it has around this budget.

The Conservative philosophy which has led us to this point in time, Mr. Speaker, was founded on the notion, was founded on the notion that individual, individual greed, individual responsibility was foremost and primary in the construction of a society that would supposedly take care of itself, that would be self-managing.

It was a philosophy economically that said that if you give to those at the top, and you give greatly to those at the top, that some of the benefits will trickle down to those at the bottom. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's plain to see that the results of that particular approach to economy and fiscal responsibility has been an abject failure. The people of Saskatchewan haven't been trickled down, they been trickled upon, and this budget unfortunately comes to the point where in fact it's time to sponge up and mop up what has been trickled down upon us.

I don't want to, however, Mr. Speaker, get too partisan about this other than to say, how in the world can any member of the Conservative caucus stand up and try to credibly make the criticisms that they have been making of this budget when in fact they were the architects of this budget? This budget, Mr. Speaker, this budget is not the budget that we would be introducing in this House had the New Democratic Party, and the New Democratic government, been in power from Saskatchewan between 1982 and 1992. Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee the people of the province that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Because central to our vision of society is the notion of shepherding our resources, of being good shepherds of what we have been given, and to share what we have been given in the belief that as we share, so shall all society benefit — totally in opposition to the philosophy of the Conservative Party and I dare say, that of the Liberal Party as well, Mr. Speaker.

Because this province has had experience with both parties and with the same philosophy, that is, give to the greedy and let the needy go defend for themselves. Fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, we are confronted here in this budget with the two conflicting visions of society and two conflicting questions of the resolutions of the problems that face that society.

First of all, the question of leadership and the question of having the courage and the will. Mr. Speaker, in this budget, measures which were taken which each and every member of this House knows are not popular entirely by the population of this province. There are things in this budget that none of us, of members of this House, would like to see in a budget.

I don't believe that there's any member on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, who joyfully will end up supporting this budget because we believe that it's overall, for the short term, the best thing for the people of Saskatchewan. We know that this budget will inflict hurt on families. We know that it will inflict hurt but we also know that this budget would, without the fiscal measures taken in this budget, that the hurt that we experience now will be spread not only to ourselves but to our children and to our children's children unless we did what we had to do. Mr. Speaker, I believe that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — There is the oft-quoted statement that we're willing . . . that sometimes we need to take some short-term pain for long-term gain. And that's what this budget is about.

One of my constituents phoned the day that the budget was called, phoned in the evening and said, you know, Bob, it's like when we were kids and our mom gave us cod-liver oil. We knew it tasted horrible, we knew that we felt sick after it, but we also knew that in the long term it was probably good for us.

Mr. Speaker, there is a portion of the budget which reminds me of that cod-liver oil. But there's another part of this budget, and the member from Saskatoon University, I think very eloquently, has outlined that portion that isn't cod-liver oil, that sets out a different vision of society, that says that despite the mess that we're in, there are those elements in society who can't look after themselves. The government must be there to step in and support them and their families from the kind of situation in which they find themselves, Mr. Speaker.

If you look just in terms of hungry kids in this province, this budget contains a 35 per cent increase in the money going to the hungry kids — to take a step, a small step admittedly, but at least it's a step in the right direction to saying that in Saskatchewan we on this side of the House believe that there should be no hungry kids and that the resources of this province should be used to feed our kids, not to put them on the street.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because again

that demarcates our vision of society from the Conservative and Liberal vision of society. We don't believe that it's every hungry kid for themselves. We think that society has a responsibility to make sure that those kids can participate in the affairs of society as equally with everybody else, and that they have that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to see that that initiative is helping in whatever way we can to move towards eradicating the need for the food banks, the food banks mentioned by the member from Saskatoon University.

There are many, many other areas, Mr. Speaker, which differentiates our vision of society from their vision of society. And that budget reflects — this budget that we are dealing with now reflects — some small steps towards the construction of that vision of society.

But I think it's important on a political level, and I think it's important for the people of this province, that the measures taken in this budget begin to raise the kind of debate that's needed in this province over precisely what kind of province we intend to build here.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the province in some ways are ahead of the politicians on this issue. I believe that the people — given the reaction I've gotten from the budget, and from the comments made to me by my constituents and others . . . that there is a fundamental rethinking going on as to precisely how we proceed during the 1990s and into the 21st century.

That there's a fundamental rethinking going on as to what type of agricultural economy we want to build in this province. That there's a fundamental rethinking going on as to how government services are delivered to people in this province. There's fundamental rethinking going on as to the effects of technology and how those effects will impact on people's lives. There's thinking going on in the areas of can we proceed along the same old path to energy generation or do we look at alternatives — for example through conservation, through alternative energy initiatives, to demand side. To demand side as opposed to supply side.

That kind of fundamental thinking, Mr. Speaker, I believe is going on throughout all of Saskatchewan. And this budget is a reflection . . . in fact it's like a . . . I guess it's like a whack up side the head, as the manager, the title of a famous book on management . . . that once in a while we need to give ourselves a whack up side the head to think about precisely what we're doing and where we're going.

And in some senses this budget reflects that there is a fundamental need. There is a fundamental need to rethink a whole number of areas of daily life, and of economic development, and of social life in this province. To ask ourselves what kind of society do we want to build in the future.

(2115)

One of those areas, Mr. Speaker, that has arisen in that debate is the question of taxation. We have here an economic conundrum where we are a heavily taxed people. We have a small population base which is wealth producing. We have a small population base relative to

the overall population which pays taxes and which pays the taxes to provide the services and the programs that we in this legislature — but more importantly the people outside this legislature — believe are important.

We have a structure in taxation which I believe has reached the limit. And I think this budget will probably end up proving that, but it gives us the opportunity, and it gives us the opportunity to begin to question the way in which taxation in this province is handled. And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that because of the kind of debate which took place prior to this budget, on taxation and revenue generating measures, that it gives us the opportunity to look at the question of taxation reform. And we on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, first of all believe that taxation reform is necessary provided that it is progressive taxation, provided that it's based on certain principles like based on the ability to pay, based on the question of those who have wealth versus those who do not have wealth, and based on, and most importantly, based on the relationship of the ability to create wealth and to have a portion of that wealth taxed to provide the goods and services here in the province that we need to do.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this budget should provide us with the opportunity to begin to raise the question of taxation reform after the budget and between now and the time of the next budget is introduced in this legislature.

We have seen for example, Mr. Speaker, in this province, an increase in personal taxation, historically, not just with this budget but previously, an increase in personal taxation and a decrease in corporate taxation. This budget begins to reverse that trend. This budget begins to reverse that trend, Mr. Speaker. I support the reversal of that trend.

But more importantly I support a notion of saying, isn't it about time? Isn't it about time we begin to look at the whole question of revenue, of where it comes from, and how it's linked to the economic performance of the province. I think that's very, very important, Mr. Speaker, for the coming year because it will be exceedingly important — the questions that this province is going to face, questions like out-migration, whether people or not will find it to their benefit as a people to stay in this province.

You know, unless we begin to undertake that kind of examination of what we are doing — and I believe that this is a start in that direction — that unless we do that in a thorough-going way, that we lose an historic opportunity to become a trend-setter in the area of taxation and tax reform.

Mr. Speaker, we have established the principle of progressivity once again in taxation in this province. This budget does that. This budget established the question that those . . . re-established the principle that those who have the ability to pay should pay their fair share. And we've taken a step towards that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we have the opportunity of building on those principles to begin to

examine the taxation system as a whole in this province, and to begin to look upon those who create and produce wealth and who keep wealth in this province, should have the opportunity to participate in that kind of wealth creation without, without having their livelihoods or opportunities to build their families and to keep their families in Saskatchewan lessened, minimized. So, Mr. Speaker, on that basis of progressivity and of ability to pay, this budget takes a step forward in that direction.

Mr. Speaker, it takes a step forward in another direction and that relates to one of the fundamental and structural problems that we have in this province, and that is the problem of keeping wealth that is created in Saskatchewan, here in Saskatchewan. We take that step forward, Mr. Speaker, in the initiative around the Saskatchewan savings bonds. That, Mr. Speaker, says to the people of Saskatchewan and says to people throughout Canada that we can mobilize a capital pool or we can begin to mobilize a capital pool here in Saskatchewan, that we can create . . . the wealth that we have created in this province, we can keep in this province, and we can put some of that wealth to work to the rebuilding of our province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — The Saskatchewan savings bond is a good initiative, Mr. Speaker. It's an initiative, I can tell you, that is well received by all sectors of the Saskatchewan population. I have yet to hear one person that I have talked to, or has called my office about this budget, say, we don't like the Saskatchewan savings bonds.

And I ask the members, I ask the members opposite, when you have somebody from your research department phone me and say that they like the notion, they like the notion of Saskatchewan savings bonds, I'm sure that when it comes time to vote on this budget, Mr. Speaker, that even the members opposite will not refuse to vote against the creation of Saskatchewan savings bonds, that they too know that this is a step towards financial independence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — It's a step. It's a step, Mr. Speaker. It's a small step but it is really a step in the right direction. In fact it's more than a small step. It is a large step in the right direction towards creating a capital pool which we can use here in Saskatchewan — Saskatchewan money used for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that all members of the House will applaud that step.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there's the whole question of wealth, of wealth creation and of wealth . . . and the recapturing of wealth that leaves this province. I want to refer some members of the House to a couple of articles, several articles which have appeared recently in the local press concerning this whole question of wealth and the need to capture and keep in Saskatchewan the wealth that we create here.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer you to the *Prince Albert Herald*, a fine, fine newspaper from Prince Albert, and a headline, "Dickenson Mines 1991 profits show

folly of Sask Minerals sale.” A very, very good article. I notice here that there’s a picture, in fact, of the member from Shellbrook-Torch River in this article. Right? Obviously the member of Shellbrook-Torch River understands the need for recapturing and keeping in Saskatchewan the wealth. But just let me read, Mr. Speaker, if I may, a couple of paragraphs from this article.

In the first nine months of 1991, Dickenson Mines made a profit of 2.5 million on revenues of 10.4 million at the company’s mining properties in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Dickenson Mines that they talk about used to be Sask Minerals. It used to be Sask Minerals. The first three quarters of 1991 made a profit of 2.5 million, which is not unusual, Mr. Speaker, because each and every year of operation of that particular former, former Crown corporation made a profit in each and every year, money which came into the coffers of Saskatchewan, into the governmental coffers, to help build roads and schools and hospitals, and to keep our province out of the financial mess which those people who sit on the other side have put us in.

Now it goes on to say: Readers of this column may wonder what that has to do with provincial political issues, but there’s a connection. On March 28, 1988, Dickenson Mines Limited bought sodium sulphate mines in Chaplin and Ingebrigt. The mines had been owned and operated by Sask Minerals, a Crown corporation. The Saskatchewan government announced that the province would receive 15.9 million from selling off Sask Minerals. This immediately drew criticism when it was pointed out that Sask Minerals had earned profits of almost \$50 million — profits of \$50 million — since it was established by the government of T.C. Douglas in 1945. Sizeable portions of those profits have been paid to the provincial treasury as a dividend. In fact, if only the Crown corporation’s three most profitable years are totalled, Sask Minerals earned profits of more than 15.6 million.

Mr. Speaker, here was a profitable corporation which provided revenue to the province of Saskatchewan, to the Government of Saskatchewan, helping to build roads and schools and hospitals for the people of this province — a victim of Tory privatization. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, a victim . . . We are all the victims of this privatization because it was one less Crown corporation to put revenue into the coffers of the Crown Investments Corporation, one less Crown corporation which provided the kind of revenue which helped to keep Saskatchewan financially stable, one less Crown corporation which, instead of adding to the public debt, helped to decrease the public debt year in and year out, year in and year out since 1945, part of the PC legacy.

This is one small, one small, Mr. Speaker, one small item in that legacy of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . folly and mismanagement, as my colleague so ably puts it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that of course isn’t just political rhetoric. I refer you to, of course, the *Star-Phoenix*, April 27, 1992. The headline: “Gass indictment of resource mismanagement.”

The report of the Gass Commission on the financial management of the province details a remarkable record of reckless spending of public money on financially-risky projects that damage and deplete our endowment of natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, the writer goes on, and the *Star-Phoenix* goes on to talk about the list. For example, the Rafferty-Alameda project that’s already been mentioned in tonight’s debate, but it’s probably worthwhile mentioning once again. “Cost the province \$155 million to date (\$113 million over estimate)” — \$113 million over estimate. The Meadow Lake pulp mill.

Investments in non-renewable fossil fuels include the Bi-Provincial Upgrader at \$177 million and New Grade Energy at \$232 million plus loan guarantees of \$334 million; (which) because of lower oil prices, significant operating losses of \$67 million were recorded at New Grade (as an example) in 1991.

Not responsible stewardship, not responsible stewardship, an investment, an adventure which was risky, which the former government was told was risky, which is totally dependent on the price of oil, which as we all know in this province, Mr. Speaker, is up and down, up and down, year in, year out, month in and month out. Something, Mr. Speaker, which does not necessarily lead to a good investment resource policy. Another indictment of the PC record — not a good shepherding and recapturing of wealth for this province.

But I look, for example, on the *Star-Phoenix* of April 29, 1992, on page 5, the business section.

(Here we find the) Cameco Corporation and the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan both posted strong first quarter earnings, according to financial statements released Tuesday.

Cameco made a profit of \$17.7 million for the period ended March 31, compared with \$7.2 million in the first three months of 1991.

PCS made a profit of \$11.4 million for the quarter, slightly off the \$12.3 million in the same period last year.

The point, Mr. Speaker: Crown corporations, one of which was totally given away, one of which was given away, and that’s the only term I can use, Mr. Speaker — not sold; not sold because sold implies good faith between the buyer and the seller. In this case, Mr. Speaker, in this case, in this case, an example of their slavish devotion to the right-wing ideology. Just privatize, privatize at no cost, no concern for the future, no concern for the long-term effects it has on the fiscal situation of this province. They went and sold off one of the primary resources of wealth creation in this province, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

They gave it away, they gave it away to their friends. They gave it away, Mr. Speaker, and who is suffering as a result? It’s not Chucky Childers, it’s not Mr. Childers with his three-quarters of a million dollar salary. It’s not those

shareholders who are reaping the dividends of this profitable corporation. It's not the New Mexico potash owners who find PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.) so profitable that now they've bought into their marketing arrangement down in New Mexico.

(2130)

It's none of those, Mr. Speaker. None of those are suffering, but the people of this province are suffering and they're suffering because the revenues, the profits from the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan which formerly came into the consolidated fund, which formerly came in as revenues for the people of the province, are gone, Mr. Speaker, gone. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that we've got to look at the question of how we recapture that wealth, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Because, Mr. Speaker, in my mind, the resources of this province are here to be used for the benefit of all the people of Saskatchewan — not for a tiny few, not for those who can afford, not for the investment dealers and the large institutional investors of Toronto or New York or Hong Kong, but they're here to be used by the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I say we can't afford, we cannot afford not to bring those resources back under public stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, that's my position on this. That's my position. I think that this budget proves it more than anything else, Mr. Speaker. We need those revenues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — But I guess that opens the debate, Mr. Speaker, that provides the dividing line in a very clear and fundamental way between members of this side of the House and those of the Conservative or Liberal Party. Because you will hear two contradictory arguments from those members when it comes to the question of utilizing the wealth that we have here in Saskatchewan for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

On the one hand, because of their ideological devotion and slavishness to private ownership, they will say that, no, no, no you don't need public management of resources. You don't need that public management. The private sector can do it better, and all you have to do is tax them. And you can get part of that resources back from tax revenue.

On the other hand, those same members, Mr. Speaker, will also say this, that you can't afford to tax the corporations because — and the litany goes on — they'll either shut down production, or they'll move it out of the province or they'll do one dire thing after another dire thing. Right? They come up with the ideological justification, Mr. Speaker, of why we shouldn't capture our wealth here in the province.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the budget process that we've gone through points out in a very stark way the legacy of 10 years of PC privatizations, of 10 years of slavish devotion to an ideology to feed the greedy and not the

needy, of 10 years of giving away what the people of Saskatchewan used to own, and now are left bereft of, of 10 years of putting the interests of their friends ahead of the interests of the province, both short-term and long-term.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to that kind of ideology and that kind of political policy that this former government engaged in, it was rejected in October, it is rejected in May, it will be rejected four years from now, and it will be rejected for the next 50 years because the people of Saskatchewan know, the people of Saskatchewan know, that there is a better way of shepherding the resources that were given us here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, as many members of this side of the House have said, this budget is a turning point, and is a reflection of the turning point here in Saskatchewan, because we're caught, Mr. Speaker, in times which are not normal times. It's becoming so that one finds it very difficult to define what normal times are any more.

We have for example, in agriculture, a situation where food stocks are nearest the lowest records that they have been ever, and the continuing, continuing flat market prices for agricultural products. We find ourselves in a situation where we have hungry kids in Saskatchewan, and we find farmers leaving the land; the age of farmers increasing, the average age. The question arises of who will farm the land next; to feed whom?

There are many contradictions, Mr. Speaker, in this society which are coming to the fore. We find ourselves, as the saying goes, in a land of plenty where there is great want. We have the technology to be able to talk to one another directly anywhere in the world, to see each other as we speak to them. Yet we have problems in our education system so that aboriginal students can't relate to an educational system which doesn't seem to be meeting their needs.

All these, Mr. Speaker, these are just small examples but they all point to a time in history unlike any other. This is not the '30s. This is not the '30s, Mr. Speaker, and the solutions of the '30s I don't believe can apply today.

We have, for example, economically, the push towards a North American free trade deal. I just may take a word to speak about that because a North American free trade deal, like the Canada-U.S. trade deal, will be foisted upon the people of this province and foisted upon the people of this country unless we see the kind of leadership exhibited by the Premier of Saskatchewan when he said in the constitutional talks, it's time for provinces who are affected by international trade agreements, that they have some say in structuring and ratifying those trade agreements. Mr. Speaker, that's got to be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — There's no more, Mr. Speaker, and the people of this country and of this province can see, that there is no more time for Irish eyes are smiling on the lawn of the White House when the songs . . . We don't hear

singing here; we hear cries of pain, cries of pain that will only be heightened as we've seen in the free trade deal, the Canada-U.S. free trade deal. Will only be heightened.

It's time, Mr. Speaker. It's time, Mr. Speaker, and this has always been and always been a principle with this political movement, that the resources of the world should be traded in such a manner that is fair and that brings benefit to all. Not just benefit to a few and hardship to many but should be shared equitably, fairly, so that we can achieve the kind of social objectives that we have long stood for.

Fair trade. Fair trade in agricultural products with all those countries around the world and particularly with those areas of the world that lack the necessary proteins and carbohydrates and vitamins, right? Who lack food, who have kids who are starving — 40,000 kids a day around the world die each and every day because of malnutrition, right? We can change that. We may not be able to change it globally but we can make steps towards that, Mr. Speaker.

And the province is demanding a say in the determination of the kind of international trading arrangements, whether it's GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) or whether it's any North American free trade agreement, that the right of the province to be able to . . . government of the province to be able to put forward an alternative vision to that of the corporate agenda. Mr. Speaker, that's what this government stands for. That's what we've been doing. And that is a measure, Mr. Speaker, that I know all the people in Saskatchewan support. It's time Saskatchewan had its say on the international level when it comes to developing fair trade to feed the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — And, Mr. Speaker, we have the opportunity to do that in a very concrete method. I'm sure that in the coming weeks and months ahead you will see that unfolded, in which we take the bull by the horns and we say, we're a trading nation. Trade is good for the people of Saskatchewan. Fair trade is good for the people of the world. And we're going to develop mechanisms to ensure that that kind of fair trade, whether it's at the level of international treaties, whether it's the level of bilateral relationships between countries, that those mechanisms we put in place so that those people in Saskatchewan who produce wealth, whether it's farm machinery, whether it's wheat, whether it's pork, all will have the ability to make sure that their products get out there to help build this a better world.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am positive that in the coming weeks that you will see that happen. And which is why, Mr. Speaker, in this budget, in the Department of Economic Development, there is an increase of almost \$2 million over last year — almost \$2 million to develop those kind of economic initiatives, Mr. Speaker. And that is a step forward for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by raising a

couple of issues that have been raised by members opposite in regards to their criticism of this budget.

And let me say, Mr. Speaker, that first of all anything that these people have to say lacks credibility. Everybody in the province knows that we've just come through 10 years of their mismanagement. Everybody in the province knows that if they had real criticisms, if they had real criticisms of the way this budget was laid out, that they would have in fact instituted their own fiscal arrangements and fiscal responsibility.

My colleague says that the arsonists can't become fire-fighters overnight, Mr. Speaker, and that is for true. So any criticisms that they do lay forth have no credibility whatsoever.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, having said that, there are issues that they do raise that I think all of us as members of the House have to grapple with. The questions that they raise concerning migration — and I know that's an issue on people's minds. They have raised it in question period and they've raised it in their speeches, and the effect that this budget will have on migration.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am willing to admit that it may have a detrimental effect. It may. It may, Mr. Speaker, for those who see this province as only a place to sojourn to make some wealth and to move on. And some of those people may find that there are greener pastures.

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that those people in Saskatchewan who believe, who believe and who know that there's a different way, who believe and know that we can together rebuild this province; that we can put together a different kind of society, a society that doesn't have hungry kids, a society that moves towards eradicating social inequality, a society which treats working people fairly, a society which provides opportunity for all people to utilize their creativity and energy in ways which helps their own neighbour; that those people, those people who have got what has come to be known as the Saskatchewan way, the Saskatchewan tradition, the Saskatchewan spirit of co-operation, that those people, Mr. Speaker, understand that this, too, shall pass; that there is going to be a better day in this province, that there is going to be greater opportunities, that there will be a future for their people; and, Mr. Speaker, they know that the future is with the members on this side of the House, not those old discredited Tories over there, not that new discredited Liberal over there, but with a government which understands, has the courage and the will to do what is right, Mr. Speaker, and to take that step forward into tomorrow knowing that it's not all going to be easy.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will be with us on this journey. Those naysayers won't. Those naysayers may go and buy the ranches in Arizona. They may end up with Jimmy Garner, flying Jimmy Garner. They may be down there with some of their big-business buddies in Palm Springs. But I can tell you, the people with the guts, the people with the imagination, and the people with the courage, and the people who care will be here in Saskatchewan building that new society, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — And with that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to close my remarks. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2145)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to again rise in this Assembly to speak to the budget debate. Of course, Mr. Speaker, it's also been interesting sitting in the Assembly and listening to a number of the speakers that have spoken both Friday and again today, and listening to the debate as it has preceded me this evening, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting as I looked at the budget and its presentation, presented by the Minister of Finance just four days ago, the thing I found interesting about this budget presentation, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that it, like the throne speech, again went back to many policies and many ideas of the former government through the 1980s, and talked about the benefits that Saskatchewan had, and specifically related them to policies and economic development that we saw through the 80s, initiated by the government of the member from Estevan. Mr. Speaker, I find that interesting.

I also find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, and it's been noted by a number of columnists, that this probably was the most politically motivated budget speech ever delivered by any Finance minister in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, again we saw, as we did on the throne speech, the Finance minister continually belating the fact that he wasn't able to move, or didn't have the ability to move or to adjust his budget because of former government policy. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, as we had indicated on the Speech from the Throne, that indeed the members opposite, including the Premier of the day, knew what the fiscal position of this province was. They knew where this province was sitting because the books, as Mr. Gass indicated, the books were as wide open as . . . for anyone who really wanted to take the time and look at the books.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, maybe there were mistakes made by the former government. We will not . . . I don't think anyone in his right mind, regardless of political persuasion, will not admit that or would even try to admit that they are not guilty of making a mistake or two once in a while.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think when we take a look over the past number of years and we look at what's happened since October 21 of 1991, I believe what we have seen and what I've been hearing and what my colleagues have been hearing on the street over the last few days, there are a lot of unhappy people in the province of Saskatchewan, a lot of people who are just somewhat disturbed at what has taken place in this province, Mr. Speaker. They're disturbed about the fact that they were led to believe that there would be no increase in taxes. They were disturbed about the fact that there would be more services, that there would be more money for services, that there would

be more money in the area of health care.

They were disturbed about . . . and they've been disturbed about the fact that they believed this was a government or a party that had indicated that they were going to be more open and more honest and more consultative. And as I get into my speech, Mr. Speaker, I want to take the time to address some of these issues. They were also . . . many people are concerned out there because this party and the present government indicated prior to the election that they indeed, Mr. Speaker, would not become blatantly political in their job fillings; in fact, Mr. Speaker, become . . . just look at whether you held an NDP card or a Conservative card, whether you get a job or not. You enter into blatant political politics.

Mr. Speaker, I believe people in Saskatchewan feel a sense of betrayal. They believe they've been betrayed by a government that they had so much hope for. At least I think and I believe there were people out there who actually believed that indeed that this government would indeed offer them some hope, offer them a vision for the future.

Mr. Speaker, even as I was travelling back to the city today to take my place in this Assembly, I stopped in the coffee shop and just talked to a number of people. And it didn't matter who you talked to, Mr. Speaker, many people of all types of political persuasions and regardless of whether they were farmers or business men or women or labourers, they were all speaking about the budget. They were all speaking about what the budget was going to do to them, what it meant to them, what it was going to mean to them out of their pocket-books.

Mr. Speaker, what I gathered as I was visiting with people today is that people were not happy at all, were not one bit happy. They were just totally annoyed at what had taken place.

They weren't happy with the fact that prior to October 21 and all through the spring of 1991, the government of the day, the then opposition, had basically taken and run with the harmonization tax, of the E&H (education and health) with the goods and services tax, and basically what was the cry of the day, Mr. Speaker? I believe the cry of the day was axe the tax; no more tax; no PST.

Mr. Speaker, the government of the day, the then opposition, ran around and told people that there wouldn't be any more tax; we wouldn't need any more tax; we wouldn't need one dollar more; in fact, \$4.5 billion should be enough to operate this province on. In fact any party should be able to operate and run a budget in this province and provide the services and provide the needs of individuals with \$4.5 billion.

However, Mr. Speaker, what has taken place? What has transpired? What have we seen, Mr. Speaker?

We have seen the fact that the members opposite didn't just eliminate the PST or the expanded E&H tax, didn't take the time to harmonize. The result being, Mr. Speaker, that they gave up \$180 million of revenue to the province which the former minister of Finance, back in the spring of 1991, indicated in his plan — the government of the

day's plan — not only to balance the budget but to meet the fiscal needs of the government to operate.

The people of Saskatchewan, prior to October 21, 1991, Mr. Speaker, were led to believe that the E&H would disappear, the provincial sales tax would disappear. And, Mr. Speaker, many people on October 22 when they went to purchase goods and purchase some of the services that they expected would be tax free, all of a sudden, here there was that 7 per cent was still on those goods and services and taxes. Mr. Speaker, they felt betrayed then and they feel betrayed even worse now that the minister has brought down his budget.

Why do they feel betrayed, Mr. Speaker? Because where the present government said that there would be enough in the budget to operate, Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden that 7 per cent harmonize tax which was such an evil word, an evil thought, that this province would enter into, now we've seen, Mr. Speaker, has become a 1 per cent increase in the E&H tax.

What is 1 per cent? It's gone from 7 per cent, Mr. Speaker, to 8 per cent. The people in the province of Saskatchewan, we now pay 8 per cent on everything we purchase, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that is an indication of the betrayal that this government has left to the province of Saskatchewan, to people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think as we spend the next year or two or three or whatever time it's going to take for the Premier of the day to indeed look forward to calling another election, people of Saskatchewan are going to look with interest and they're going to follow with interest the proceeds of this government, the process of this government. They're going to be taking a very serious look, Mr. Speaker, wondering if indeed this government is ever going to come up with a plan of balancing the budget, a plan of reducing the deficit, a plan of being fair and honest and open with the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think over the next four years your loyal opposition, the loyal opposition in this province, is indeed going to continue to remind the people of Saskatchewan that indeed the former government laid out a plan. They went to the people of Saskatchewan with a plan, a plan that included harmonization of the sales tax. And, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at what harmonization would have done for the people of Saskatchewan, you talk to small-business men and women around the province today, and Mr. Speaker, what do you find? Many men and women in business in the province of Saskatchewan began to realize that the harmonized tax certainly would have been of greater benefit to them as well as providing money to the coffers of the province of Saskatchewan.

After all, Mr. Speaker, what was harmonization going to do? It was going to return the tax on the services used by business men and women to provide services to their customers. It would have returned the E&H tax on their power bills and on the telephone bills and on their heat bills — and also, Mr. Speaker, not just business men and women in this province but also the farming community of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we take a look at the budget today, and what has the budget done for the business men and women of this province? What has it done for farmers? Certainly many people in this Assembly have come from a business background. Many people in this Assembly have come and are active in the farming sector. I'm sure many of the members opposite who are actively trying to, or may be in the process of, planting their crop, have been taking time to sit down and just try and count the cost of what it's going to cost them to put a crop in the ground this year.

Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden to find 3 cents on gasoline, 3 cents on diesel fuel, a limit of \$900 on a fuel rebate to produce in this province. As one MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) already indicated, he's bypassed that a long time ago. He's limited now to \$900 in a fuel tax rebate.

Mr. Speaker, that may have seemed like an insignificant amount of a rebate to many people in this province. But when you consider the fact that farmers in Saskatchewan and over the years work hard, they're diligent, they're good keepers of the land, they're good environmentalists, they're good conservationists, Mr. Speaker . . . and they work hard, they put many hours a day in the fields, Mr. Speaker, they produce food for the consuming public not only of this country, of this great nation we live in, but for men and women around the world.

I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, as the men and women of our farming community go out to put the crop in the ground, they're going to be more discouraged than ever, than they ever have been. Not only are we looking at depressed agricultural markets, Mr. Speaker, we're also looking at . . . we also see where the provincial government has taken away almost any incentive, any initiative the farming has had to get out and produce a crop, to take the time, Mr. Speaker, to produce, to put the seed in the ground.

One of the members opposite, as the Minister of Finance has taken the time to do, continues to tell us that it's all the federal government's responsibility. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's easy to blame somebody else. It's always easy to look at the other person and blame the other person for our faults, or blame the other person for some of the problems we face. Mr. Speaker, is that what the former premier did of this province? Is that what the former premier said to the farming community in the province of Saskatchewan — no, we'll blame the feds?

Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the deficit . . . and certainly the government of the day takes great pleasure in talking about the deficit so they can cover up where they're going with their budget and with their spending.

Mr. Speaker, we take a look at where the deficit is. And if you take a serious look at where the deficit accumulated over the past nine years, Mr. Speaker, you would find that despite the drought, despite the poor economic climate, despite the poor world grain markets, Mr. Speaker, and prices, despite the low prices for our natural resources like potash and uranium and oil . . . Mr. Speaker, the former premier of this province believed in the men and women who formed the backbone of this province. The former premier of this province didn't just say to Ottawa

it's all your responsibility. The former premier and the former government took the time to support the major industry in this province, which is agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is imperative. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the federal government does have a responsibility. But, Mr. Speaker, we in Saskatchewan, as a provincial government, have a responsibility to our people as well, including men and women, agriculture producers across this province.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the agricultural sector and we look at this budget and we ask ourselves, what's the government doing today for farmers? Is the government showing support for farmers? In fact, we just have to look back over the last few years and listen to the debate and even go back into *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, and many of the members who are presently sitting on that side of the House, every time the former government brought forward a budget, were continually condemning the former government for not putting enough into agriculture, not taking the time to put enough into health, not putting enough into education.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what did the Minister of Finance do the other day? What did he say to the farmers of Saskatchewan, and indeed speaking to the farmers of Saskatchewan, what did he offer them? You know, Mr. Speaker, when money is put into agriculture, it's money not just put into the hands of farmers, it's money put into the small businesses in all our communities around rural Saskatchewan. It's money put into our educational system, Mr. Speaker. It's money put into our health system.

And not only that, Mr. Speaker, but this government took the time to cut — cuts in our health program and our health spending, cuts in education, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. It now being 10 o'clock this House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.