

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, I have reviewed the following petition pursuant to rule 11(7) and it is hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to allow the 1991 GRIP program to stand for this year, and to start working with the federal government to redesign the program for the future.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're getting quite good at that. It's my pleasure today on behalf of the Minister of Finance to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, eight people seated on the floor behind the bar. These eight people are involved with the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, and particularly with the life enrichment program. The supervisors are Lynne Demeule, Joyce Sevigny; and the staff are Kari Buchberger and Jill Hunt.

Mr. Speaker, it will be my pleasure to meet with this group after question period for pictures, and later on refreshments and a bit of a visit with them.

I ask all hon. members to join me in welcoming this group to the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As opposition members, we as well would like to extend a welcome to our guests who are seated on the floor this afternoon. Certainly it is really something to see individuals having this opportunity to come out and certainly take the opportunity and the ability to witness the proceedings of our Legislative Assembly. And we extend our best.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker and to the Assembly, I'd also like to extend my welcome to the Saskatchewan Abilities Council for attending today. And a special personal welcome to Gary Lunde who is from Milestone and who I had the pleasure of teaching at Milestone.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment during this time period just to raise an issue of concern to a number of constituents in the

Moosomin area in my constituency.

It's a concern, Mr. Speaker, in which a group of people invested in an investment firm, an investment firm which went bankrupt a while back, Mr. Speaker. And since that time the members from my area have been in contact with me. We've been in contact with different ministers, with the Premier and with the government. And to date the members have found that they have had very little response. They've had a response back and the response has indicated that there's no help available.

We just want to remind the Assembly that when it comes to supporting people who have invested in this province and invested in other investments . . . certainly the government recently, I believe, put some funding into Principal Group, and the investors in my area feel that if the government was willing and able to put investments and help out the Principal investors, that certainly a small group such as theirs should be able to receive some finance as well, in light of the fact that the investment they made was made in good faith, in good trust. And we just want to bring it to the attention of the Assembly on the floor of this House.

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to announce the presentation of funds to the town of Bengough and the RM (rural municipality) of Bengough for jointly purchasing a mobile command post and rescue equipment for approximately \$40,000. Mr. Speaker, I will be receiving on behalf of the provincial government, a cheque from the federal government for 50 per cent cost sharing of this approved project, and in turn I will present these funds to Bengough and the RM at a presentation ceremony tomorrow, May 27, at the fire hall in Bengough.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the citizens of Bengough and area for being conscientious and concerned about the needs of their citizens in being prepared for emergency response. I have found the people of this area progressive, and in the true Saskatchewan spirit they exemplify the traits of compassion, community, and co-operation.

The joint emergency preparedness program is sponsored by Emergency Preparedness Canada. The funds are part of a cost-sharing arrangement to enhance emergency readiness across the nation. The province of Saskatchewan helps administer this program and helps individual communities submit proposals to receive this funding.

The communities must first decide on their needs and raise their own funding and then submit for 50 per cent cost sharing. Communities must therefore show initiative and vision, and I commend and congratulate Bengough for qualifying on both accounts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to have this opportunity today to rise to discuss with you and to bring to the attention of yourself and through you to the members of the Assembly and to the province, the

condition of the drought situation as it progresses in the South-west.

While we've had some localized showers in the past weeks that have helped cereal crop production to begin — not too bad a condition — the pasture lands of the area, along with the dugouts being dry from no run-off as well as the potential now for no hay production, looms almost certainly to be inevitable fact.

And that inevitable fact, sir, means that we have to encourage the people of this province to consider this as a disaster, and we will be asking this government to unveil their emergency measures program and their disaster assistance programs for hard-hit livestock producers in the very near future. We have heard of one farmer who has already moved 70 head of cattle north to the pastures, and he will not be alone, as reports are coming in that many producers are considering that measure as well as buying feed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — Mr. Speaker, I firstly would like to congratulate the Rules Committee for bringing forth a time for private members' statements. I think it will add a lot to the Assembly.

I have been advised that Environment Canada is proposing to convert the Hudson Bay manned weather office to an automated weather observation station. Local air traffic as well as air ambulance, Mr. Speaker — and Hudson Bay relies on air ambulance because of their location — and fire protection services, Mr. Speaker, all rely on the accuracy of information currently provided by that manned weather station.

These users have expressed concern with the proposed change-over to an automated station. It is generally felt that the automated station will not provide the same level of accuracy and detail required for air traffic operations. Department staff and local airport users have advised that the weather conditions in the Hudson Bay area are very unique because of their location again, their geographic location to the Pasqua and Porcupine Hills.

Mr. Speaker, in view of these concerns, I would ask that Environment Canada reconsider their proposal concerning the Hudson Bay weather station, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to your attention and that of the members the 90th anniversary of the founding of St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in Regina.

Starting in 1901 Romanian immigrants in Regina saw the need for a church to enable them to practise their faith. Construction started that year and was completed the next year at 1770 St. John Street in the constituency of Regina Victoria. The church has remained at that location

since and continues to serve the Romanian Orthodox congregation.

Mr. Speaker, St. Nicholas is also remarkable because it is the oldest Romanian Orthodox church in North America. Groups of Romanian peasants began to arrive in Canada in the 1880s. Many of these early immigrants homesteaded in Saskatchewan. Some of the communities in which they settled in numbers are Dysart, Wood Mountain, Kayville, Assiniboia, Canora, MacNutt, Pierceland, Edenwold, Lipton and Regina.

Over the years Romanians in Saskatchewan have made a valuable contribution to the building of Saskatchewan as farmers, workers, business operators, and professionals. In Saskatchewan we are all enriched because of their presence.

Mr. Speaker, as we rejoice with the congregation of St. Nicholas in their anniversary, we salute the Romanian community in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a matter that concerns my community. As members will know, today is the first day of the Nerland inquiry in Prince Albert. And I want to commend the Justice minister for listening to the people of our community and responding to their request for this inquiry.

I want to say that the community of Prince Albert does sincerely welcome the inquiry and our community believes, the people in Prince Albert believe, that this is an important step in the healing process and will as well restore trust in our justice system and I would ask all members to support me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to bring to the Assembly's attention a matter of concern in my constituency — the Alameda dam. The government opposite and the minister for Souris Basin harps continuously on the lack of water in Rafferty yet he fails to mention that there is water in the Alameda dam.

There's 35 feet of water at present in the Alameda dam. Water has been going over the outlet of that dam ever since last fall. And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, it ran until December. Again this spring the water is running through the outlet and down the Souris River.

One of the concerns of the people in the area, from Oxbow, Alameda, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, all of south-eastern Saskatchewan, is the recreational and tourist potential of this facility. Their concern is when will fish be placed in this reservoir? When will the breeding pens be placed in the reservoir for fish in this reservoir, Mr. Speaker?

I would encourage the government, Mr. Speaker, to proceed with those plans as they are needed and they would be an excellent source of revenue for the government when tourism is developed. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Does the member have leave to introduce some guests?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That makes up for all of the times you've forgotten the name of my riding. I now owe you one.

I want to take this moment to introduce some special guests. It would have been particularly unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, if these people had been overlooked. These are some exchange students who are being hosted by Thom Collegiate. There are 14 in number, they're in grade 11, from a variety of different cultures. I know all members will want to join with me in exchanging . . . in giving to these people a particularly hearty welcome to our city and our province.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Does the Premier have leave to introduce some guests?

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, members. I also have a small group of visitors that I would like to introduce to you, sir, and to the members of the Chamber, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery, if they've arrived. I think they have arrived.

They are 34 students from grades 3, 4, and 5 at King George School in Saskatoon who are here to visit the legislature, sample a bit of question period, and do the usual things that students do at the buildings. They are accompanied by teachers, Linda Kindrachuk and Lorne Davis. And I'd ask you, Mr. Speaker, and the members to welcome the King George School group here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1345)

The Speaker: — Does the member wish to introduce some guests?

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes.

The Speaker: — Does the member have leave?

Leave granted.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the Premier in welcoming our guests from King George School in Saskatoon, and in particular I want to welcome Max Abraham who I believe is the principal of the school. When I was a practice teacher at Brevoort Park in Saskatoon, Max was a wonderful grade 7 and 8 teacher. I think Max also has a history of being a fine, outstanding athlete in our younger days at university. And

I want to say welcome to the students and welcome to Max.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Expansion of SGI

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Mr. Minister, last week your government admitted it had secretly set up a new Crown corporation owned by SGI, the auto fund, and the Crown Management Board. You plan to use this company to expand SGI CANADA into other provinces, expand using taxpayers' money rather than private investors.

Mr. Minister, a simple question that requires a simple, non-partisan answer. Since you have applied to set up in other provinces, you must have done a cost analysis of your project. Can you tell us how much your expansion plans will cost the taxpayer?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to allay the member's fear about this secretive plot that we have. It's so secretive that as a member of the opposition when you were trying to privatize SGI, we explained at that time how we would look at moving SGI outside the borders of the province. And basically what SGI management is now doing is looking at opportunities in other provinces whereby SGI might take their services and thereby create employment at the head office in Regina.

Now you also asked about this secret company that we set up. It is basically the company that you set up to privatize the corporation. The only difference is we would maintain this as a government owned company.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — That was a very good answer, Mr. Minister, except it didn't answer the question, and that was: how much will it cost the taxpayers.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd have to ask the president, Mr. Bill Heidt, but it would probably be a couple of weeks of his time so far.

Mr. D'Autremont: — To the same minister. Because either of your lack of planning or your lack of openness you refuse to answer the question. Mr. Minister, clearly you are going to sell insurance in other provinces. This requires not only significant start-up costs, but also capital base from which insurance contracts would be written.

Have you done your homework, Mr. Minister? Have you calculated how much this is going to cost taxpayers, and have you determined where the money will be coming from? Will it be coming from SGI or the auto fund, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that what we are talking about is the potential of the

company expanding, at this point at least, into Alberta and Manitoba. It would be done not in the grandiose scale that the previous government talked about, of going into Montreal and Toronto and Vancouver. We would very simply extend the borders of Saskatchewan to the small, rural communities in Alberta and Manitoba. To this point we haven't got confirmation from the governments in Manitoba and Alberta, but it might be possible that if the members co-operate and talk to their colleagues in those provinces, it might speed the process up.

As to whether or not or how the formula for funding will be structured, obviously this will be intended to make money, that if we don't plan on making money, we won't do business in the other provinces. So far from costing the taxpayers money, it will in fact make money and create employment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Minister, I suggest that it will cost a great deal. It will cost the taxpayers money that could have been done with private investment. You have set up a Crown corporation that is owned by SGI, the auto fund, and CMB (Crown Management Board of Saskatchewan), so we know where the money's going to come from, Mr. Minister.

A new question for the same minister. Mr. Minister, I have a copy of the statement of operations and rate stabilization reserve for the month ending October 31, 1991. The net increase in the rate stabilization fund was \$15.142 million. Yet at the end of December 31, 1991, the rate stabilization fund had suffered a loss of \$6.78 million. This is a decrease of almost \$22 million. Mr. Minister, can you tell this Assembly where this money has gone?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as you will know and members of the Assembly will know, that both SGI CANADA and the auto insurance AAIA (Automobile Accident Insurance Act) portion of SGI have been a very, very stable operation of Saskatchewan for many, many years. What I want to tell the member clearly is we have no intention of privatizing SGI, if that's the point you're trying to make here, that we should be doing that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to explain that the reason we're not going to privatize SGI is because we've watched you people for 10 years privatize corporations in this province, do away with assets and drive the deficit to close to \$15 billion as a result of privatization and mismanagement.

We intend to, if we are allowed to move into Alberta and into Manitoba — and I ask for your co-operation in helping us do that — to expand the company to spread the risk and make profits for the people of the province and at the same time create employment for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Minister

said, if we are allowed, because it's doubtful whether or not you will be allowed. It would seem that the province of Alberta has no interest in this new corporation.

Question for the minister: Mr. Minister, is this what the SGI auto fund is doing with the changes to the provision for unpaid claims which have gone from \$221,000 in December of 1991 to \$25.280 million at the end of December 1991. Have you added additional funds, over and above the actual expected cost of claims, such that you could hide this money and not report it in the current fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well it may come as a surprise to the member that unpaid claims go up during winter months when there are more accidents, and this is traditional. And the member for Thunder Creek should have been able to tell you that if you had checked with him.

But I want to say to you very clearly that this expansion, if it were to go ahead . . . and I say if because we have to get approval from the superintendent of insurance in the various provinces, and after that obviously a political decision will likely be made in the cabinet or the caucuses of the two provinces.

And I ask the members opposite, if you know any of the people in government in Alberta or Manitoba that you approach them and ask that in terms of open trade and removing the barriers to trade between provinces, that you allow this Crown corporation, as we have allowed Crown corporations like Suncor, which is an oil company owned by the Government of Ontario, or Pacific Western, the airplane company owned by, previously owned by, the Loughheed government in Alberta — flew into Saskatchewan, made money here. Open up the borders and let us do some free and fair trading with our provinces and our neighbours.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the difference between \$221,000 and 25 million is a very significant amount of money to have disappear or have shifted around into areas where it wasn't before.

Mr. Minister, this is creative bookkeeping. This creative bookkeeping has given the impression that you're stabilization fund is not as wealthy as it actually is, giving you an excuse to raise SGI rates.

Mr. Minister, how is it that . . . how do you plan to fund your new Crown corporation? Is this how you plan to expand it, using money from the stabilization fund from SGI . . . for SGI CANADA into other provinces, using hidden money bolstered by additional taxpayers' money from rate increases?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to explain to the member how this will work. I explained that it will be basically in the rural areas of Manitoba and Alberta, and what we will be doing is taking the package policies that we have and they will be sold by the agents and brokers in those provinces.

And in terms of how much it will cost, it won't cost anything because we plan to make money at this project if

it goes ahead.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to have great difficulty in answering the question. He's very good at dodging and giving political answers. I wish the minister would use his leadership abilities to tell the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan what happened to the \$22 million. Will he please answer the question?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well first of all I want to explain again that the total cost of the project to date is a couple of weeks work by the president and some of the staff in SGI. So whatever you're talking about, whatever numbers you're talking about, is the exact arithmetic that got us to \$15 billion in the hole. What it's cost us is a couple of weeks time of some employees in the Crown corporation SGI. That's it. That's the total cost.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the increase in the unclaimed portion of SGI auto fund, will that money be rolled back into the rate stabilization fund in the future or will it be used to pay dividends to CMB next year or will it be used to actually fund the expansion into other provinces? Which is it, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well as the member knows, that the rate stabilization fund and AAIA, it isn't transferable, and you know that full well. So to try to make up some sort of a story about this money has been spent in terms of expanding outside of the province is a bunch of nonsense.

The simple fact is, is that no money has been spent in expanding SGI outside of the province because we're still looking at getting approval from your counterparts in Alberta and Manitoba. So how could we have spent money expanding into those provinces?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Highways Budget Reductions

Mr. Goohsen: — Seventeen days of bell-ringing. Talk about a flip-flop — \$22 million — poof. Mr. Speaker, that question for the Minister of Highways, the Minister of Highways who has already destroyed this GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program is now set . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the minister will want to hear the question. By now, seeing that a thousand kilometres will be turned from pavement to gravel, the minister is not only causing road building companies to go bankrupt and putting hundreds of people out of work, but he is telling the rest of the country that tourism is not a priority for the province so desperately in need of diversification. Travel agents are already reporting very negative response from eastern Canada.

My question, Mr. Speaker: will the minister tell this

House exactly who he consulted with in this disastrous decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — In arriving at all of this year's budgetary decisions, we had to deal with a deficit that the member opposite ought to know about. We were trying to get from a \$1.3 billion projected deficit to the \$517 million deficit we are projecting for this coming year. And we will continue to work at streamlining government in order to achieve that. And we have to look in every area in which we can in order to achieve those efficiencies, and we've done that in my Department of Highways as well as in other areas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — I wonder if the people of Saskatchewan are going to take the dancing deficit as an excuse for this government becoming the true pot-hole government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the road builders' association says this decision is a disaster for their industry and for the excellent highway network in this province. They predict that this is only the beginning and that likely thousands of kilometres will be turned back to gravel in the coming years.

Now with the Highways' budget reported in the *Leader-Post* as less than in the 1950s and when you take inflation into account, my question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister. Mr. Minister, did you consult with the road builders' association, the Yellowhead Route association, the Red Coat Trail Association, the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), or the tourist industry, or did you do as your government seems to be doing on all fronts and make your decision behind closed doors in a cabinet room?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The issue the member opposite raises has a lot more to do with budgetary considerations overall and the extent to which Saskatchewan can afford to invest in this piece of its infrastructure than it has to do about the initial question he asked. So I find it difficult to believe this is a follow-up question.

But let me talk about the state of the highway system in Saskatchewan. We have a very large network of highways that is important to our economic structure. We have in this budget focused our expenditures in such a way as to maintain the highest volume traffic roads in the greatest . . . in good condition so that the economic activities of the province can continue.

On the question of low volume roads, the member opposite needs to know that the guideline for putting roads into blacktop is 300 vehicles per day. And the guideline for reducing the surface from blacktop to gravel is 180 per day. It's necessary to make these tough decisions in spite of the fact that we all would prefer to travel on blacktop if there was enough money left after the disaster you left us with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we've had a rash of traffic accidents in the last while with a lot of our roads still paved. I wonder if your conscience will rest easy when you see the results of turning a lot of those paved highways back to gravel.

Mr. Minister, I did not hear an answer to the question that I posed to you and so I'm presuming that you did not in fact consult with anybody before you made this decision or you would have been happy to tell us who you did.

My question. This minister knows he had choices in how to achieve his budget targets. He is now telling this legislature that he failed to consult with major affected interest groups before the announcement of this very regressive measure. Is that true, Mr. Minister? Did you fail to negotiate with anyone?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I could get the member opposite a list of the hours that were spent in discussions with various pieces of the transportation industry since I've become the minister, in which all of these discussions were important in laying out what was possible within the province and what can be achieved under the circumstances we find ourselves in.

The member opposite mentions conscience. I do not know how he could even think about conscience and ask us about that after the unconscionable raping of the Saskatchewan economy that the members opposite have done. I am disturbed by the actions of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy that the minister has offered to give us lists of the hours that he has spent, because our indications are from many of these associations that they've had no consultation whatever. Would you table in this Assembly the list of those hours that you spent and who you spent them with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, we will continue to discuss with our road builders, our contractors, the agencies concerned, the communities that have an input into the highway system in Saskatchewan, the ones that continue to write and establish meetings with us. And we will spend the required time doing the discussions that are necessary to continue to prioritize our highways expenditure within the limits that we have here in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — It's unfortunate in all that preamble all we got was your assurance, which doesn't seem to hold much weight in this province any more, Mr. Speaker.

Another question to the same minister. The government

members opposite have cried and hollered for increased spending on highways for years. But now in office they reduce the budget to its lowest level since the 1950s, fully a 28 per cent cut in the maintenance budget.

My question: will the minister who has gutted GRIP give this House his guarantee that the road builders association prediction that thousands more kilometres will be converted to gravel will not happen. And will he tell us how the choices will be made as to which roads will be turned back to gravel this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the guidelines for reversion, I believe I outlined them for you in rough a few minutes ago.

The fact is that the road builders are victims of the kind of economic mess you've left this province in. Engineers are victims of the kind of economic mess you've left this province in. Farmers are victims of the kind of economic mess you've left this province in. And you sit there and self-righteously talk about this kind of thing. Give me a break.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry, Mr. Minister, but we are not going to give you a break. You get paid too much money in this province to be given a break. You are there to do a job.

Mr. Speaker, another question for the same minister. This government's budget has already brought on many, many hardships to rural Saskatchewan including major cuts to agricultural programs, the elimination of the Pension Plan, gas tax increases, rural hospital cuts, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. Rural municipalities have suffered cuts in revenue-sharing grants and road maintenance transfers. Now, Mr. Minister, you appear ready to transfer an even greater burden to the rural municipalities.

My question is: will you guarantee to this House and the RMs that this regressive move to convert paved highways to gravel roads will not result in an eventual unilateral move by the province to transfer responsibility for these roads, for future roads, to RMs, especially since they are cutting their operating grants at the same time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the developments in this province will happen because communities get together and discuss with provincial governments the directions they want to take. There are innovative and practical politicians all across Saskatchewan — unfortunately there are very few sitting across on the other side of the House — who know about tough measures, who know about managing budgets, and who will co-operate and continue to co-operate with government in achieving their ends for their communities and will work with the provincial government in helping us to achieve our objectives for the province. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — I had thought I'd let you off at that point but the minister alludes to the fact there would be nobody over here that could handle a budget. My question is to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, have you consulted with rural municipalities with regards to a technique and a principle to follow in balancing budgets?

Our municipality, for example, has had 11 consecutive years with no mill rate increases. I'm proud to have been a member of that council in all those years. Have you consulted with any municipalities or municipal people to teach you how, in fact, to balance a budget?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I do not know, Mr. Speaker, whether this question deserves a response. This I think is a member from the same government that for 10 years put us in debt \$15 billion and then asked the public of Saskatchewan whether they liked deficit budgets or not. I am amused.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Resignation of CEO of Gaming Commission

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission. Will the minister confirm that the executive officer of the Gaming Commission resigned on Friday last week?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I can confirm that.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, it's interesting that since you're responsible for the Gaming Commission that you wouldn't know that, because he did resign as a matter of fact . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, I didn't hear that, I'm sorry.

Okay, will the minister outline why the resignation took place?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No I won't, Mr. Speaker. These are sensitive matters and they are not I think appropriate matters to be discussed in front of public television.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, again to the minister for the Gaming Commission who will know that his party's long-standing opposition to electronic gaming is in direct contradiction to their recent announcement that gaming will be now permitted in the province. Will the minister not admit that the real reason for the resignation of the chief executive officer of the Gaming Commission was a fundamental difference between him and the government and the philosophy behind who controlled the Gaming Commission and how it was administered?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — There is not a word of accuracy to the comment made by the member from Morse.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — With the recent shift in responsibility for the Gaming Commission from the Department of Justice to the Department of Finance, we now have a perfect example of putting the fox in the chicken coop.

How can the government expect the same department whose job it is to generate and redistribute funds to be the policeman who administers the entire gambling sector? Or do you believe there is no need to properly scrutinize those people who own the instruments of gambling?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — This is . . . Mr. Speaker will not permit this debate to continue, but suffice it to say that members opposite when they were in government had no reason to be particularly proud of the way they handled gambling in this province. There was a good deal of the gambling which went on, both in bingo halls and otherwise, which did not comply with the Criminal Code.

We are determined to remedy that. Those matters however had nothing to do with the departure of the CEO (chief executive officer).

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, I want you to answer the question that I asked, and is that you are responsible for the finance and now also for the control of the gambling measures, and I think it was best left in the Department of Justice. Do you believe there is no need for the Department of Justice to keep a scrutiny of the gambling sector in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — No, there is certainly every need for the Department of Justice to scrutinize it, something that was woefully lacking when the former member sat on the treasury benches. That's something that is going to happen now. I repeat again, however, that had nothing to do with the departure of the chief executive officer.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Child Care Week

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to my recent proclamation of Child Care Week for the period May 24 to 30. The Saskatchewan Childcare Association asked me to proclaim this week, and I was pleased to do so. The child care community and the Saskatchewan Childcare Association, in particular, have worked hard in preparation for this week. I encourage people to participate in the many activities that have been planned. I will personally have the pleasure of attending some of these activities.

I want to recognize the importance of child care services to working parents, and the contribution of the many dedicated people who work in the child care field. The dedication of child care workers is shown by the hard work and caring they bring to their jobs despite the low pay for their work.

Child care is a vital part of any strategy to deal with poverty. It is a necessary service to help parents maintain employment or attend school to learn new skills. Developing an adequate child care system requires a national commitment. I will be doing everything that I can to help put child care onto the national agenda.

There are also things that we can do here in Saskatchewan even in these difficult economic times. In

the budget presented by the Minister of Finance on May 7, an additional \$500,000 was directed towards improving our child care system. This money is being spent carefully and wisely to provide: first, an increase in the operating grants to licensed child care centres; second, the development and expansion of innovative services, such as high school programs for teen parents and work-place child care services; third, improving the quality of training for child care workers, and providing assistance to workers who want to upgrade their skills.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance of child care services to working parents. I ask that all members take the opportunity to acknowledge Child Care Week and give recognition to those who provide child care services in their communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to join with the minister in her official recognition of the importance of child care to our province and in particular those who provide the services to children in care.

I must raise my concerns, however, that it appears as though the primary commitment to improving child care is to get the federal government to do a better job. And I think the minister knows that the natural follow-up question to this becomes one of what happens to the children of Saskatchewan in the interim if the federal government in fact delays or does nothing.

Both I . . . I speak for myself and the Liberal Party that I believe that the well-being of children should be the priority of every government. In fact if it were the priority of this government and every subsequent government, the way that we would make decisions and choices in this country and in this province would be very, very different.

I do hope that there will be a choice made here to make decision-making based on the well-being of the children of our province. If that indeed becomes the case, the way in which we select programs, the way in which we choose to spend monies, will be very, very different. In fact partisan politics will go aside and we will be seeing long-term commitment to things that really matter.

(1415)

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I'd like to thank Madam Minister for sending me your ministerial statement before question period. I appreciate that.

The Saskatchewan Childcare Association asked you to proclaim this week as Child Care Week, and I thank you for that. I'm sure they appreciated it.

I'd like to, Mr. Speaker, congratulate the Saskatchewan Childcare Association for their preparation and hard work to make that a successful week, as I understand they worked hard to make it a very successful week, to let the people in the province of Saskatchewan know their situations.

And the minister in her remarks said the dedication of

child care workers is shown by the hard work and caring they bring to the job despite the low pay for this work. Now that should mean something to the minister, that they're saying and you're admitting that they're low paid, and perhaps the government should be doing something about that. Then you jump right in, Madam Minister, to put the blame on someone else — as this government always does, pass it on to someone else — that it's the federal government.

Now I know you have to have funding, but perhaps you have to, as our Leader of the Liberal Party said and I agree with her . . . what are you going to do in the meantime? Because it's your government, Madam Minister, that has laid off so many people. They are responsible for many, many, as we talked about it yesterday in question period. There have been thousands of people who will be going onto welfare for the lack of jobs, and there's going to be over the economy in this province and your tax grabs, there will be many hundreds and hundreds of people, that the spouses will have to go out and work and are going to put more of a strain on the child care program.

And I'm saying I feel sorry for you, Madam Minister, because the Minister of Finance will control the finances and you'll have a hard time getting the multimillions more that you need to fund your Social Services department, and which that is a very, very important department for people that are on welfare that can't work and for the children that need care while their parents have to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 22 — An Act to amend The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of the Bill to amend The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Act.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to move second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole on the said Bill be waived at this time.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, second reading and Committee of the Whole waived.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move the Bill be read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 23 — An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second

time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 24 — An Act to amend The Queen's Printer Act

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Queen's Printer Act.

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

Bill No. 25 — An Act to amend The Real Estate Brokers Act, 1987

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Real Estate Brokers Act, 1987.

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

Bill No. 26 — An Act to amend The Auctioneers Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Auctioneers Act.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to move second reading and consideration in Committee of the Whole be waived at this time.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, second reading and Committee of the Whole waived.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move that the Bill be read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

PRIVILEGE

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise today on a very serious matter of privilege, and I will send the Government House Leader a copy of my remarks for his perusal. If I could get one of the pages . . .

Mr. Speaker, I intend to clearly contain my remarks . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before the member proceeds, I have to inform the Assembly that under the new rules, the notice of two hours notice was to have been before 11:30. However, I did receive notice at 11:58, which would have met with the old rules.

I am prepared, however, from the serious matter that is before us to waive the two hours and let the member proceed. I do want to indicate to the member, however, in his statement that he is to be directly on the issue and state why it is a serious question of privilege.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I contend that the Associate Minister of Finance has committed a contempt of parliament last evening in the Committee of Finance, and I further contend that the abilities of members to execute their duties have been grievously breached by events in our Legislative Building and the subsequent conduct of

the minister.

The background to this matter is one that Mr. Speaker will understand. After an election there is a tremendous upheaval as members and offices on one side of the building must pack up and physically move everything to offices on the other side of the building.

Mr. Speaker, after the recent election, the member from Arm River was hustled out of his office. In preparing for the move, that member packed up all — and I must emphasize the word “all” — of his files. Because there was inadequate space available in the new location to which he was moving, he sought and was granted storage space in the cages that are normally reserved for cabinet ministers, as in the building of MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) there was no storage space for MLAs. And it should be remembered that this is not a government building, not a cabinet building, but the Legislative Building, the MLA building.

The fact that there is only storage space for cabinet ministers created a serious problem of privilege for us today because, Mr. Speaker, someone removed files from the storage of the member for Arm River. The minister has yet to name the people who took these files and provided them to him, but he made it clear in offhand and certain remarks that this had in fact happened.

This is and of itself is a serious *prima facie* case of privilege, Mr. Speaker. It gives *carte blanche* to the removal and misuse of constituent records. It says that these premises are not secure and that MLAs cannot use these premises with confidence. I can think of no other more serious interference with the member's ability to do his duties.

Further, Mr. Speaker, even if it is not a matter of theft, it is a fact of law, it is a matter of the utmost irresponsibility. The minister said to the member from Arm River that he, the minister, had many more of these members' files. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the minister is attempting to intimidate the member using the member's confidential constituent files. The remarks were clearly designed to silence the member from Arm River in estimates examination.

By his own actions and words the minister clearly confirmed that his purpose was precisely to interfere with the ability of the member for Arm River to do his duty which consists in part to asking questions in the Committee of Finance.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, whether or not the minister knew that these files were obtained illegitimately, the mere fact that he would use them even in the actual belief that they were accidentally left behind in the transition, that mere fact itself is a contempt of this House.

Our caucus found several things left behind by NDP (New Democratic Party) members; and, Mr. Speaker, our caucus returned them to the NDP caucus. That is consistent with the right of all members to be treated with respect and to have their records and by extension, their constituents, treated with respect.

The minister deemed the confidential constituent files of

a member of this Assembly to be tools for blackmailing the member for Arm River. This is contemptible and is a contempt of parliament.

There is a disturbing pattern occurring in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and it needs to be addressed quickly. It appears that ministers have provided information from government files to their caucus colleagues relating to who has enrolled in programs and who has not.

There appears to have been a case where NDP caucus members were provided information about the SaskPower account of members of an MLA's family. Now either this information is being provided by cabinet ministers contrary to the law or it is coming from these additional confidential files that the Associate Minister of Finance says he has in his possession.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how to proceed, but there is certainly a serious matter of privilege for this Assembly to confront.

The Speaker: — Before the Government House Leader proceeds, I want to indicate to the members that I will probably take two speakers from each side, and then depending on the case that is made or not made, I will probably take notice of the serious allegations that have been made and make my decision at that time.

(1430)

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that in consulting with the member from Regina Churchill Downs, he indicates very clearly that the documents the member is concerned about were left in an office that was, after the election, occupied by one of our members. And the member forgot them when he left as a government member, and they were in the office when our member moved in.

Now one can wonder why the member from Arm River left the documents in that office. But I'm not sure that there's a question of privilege when the member from Arm River forgets some documents in an office and then wonders where they are, and then when they're found by someone else, you say, well they took my documents. That simply isn't an accurate reflection of what took place here. And I know from time to time I leave documents laying around, but I would be hard pressed to explain if someone picked them up, that they had taken my documents.

And clearly what has happened here, Mr. Speaker, is that in the transition . . . and I'm not here blaming the member from Arm River because I'm sure this happens many times in government. I know it happened after the 1982 election where files were left and then the next government found those files and read them. It's difficult if you find files laying around not to open them up and look at them.

But I want to say clearly that any indication that these files were taken is not an accurate reflection of the fact that the member from Arm River probably left them in the office when he vacated it, and a member of our government found them when he took over that same office.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this matter of privilege. The member from Arm River had 14 boxes of files placed into storage after the election campaign. Upon checking those file boxes, Mr. Speaker, the particular files in question, of the family that was brought up last night by the member for Churchill Downs, were all there with the exception of the document that the member from Churchill Downs raised in this legislature last night. All that was left in that particular file was a memo sheet from a secretary. The actual letter was missing.

Mr. Speaker, these files are from 1987. Upon checking the member from Arm River's material, all 14 boxes that were in storage in this building, everything is in order. That member has not had access on a regular basis to files that are four years old and would have no reason, Mr. Speaker, to have them laying around, particularly only one letter out of a number of files dealing with that particular area and family.

Mr. Speaker, those boxes were placed in storage in this building with the trust of this building along with them. They were then moved *en masse* to the member's office. And if Mr. Speaker or any of his staff wish to go and look at these particular boxes and files, they are there, they were opened in the presence of witnesses to check into the authenticity of what was in them and what was not.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that someone had access to the member's files while they were in storage in this building. I am not accusing the minister.

How the minister came to those files is his business. But clearly in using those files in this Assembly . . . There are a number of sections in Beauchesne's. I specifically quote 16, 55, and 67 that impinge on a member's rights. The member was using files obtained, as our member said, perhaps in a method that isn't concurrent with normal practice of members in this legislature, to intimidate the member from Arm River during estimates.

The member said in offhand conversation last night that he had more of these files. If the minister has those files, Mr. Speaker, and they are under, if they are under a cloud of suspicion, which I suggest they are, Mr. Speaker, then this member's rights as a member have been infringed upon and it's incumbent upon that minister to divulge who provided those files to him and to this legislature.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I find it scandalous that members opposite would accuse someone of theft just because they lost a file. If I accused someone of theft every time I lost something, the jails would be full and the streets would be empty.

This is utter and complete nonsense. It is possible for people to forget files. The Government House Leader has explained where the file came from. The member from Arm River appears to have forgotten it and left it in his office after the transition in government. He has not a scintilla of proof to the contrary, but that doesn't stop members opposite from making wild allegations about theft.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest before this matter goes any further, you ask the members if they have any evidence. I suggest they don't. I say to Mr. Speaker and I say to this Assembly, there was absolutely nothing improper about the way the file was obtained. It has been correctly explained by the Government House Leader.

If the member from Arm River was foolish enough to leave behind files which he now does not want revealed, that now finds embarrassing, he is his own victim and no one else's.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, just a short word . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I said that at the time I would make my decision depending on what evidence there is. I do think that the member who is directly involved, the member who is directly involved should have an opportunity to at least state his case. If somebody else wants to speak on behalf of the government after he speaks, fine. I will take the member from Arm River and if somebody from government wishes to speak I will take one more member and that will be it.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few words of clarification. My colleagues have clarified this quite well, but I've been condemned for leaving a file behind. And I want to make this very clear that our House Leader at this time was chosen, was the member for Rosthern. He wasn't able to be here the week of the move.

My wife Helen and myself were the ones that stayed here for the night of the move. And I spent almost a week here, and I was here till 2 or 3 o'clock that morning. When the NDP members, Mr. Speaker, were moving into the offices where we were at, at 2 o'clock that night my wife and I and another lady went and we started down in the far office and went through it with a fine-tooth comb. And there was nothing left. And their members, Mr. Speaker, were just moving in and putting their names on the door.

And to clarify, my own files, I had five cabinets. They were all five cabinets moved empty to my office where I'm at now. And everything I had was put into boxes. We had 14 or 15 boxes that we called garbage, and we put garbage bags on and they were given to someone to shred. The other 14 boxes were files that I had when I was a minister.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that they didn't know that I kept these documents this long. I have everything that was ever mailed out for me since 1978. I have copies of every detail. They can come to my office and look.

And the 14 boxes, I didn't have time to go through. They were put in a box, and I asked someone if they could have some place to put them in storage. And some gentleman said there is a place in the government storage, but you're not in government. Then they went to someone else and came back, Mr. Speaker, and said, seeing you've been a senior member, we will store these boxes and then we'll give them to you at a later date.

And they were to come to my office while this session was on, for me to go through them one by one and send some to the archives, maybe destroy some, and take some

home. And I have never opened one of those boxes. And I swear to God that I've never opened a box till this morning because those boxes just in the last week or two were brought back to my office.

And after this incident last night, I knew exactly, because my wife told me, exactly which boxes I would find this correspondence in because she put them there. And, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely say that I opened two boxes, and I found the ends where Norrish were, and there were the files very clearly. And I had several Norrish families that I dealt with through 14 years. And this file was . . . the letter was missing. So what else can I think, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, clearly the member from Arm River has a problem, and it's a problem of a lost file or a problem of lost memory or something like that. But he brings this to the House, Mr. Speaker, and tries to palm it off on the House as a problem of a loss of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, I bring to your attention a definition of privilege of the House, as given to us in the 6th Edition of Beauchesne's on page 11. And here it talks about, in section 24, that:

The privileges of Parliament are rights which are "absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers".

Those are referred to the definition of a parliament. Then further on, Mr. Speaker, where we're dealing with the privilege of individual members, and Beauchesne on page 25, section 92, states that:

A valid claim of privilege in respect to interference with a Member must relate to the Member's parliamentary duties and not to the work the Member does in relation to that Member's constituency.

Now clearly this is a matter related between him and his constituency, Mr. Speaker. It has nothing to do with anybody else. I would suggest if he is looking or trying to find the file, he'd be better off not to bring the matter before the House as a matter of privilege but place an ad in the paper some place under lost and found.

The Speaker: — I have listened very carefully to the arguments for and against the question of privilege, and because it is a very serious matter any time someone brings a question of privilege before the Assembly, I will want to have a look at what the members have said. And I will bring my decision back just as soon as I can.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Financial Crisis Facing Farmers in Saskatchewan

Mr. Keeping: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Government of Saskatchewan plans to take steps to deal with the unprecedented crisis, financial crisis we have that are facing farmers in the province. And

we need the support of the Farm Credit Corporation. However the federal minister responsible for the Farm Credit Corporation stated on May 20 that he will order the corporation not to co-operate with the Government of Saskatchewan to solve the problem.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that's of grave concern for all of Saskatchewan. And at the close of my remarks I will present a motion urging the federal government to become part of the solution and not the problem, and ask our Prime Minister also to remove the present Minister of Agriculture and replace him with one who is prepared to co-operate.

This is an urgent matter, Mr. Speaker, because it was just announced on May 20. It is urgent also, Mr. Speaker, because even as I speak, daily farmers and farm families are losing their farm and being foreclosed on.

Mr. Speaker, in the month of April alone the Farm Land Security Board received 166 notices of intent to foreclose; 4 per cent of them were from the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan; 13 per cent of them were from credit unions; and 25 per cent were from the banks — all the banks together; and 57 per cent of the foreclosures proposed were from the Farm Credit Corporation — 57 per cent. That's a large percentage, that's way over half.

Mr. Speaker, this is an enormous problem when the federal Minister of Agriculture announces that the Farm Credit Corporation isn't going to co-operate.

I am a farmer as you know, Mr. Speaker, and I farm in the north-east part of the province and I consider it a privilege to be here today in this Assembly. And I have watched over the past 10 years in Saskatchewan as neighbours and friends of mine have been foreclosed on. They've lost their land and moved on. And the farmsteads are there to see as you drive by. I knew the families, I knew the children, I knew the families, and it hurts me when I drive by and I remember them. But it not only hurts me, it hurts all of Saskatchewan. And not only rural Saskatchewan, but it hurts all of Saskatchewan. The towns, the villages, and urban Saskatchewan hurt when people are forced to leave. The whole province suffers.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, for this reason it's unacceptable to me that the federal Minister of Agriculture would refuse to co-operate to keep families on the farm. I have worked on agriculture boards and with municipalities, with people from all political stripes, and we've had to put aside in many cases our political agenda to work with one another for the betterment of our community and the betterment of the area we lived in.

This is the kind of co-operation that's required once more, Mr. Speaker. In fact if Saskatchewan is going to survive we are going to need to co-operate and have the co-operation of everyone involved.

We're going to need to put aside our political agendas and help Saskatchewan. Our farmers are facing a crisis, very devastating, and they need all the help they can get

to stay on the land. And now we have a federal Minister of Agriculture saying he doesn't want to be part of that plan to keep farmers on the farm, a minister who lives here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this is doubly offensive to me, that someone from our province would do that.

Mr. Speaker, this is urgent and important for all the farm families and all rural Saskatchewan and indeed all of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to heat up the debate and I don't want to be confrontational, but this problem with the farm families being foreclosed on is real. They're real families and they're real people. And it's going on even today. And the members in this place on both sides of the House know what I'm talking about.

Mr. Speaker, everyone close to this problem realizes that we have to act to keep these farm families on the land as much as we can. Now this plan that we had, and some people are talking about, is a plan that would allow farmers who have lost their land to retain and farm it for some years.

It's a compromise, Mr. Speaker, between the lenders, between the farmer, and the taxpayer. And that's what we need today is compromise and co-operation for the good of the community and the good of the province. Forcing these families to leave is not good for them. It's not good for the rural areas, and it's not good for our province. We need these programs aimed at keeping farmers on the land. We are not trying to favour farmers for political advantage. We're not trying to drive a wedge between farmers and urban communities. But we're trying to do these things because it's good for the whole province.

It brings me no pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to ask a federal minister to be unloaded. But we need an Agriculture minister that will co-operate to find ways in keeping farmers on the land. We need an Agriculture minister federally that is willing to co-operate and will not order the Farm Credit Corporation to continue to foreclose and remove these families from their land. An Agriculture minister we need that will put the good of the province and the good of the farmers ahead of his own political agenda.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, I am from a farming community, and our community has had a lot of families and a lot of farmers disappear over the last 10 years. And we've suffered from three major problems as I see it: one is bad weather, number two is poor prices for our grain, and number three is bad government.

Mr. Speaker, we are very restricted in what we can do about the weather. We're even quite restricted in what we can do about the bad prices. But, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province did find the solution for the bad government we had last October 21.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, my home town published a history book, as many have, just a little two years ago . . . it's almost two years ago that they published it. And this past weekend I was reading it again, once again. It never

fails to amaze me how, as I read, the quality of our pioneers. And I'm sure it's the same in every area of the province, the quality that they had, their hard work, how they shared with one and other, how they co-operated. What an example they left us.

They never had very much. When you read the way they had to do things, you realize they were very restricted, as we are somewhat today, in the options they had. They never had very much, but each one worked and shared what they did have for the betterment of the community. And it was better because of their co-operation, and our province is better because of their co-operation.

Mr. Speaker, they left an example for us. And that's what we need once more is co-operation. What we don't need is what we've been receiving from the federal Minister of Agriculture. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move the following motion:

That this Assembly requests the Government of Canada to actively co-operate with the Government of Saskatchewan in finding methods to deal with the growing problem of farm debt; and further, that this Assembly requests, in the strongest possible terms, that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney replace Mr. McKnight in the portfolio as Minister of Agriculture, replace him with a minister who is prepared to work for solutions to the problems we are facing in our agricultural community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk of a very serious matter. The matter before us is the problem that we have. We seem to have a Tory problem in this country. In Saskatchewan we managed to rid part of our problem, but we still have the plague in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has an obligation to provide good government for the entire country. We have federal members representing us all through the West, one of whom is Mr. McKnight from the province of Saskatchewan.

I would think it would be up to that member, the Minister of Agriculture, to provide this province with some credible policy in order that he might work with the people of Saskatchewan to attain a goal of relieving some of the hardship on farm families, to work with the province of Saskatchewan, to achieve alleviation of farm stress, and to provide security of tenure.

Mr. Speaker, I can recall when the last government was in power, them stating time after time after time that you had to have a Tory government in Ottawa and you had to have a Tory government in Saskatchewan because through co-operation we were going to get things done. I can recall hearing that line over and over again — part of their campaign. And I think that's a good line, to co-operate federally and provincially.

The Tories, though, used it for strictly political purposes and I won't get into that. We've been through that many times before. But their purpose was preservation of

government, not preservation of people and the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a federal minister who has that obligation. Now that there's a new government in Saskatchewan, he seems to have forgotten his obligation to work with people and co-operate with people in Saskatchewan. Because he's still working strictly on his political agenda. And the precedent of the . . . the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa is to the agricultural sector of this province and every other province in Canada. But he is not working, he is not holding up his responsibility.

I give you an example. The GRIP program was designed on three levels. The first line was the farmers' cash from the crop; the second line was the GRIP program and the NISA (net income stabilization account) programs; and the third line was called the third line of defence, or monies that would be made available in times of disaster when the first and second lines were not adequate.

The former government signed the deal with the federal government on that premise. We renewed the program, improved the program on that premise. This federal minister, Mr. Speaker, agreed in the beginning and made statements throughout his term that we would have a third line of defence. This federal minister, Mr. Speaker, has not delivered. He simply has forgotten his commitment to the people of western Canada and Saskatchewan particularly.

Why has he forgotten his commitment? He has forgotten his commitment because he has a political agenda — not to help the farmers of this province, provide them with security of tenure, but to try to discredit the New Democratic government.

Mr. Speaker, any elected member to an institution like the Government of Canada who goes against the mandate that he was given by his people and by the people of Canada in the position that he has as the Agriculture minister has a responsibility, has a commitment that he must deliver on. This member has not delivered on any commitments relating to security of tenure.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the third line of defence was one issue. Now Farm Credit Corporation is the second issue. Farm Credit Corporation is a major institution, a major lender in Canada. It holds almost two-thirds of the farm mortgages. About 800,000 acres in Saskatchewan, I believe, is a close number that Farm Credit Corporation holds.

Mr. Speaker, our government is now attempting to do and will be doing what the former government in Saskatchewan refused to do, what the Government of Canada has refused to do all the while they had years and years of opportunity to deliver, a farm tenure security program.

Two issues when you walk around rural Saskatchewan. The biggest issue is security of tenure. They have to have security of tenure in order to continue the operation. Not just a big issue for the farmer but, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite, a big issue for the communities, the

business people, the teachers, the doctors, and every labour person in our province. Because that creates some stability in rural Saskatchewan. And what does the federal Agriculture minister say?

When we announced by way of a committee — with extensive consultation I might add — that we were going to bring forward some security of tenure by a six-year leaseback . . . I want to quote from a release on-line, on the wire from Ottawa: federal Agriculture minister Bill McKnight says he would order the Farm Credit Corporation not to obey any provincial legislation that attempts to force it to lease back land to bankrupt farmers.

Isn't that wonderful. The Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, I might add the federal Minister of Agriculture who has not even waited to see the Bill. He has no idea what the legislation is going to entail. And yet he is up on his high horse, on his high political horse making statements saying that he is going to order Farm Credit Corporation not to help bankrupt farmers. Isn't that a wonderful minister.

A minister in charge of a corporation that holds 800,000 acres of land in Saskatchewan ordering his corporation to not help those bankrupt farmers.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I see 10 chairs over there, the opposition, who by their silence has quietly been applauding the actions of that federal minister.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members today, turn a page on your blatant political, manipulative ways that you've learned in the past. Turn the page and come clean with co-operation. And they may laugh, but I'm being very serious, Mr. Speaker.

Why haven't you stood up in your place? And you've had the opportunity today. The rules of this Assembly are, we get a speaker for 15 minutes, the opposition gets a speaker. Do you think they would stand up in their place and say Mr. McKnight was wrong, that we're going to support the Saskatchewan government in providing security of tenure? They sit there silent, obviously supporting him.

Mr. Speaker, again, is that the role of this opposition? To support a wrong-headed direction by the federal Agriculture Tories minister, instead of supporting bankrupt, cash strapped Saskatchewan farmers. Again, they have an obligation to the people who elected them to do what's right. Providing security of tenure is right, so why would they not stand up today and join with us and show the farmers of Saskatchewan that they want to sincerely help them have security of tenure — that they want to help them have security of tenure. But they haven't done that.

So, Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can conclude is that Tory blood is thicker than water — putting politics, because McKnight's a Tory, ahead of Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I say . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, one of the elements of the motion that we have before us today speaks about co-operation. And I believe that not one person in this Assembly would dispute that co-operation is going to be needed to deal with the farm debt crisis in the province of Saskatchewan.

I and my colleagues agree that co-operation is necessary. However I find it ironic that the province and the provincial government requested the federal government to co-operate, when it was not the federal government who had to take the government to court, it was the farmers who had to take the government to court in the changes to GRIP. It was the provincial government who refused to co-operate with farmers on GRIP '92.

And I want to point out to the Minister of Agriculture too here in the province of Saskatchewan that SARM, for example, sent him a letter as early as February 13, or was it February 10, outlining the changes that were necessary to GRIP, and they did not reflect the changes that the Minister of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan suggested to them.

I'm not here to defend the federal government. I am here because my constituents will . . . I am here because my constituents want me to be here and talking about agriculture. And I will tell you what my constituents say about this Minister of Agriculture in relation to the things he's doing. There isn't one of them that I have been able to find that would agree with his GRIP changes. I can't find one of them. And if he can, then I'm sure that I would be interested in discussing that with that individual. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the National Farmers' Union don't even agree with him, and that is the truth of the matter.

As it relates to the motion of finding methods to deal with farm debt, I want to point out to the Minister of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan that he is not co-operating with the federal government. The federal government has offered the \$200 million in GRIP '91 that he is leaving on the table. He is leaving it there for a specific reason and that deals with his own personal agenda as it relates to GRIP '92. And I think that that's wrong.

I also want to point out that the Minister of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan has ripped and torn every facet of agriculture apart in this province, and what has he delivered? Everything is cut back. The livestock industry of which he was a part has been shattered, literally shattered by the feed grain assistance program that he neglected to put in his budget, the livestock cash advance and all of the things related to that.

I want to point out to this Assembly that it's not the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa who has got a problem. I think the Minister of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan has got a problem.

I also want to point out that the Minister of Agriculture has got a very serious problem when it comes to the court action in relation to GRIP. If he calculates the volume of grain that was seeded last year at 30 million acres and he

calculates the volume of loss to the farmers and the producers of the province of Saskatchewan, if it averages \$30 a cultivated acre, that in itself is a \$900 million cost to this treasury that he probably hasn't even figured in.

And, Mr. Speaker, he isn't the one that's out of step. The Minister of Agriculture from Ottawa isn't out of step; it's this Minister of Agriculture from the province of Saskatchewan that's way out of step. He's out of step, for example, with Mr. Brian Perkins from the livestock feeders association who wrote a letter and said to him, would you check to see where the livestock industry is going to be in the next few years with your changes to the different programs that you have announced in the cattle and the hog business.

Mr. Speaker, that's where the person is who is out of step with the agriculture community, not Mr. McKnight. Mr. McKnight probably knows just as well as the Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan that the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan would have preferred the '91 GRIP. As a matter of fact, my constituents tell me that they would . . . even though they've opted out, they still would want to be a part of '91 GRIP. What does that tell you, Mr. Speaker?

I saw a notice today that we're going to have about 40,000 people involved in '92 GRIP because they were forced to. What does that mean with what the other 8,000 do? The other 8,000 decided to opt out. But, Mr. Speaker, they opted out because it was the wrong thing to do.

As matter of fact, on Saturday I visited with a number of farmers from my constituency who had opted out — a father and two sons — and they would be prepared to go back into '91 GRIP if it was made available. Now who's not co-operating?

Mr. Speaker, I find that not only disgusting, but also a serious, serious problem. I'm going to at the conclusion of my remarks make an amendment to this motion that says this:

That this Assembly request the Government of Saskatchewan to actively co-operate with the Government of Canada in finding methods to deal with the growing problem of farm debt.

That's the point that has to be made in this discussion — the co-operation and the problem. The problem has two things that need to be dealt with: one is debt and one is income. And, Mr. Speaker, these people have lowered the income levels of farmers by a significant amount. They did it in program cut-backs and in tax increases.

Mr. Speaker, I know of at least two people who have contacted us already that they're not going to start their pivots because of additional electrical costs, and that is a serious problem, Mr. Speaker. And there's going to be others who are in that same position.

You got increased costs in power, you got increased costs in telephones, you got increased costs in the majority of the utilities, and what does that do to the producers in the province of Saskatchewan? It seriously infringes on their income. Their income is infringed on and that reflects

directly onto the payment of the volume of debt.

So what we have to do here today, Mr. Speaker, I believe, is not criticize the federal government. You talk in your resolution about co-operation with the province of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada. Well you don't do that by telling the Prime Minister that he's got to get rid of his Minister of Agriculture.

Where do you find that you're walking and co-operating with him? In our discussions with him there are 10 provinces in this country who can walk if they want to, step in step with the Minister of Agriculture. From our discussions there's one that's out of step. It isn't the Agriculture minister from British Columbia; it isn't the Minister of Agriculture from Ontario. It just happens to be the Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan who's out of step. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the problem that we have in this province.

He's out of step in a whole lot of ways. He's out of step in what the capacity of the individuals are to deal with the processing industry. He's out of step with primary production in the hogs. He's out of step with the livestock industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, he's a grain farmer and perhaps formerly a hog producer, and he should be able to understand a little bit about what's going on. And I find it very, very difficult to believe that he wouldn't change his mind if he couldn't persuade his extensive non-agriculture colleagues that that was a part of what was promoting Saskatchewan and making it viable.

Mr. Speaker, there are a whole host of things that I could talk about where this minister is out of step, the Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan. That's where the problem is. And I want to say to this Assembly that I'm going to move an amendment, and it goes like this:

That this Assembly requests the Government of Saskatchewan to actively co-operate with the Government of Canada in finding methods to deal with the growing problem of farm debt; and further, that this Assembly requests in the strongest possible terms that the Premier replace the member from Rosetown-Elrose in the portfolio as Minister of Agriculture with a minister who is prepared to work for solutions to the problem facing our agriculture community.

And, Mr. Speaker, I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak on this amendment. Farm debt is an issue that must be dealt with. The only way to deal with it is to come up with solutions and programming to compensate the producers for circumstances out of their control.

You cannot deal with farm debt if you do not understand the problem. Farmers in Saskatchewan know what the problem is. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, that's why they hung the problem in effigy the day this House

commenced sitting.

Problems in agriculture are nothing new. We on this side of the House worked long and hard developing programs to assist producers in this province.

Our record stands on its own. The federal money and the programming that farmers welcomed did not come easy. It was accomplished through intensive consultation and co-operation. Farmers were consulted and co-operated. The federal government was consulted and co-operated. The provincial government went to farm groups across this province. And what was accomplished, Mr. Speaker? Over \$13 billion of money for agriculture from the federal government — \$800 million, Mr. Speaker, last fall, the final payment for which we received only a few weeks ago.

Why is it that the NDP government today cannot make any progress? I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker. It is because they do not consult, nor do they co-operate with anyone. Co-operation is a word the NDP use quite loosely.

The government talked of a six-year leaseback program. They condemned the federal government for being reluctant to support this NDP government's initiatives. I find it difficult to believe that anyone supports the action of this government.

Mr. Speaker, even the credit union system has severe problems with the leaseback program. This leaseback program scheme may allow a few farmers to remain on the land. However, credit unions that are phoning myself and our members are telling us that if this legislation proceeds, it will be very difficult for viable farmers to receive credit.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone should resign, it is the current provincial Minister of Agriculture. The federal government over the last few years has worked hard and caused interest rates to drop dramatically. This provincial Minister of Agriculture has not reduced interest rates, rather he has increased interest rates at ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan).

This is the same minister whose changes to GRIP are being challenged in court. This is the minister that has a gag order on crop insurance agents. It is this Minister of Agriculture who is betraying the farmers of Saskatchewan.

The farmers in Saskatchewan rallied last fall for more money, better long-run predictability, and cost of production. The NDP promised to provide cost of production, improve GRIP, and get immediate money into the hands of farmers. What was promised by the NDP is exactly the opposite to what they have delivered.

Mr. Speaker, this applies directly to this amendment. The NDP government has ignored the magnitude of hardship our producers are being forced to bear. Is this co-operation? Ignoring the problem, Mr. Speaker, does not make it go away. The NDP government had the audacity to brag in the budget speech that it is taking almost \$120 million out of the GRIP program and that this action will save the provincial government money. The

provincial minister would rather have the province save money than give our farmers security through a safety net program. Mr. Speaker, the provincial government must quit trying to divert the blame. They must take some responsibility for what is happening to our producers.

(1515)

The producers of this province have no faith in this Agriculture minister. That is why they hung him in effigy. This being the case, Mr. Speaker, he must be replaced. He must be replaced with someone who knows the issues and who will work together with the federal government, work in co-operation with others to deal with the problem of farm debt, a minister interested in solving the problems rather than pushing his personal political ideology.

Mr. Speaker, farmers want some say. They want to offer solutions. They are facing the problems. Allow them some input. Mr. Minister, don't just point the finger and say it's not my fault; it's the fed's fault. Don't just deal with issues when they go to court. That, Mr. Speaker, is absurd.

We ask the members opposite to put aside the politics. Show the people of Saskatchewan that you can go to bat for them. You are now the government. Governments work together. We ask that this NDP government co-operate with the federal government, work side by side on this massive problem, put aside the politics, pull up a chair and discuss how you can work together to assist our province's producers.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this amendment.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite, after their complete betrayal of rural Saskatchewan, can talk about co-operation in the same sentence that they point fingers elsewhere, in this case, namely the federal government and the Minister of Agriculture. It is appalling, Mr. Speaker, this kind of action.

How can this government muster up the nerve to speak about co-operation and finding answers to serious farm debt problems while they're dismantling the GRIP program, cancelling the feed grain adjustment programs, and the natural grass program out in the rural areas, even, Mr. Speaker, to the point of cancelling the Saskatchewan Pension Plan which many farm wives were members of.

Anything and everything, Mr. Speaker, that helped farmers in this province, whether it was a program or subsidy, anything is being taken away by this government. Does it make sense, Mr. Speaker, to on one hand be saying, now the bad, bad federal government has been off-loading on us and aren't they terrible, and then on the other hand, turn to Saskatchewan farmers and say, you are out of luck because we don't want to give you any more money. Obviously not.

Not to mention the NDP call for the replacement of the federal agricultural minister who has worked very hard for Saskatchewan in the past. He's worked for all farmers, Mr. Speaker, all through the country.

And it must be an extremely difficult time in a world

recession in the food industry. I guess the NDP don't think the federal government's contribution to help bring over \$13 billion to Saskatchewan farmers over the past 10 years was good enough. But that is beside the point. The last thing I expect is for the members opposite to compliment the achievements of previous administrations. Instead, I expect they are searching somewhere for a plaque so they can change the name, so they can take credit for something or other.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter what the NDP say or how much they try to bash the federal government and the former provincial government when it comes to agriculture, because the people do know better. Producers know who stood behind them through the droughts, the grasshoppers, the spring seeding loans, and on it went all through the 1980s. Mr. Speaker, the farm families also know who has pulled the rug out from under their feet. It is the NDP government in this province today.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the pot calling the kettle black. This is the government who reconstructed the GRIP program with the net effect that if there's a crop failure, \$200 million of federal government matching dollars will be lost. And they talk about losing a third line of defence. They just threw away the potential of getting \$200 million from the federal government — just to play politics.

This is the provincial government who points fingers at Ottawa while it guts rural Saskatchewan with fixed-cost increases — increases in power bills worth millions to intensive livestock operators, to people who run electric power irrigation projects and pumps, right down to the housewife who turns on the kitchen light — fixed costs on increased phone bills, increased grazing lease fees up 67 per cent in the Cypress Hills. In one area — 67 per cent increase. Can you believe it?

Increased breeding fees in the pastures, the cancellation of the bull purchase program, increase in the PST (provincial sales tax) from 7 per cent to 8 per cent on everything almost that farmers buy, along with everyone else in the province, increase in the interest rates on livestock cash advances, Mr. Speaker, and cancellation of the feed grain adjustment program, and on it goes, to the increase in the gas tax. This is going to be a phenomenal cost to the farmers of Saskatchewan, the biggest fuel consumers in this province during the summer months.

An industry under attack, Mr. Speaker — under attack by a Saskatchewan government and nobody else; down-loading on the RMs where farmers will have to make up the difference because of the cuts in revenue sharing. Mr. Speaker, the farmers of this country will have to pick up those losses through increased taxes on their land.

Now they say, join with us and deal with the growing farm debt. Who is causing the growing farm debt in Saskatchewan? There are three guilty parties, not just one or two. Where is the leadership in your actions? Never before have our provincial farmers had to deal with an agricultural minister who didn't know the first thing about agriculture. Mr. Speaker, until the member from Rosetown-Elrose . . . in fact I have heard his own

constituents say they would be . . . there would be a better response from the member's livestock than there would be from him. Now that's a terrible thing to have to say, but it almost seems to be coming true.

Mr. Speaker, this is exactly why the member from Riversdale should do what is best for Saskatchewan farmers, what is best for the province as a whole, and replace the member from Rosetown-Elrose with a competent person to act as Agriculture minister — someone that the people will have confidence in again. No matter how hard this individual tries now, it's unfortunate but his days are numbered. The people out in the country just have lost faith in him and he can never regain that.

We must have someone who will listen to farmers, with someone who understands farmers, Mr. Speaker. Only then can we hope to see some real solutions to the farm debt and the many other hardships farm families face today. But until then, Mr. Speaker, this minister and this government are just playing politics with some very serious problems — problems that will affect us all in the end. Because our economy works in a circle, Mr. Speaker, and what happens at the farm gate will continue to work its way through the entire system.

Mr. Speaker, I talked to a young diabetic farmer this past weekend. He said that he had always voted NDP in the past, his whole family had. But looking back, he said that things under the Conservatives had been pretty good. The changes in the last budget, he said — and he pointed out that he is a small farmer with a wife who works off of the farm — the changes will cost him another \$5,000 on his fixed costs this year. And he told me quite confidentially that he just doesn't know what to do because he hasn't got the money and he doesn't know where he's going to get it.

A rancher from Maple Creek called and he told me he estimates that the extra fixed costs this year as a result of the new budget in Saskatchewan will cost him between 15 and \$20,000 on fixed costs, a result of this budget from this Agriculture minister in large part, that affects his operation.

Maybe, Mr. Speaker, we are asking the wrong person to resign. It is time for the NDP to stop pointing fingers, to start acting like a government, and to start helping rural Saskatchewan.

We all know this government likes to talk a lot about co-operation. It is time to prove they mean business. So far all we have seen is the opposite. There is no co-operation with rural people in this government.

And I want to remind the minister that you can get more flies with honey than you can with vinegar. And if you keep kicking the federal minister metaphorically in the shin, how do you expect him to sit down and negotiate and to give you help?

It is probably true that we do need more federal money like acreage payments and the kind of like that we've just been receiving. But we have a provincial government here that is more intent upon political grandstanding than actually going down and sitting down and seriously

negotiating. And that is proven out by the simple fact that we have 9 provinces out of 10 who have agreements. No one said that they agree that they're all perfect, but they at least have agreements and they are working for farmers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for the members opposite to continue to pretend to care about rural Saskatchewan and rural agriculture and at the same time slowly dismantle the entire industry. This vendetta, Mr. Speaker, of the government against rural Saskatchewan has got to come to an end. And it can only truly end by removing this minister and putting a new face in his place so that there will be confidence in him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to speak on both the motion and the amendment this afternoon. I had no intention initially of addressing the motion that was put forward. But after hearing both the government and the official opposition give their views on this issue, I believe that it's imperative that I say what's on my mind.

There is absolutely no question that the people of this province in agriculture are suffering. They believe in part that they are betraying their heritage, that they in fact are betraying the future of their children. They are people who have lost pride. They are people who feel as though their way of life is disappearing before their very eyes. And these individuals have accepted responsibility in part for some of these things even though so much has been out of their control. If we talk about what is within their control, it's very, very little considering what's happening in agriculture.

As has been spoken about this afternoon, weather is not within their control. Pests and disease are not within their control. Commodity prices are not within their control. Limited cash flow with large investment is not within their control. Government policies and regulations are not within their control. And the list goes on and on. And yet it's their lives upon which all of these things have an impact.

There are two very important aspects that have to be dealt with in agriculture in order for people to be able to regain a sense of stability and security in their lives. The first indeed is farm debt, and the second, equally important, is farm income. And what we've heard in this theatre this afternoon is truly theatre, is not dealing with the primary concern of how do we deal with farm income problems and how do we deal with the farm debt issue. Instead what we've heard are words — words about co-operation, where in one breath someone speaks of co-operation and the next breath they chastise each other.

(1530)

And that is not going to help the farmers of this province and it's not going to help the farmers of this country. And I don't know when it's finally going to happen in this place, this place where decisions are to be made, where people are to come together with their ideas to arrive at conclusions, to work in a co-operative fashion to do one

thing, Mr. Speaker, and that is to govern the province of Saskatchewan well.

It does no good for the government to call for the resignation of the Minister of Agriculture in the federal government. It does no good for the official opposition to call for the resignation of the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan. Where does it do no good? It does not change the lives of farmers and farm families in this province. It does nothing about farm debt, which you people are asking about, which you say that you're most concerned about. It does nothing to address the farm income problem.

And what we truly need, Mr. Speaker, is a national agriculture summit where people who are truly concerned about this issue, whether they deal as producers, whether they deal as producers or lending institutions, those who deal with marketing and transportation, those in research and development as far as agriculture are concerned, can come together and truly work toward a solution.

This province can lead in that. We can take a leadership role, go forward, and call for this kind of summit. And we can put the partisan politics aside because the people of this legislature must begin to recognize that this is not something to simply play politics with. This is not something that is good enough to come up with one motion and then an amendment to a motion that on the one hand says co-operate and on the other hands says, but we don't like you guys on the other side, so resign.

We need to show leadership in this province — the Conservatives, the New Democrats, and the Liberal Party — that this issue is important enough to come together and show that we genuinely have a concern for the real people of this province.

When we're talking about a farm in trouble, we're not talking about a farm. We're not simply talking about a farmer. We're talking about people who live on this farm. Very few farms have one person working on the farm. They have two people who work as a partnership.

In rural Saskatchewan we have more children per rural families than they have in their urban counterparts. Generally that's more than three children per household. We're talking about five people on every farm that we're talking about in difficulty. And they are facing real problems, real problems of such things that we think are urban difficulties, such things as child hunger, people for the first time going on social assistance in rural Saskatchewan.

All of these things are our problems too that we are to be responsible in helping to find solutions. And I find it deplorable, and I also find it sanctimonious, that people take an issue such as this and bring forward a motion and an amendment that try to say that they're concerned about something like farm debt and then turn it around and make it nothing but a political issue asking for resignations. This to me is unacceptable, and it should be unacceptable to the people of this province who elected every person here to govern the province well.

Mr. Whitmore: — I wish to speak on the motion that's been put forward, and I wish to speak against the amendment.

Interesting discussion that we've had from members opposite today from both parties. Certainly we understand that there's ice water in the veins of the Conservatives sitting across the way. No one discussed the question of farm debt. No one made the comments of putting action forward to deal with the problem. No one talked about 1.2 million acres being taken over by the banks and a potential of another 2 million acres being taken over.

We're talking about people out there. And then we hear from the Liberal Party the question . . . the leader from Saskatoon Greystone, the question of a national summit. What's precipitated the question of the motion in the first place is that we're coming forward with action. We're coming forward with legislation to deal with debt. And it's coming. When we bring forward legislation, what happens? Mr. McKnight says, the Minister of Agriculture: oh no, no, we can't have that. We can't have that. We don't agree with that. That's not good for us. That's not good for the upcoming federal election.

July 1991 at Kananaskis, federal and provincial agricultural ministers got together and said yes, we need a leaseback program from Farm Credit Corporation. It was stated in the document. What's happened? Nothing.

Western premiers met last week to discuss the issue, saying that we needed action in farm debt, especially with federal co-operation. What happened? Nothing.

The members opposite who ruled this province for 10 years stated that they're ignoring it, you know, the question of farm debt. Look at the number of foreclosures that have taken place. Look at the higher number of voluntary transfers. We talk about foreclosures; that's the tip of the iceberg. Voluntary transfers is the key.

We're bringing forward legislation to deal with those things. We have put forward a committee with financial institutions, Farm Credit Corporation, farm organizations, and farmers to deal with the problem. They have brought forward recommendations, and we wish to act on them. And you talk about co-operation. We've been co-operating with the people of Saskatchewan to bring forward that question of dealing with that issue. So don't tell me there hasn't been co-operation.

I just can't believe the words that have been said today, I tell you. When I hear the question of a national summit on farming, how long is that going to be? Is that 10 years away? Is that when we get a Liberal government in Ottawa? Pie in the sky. Pie in the sky. It is time for action to deal with debt.

You want to talk about co-operation? Two letters were sent to the Minister of Agriculture asking for discussions on this area of farm debt in the end of March. What did we get? No response.

When we talk about leaseback programs that provide security for farmers, I think even the members opposite

discussed the question of leaseback programs during the last provincial election. They saw it as an opportunity also. The former minister of Agriculture talked about leaseback programs at Kananaskis when he signed the memorandum July . . . dated 1991.

But did these members opposite talk about debt today? Did they talk about debt? No, they ignored the issue. They ignored the issue, just as the Minister of Agriculture is doing in Ottawa — ignoring the issue, pulling the coat over their heads and hoping the problem goes away because that's the way they attacked it for 10 years. They thought the plan was going to go away . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, as the member has stated to me, friends of the banks.

I didn't see them standing up today and saying, Mr. Hewitt of Farm Credit Corporation said: the crisis is over; the crisis is over in agriculture. What a monumental statement. What a monumental statement.

Is it over? Would the members opposite care to answer the question? Is the crisis over? No it isn't. They know that. They know the crisis isn't over. That's why we need action. And it's funny when you start to bring action forward how people start to say, oh no, that's not what we want. That's going too far. We're taking away too much from the financial institutions. We're taking too much away from Farm Credit Corporation.

Well now it's time to give something back to the farmers. When the question becomes . . . and Mr. McKnight's stating: well credit's going to dry up, and everything's going to dry away . . . dry up in terms of lending and land values are going to decrease. You tell me what's better — dumping 3.2 million acres of land onto the market? Is that better for the income and stability of Saskatchewan? No it isn't. No it isn't.

We have to deal with the problem. We have to provide security. We have to provide long-term tenure. Financial institutions agreed to that. Farm Credit agreed to that in terms of the debt resolution committee. They dealt with the issue. We are acting upon it. And I am sad today to hear the comments that have come forward, very sad.

An Hon. Member: — How come the credit unions don't like it?

Mr. Whitmore: — The member opposite talks about the credit unions. The credit union system has agreed to the program. They signed the document that talked about the debt committee.

An Hon. Member: — Not the ones in my constituency.

Mr. Whitmore: — Then I say to the member opposite is patience, patience when the legislation comes forward to see who is in support of the program. Because I will tell you, it will be the farmers in Saskatchewan that are in support of the program. It protects the farmers that are now on the land. It protects the farmers who have land out there as security that's bought and paid for. That at least provides security for them that the asset base doesn't erode.

It maintains people in the community of Saskatchewan. Is it wiser to see people leave? Is it wiser to see a bank come in and shut the doors and have those farmers leave, go to Alberta, B.C. (British Columbia), or Manitoba?

An Hon. Member: — You're shutting the doors on credit unions.

Mr. Whitmore: — Oh yes, we're shutting the door, yes, yes. It's terrible, terrible. We're going to turn the lights out. We're going to turn the lights out. I tell you, it is time for action. It is time for action.

An Hon. Member: — Ask where they've been the last 10 years.

Mr. Whitmore: — That's right. Where have they been the last 10 years? Where have they been?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whitmore: — They brought up processes to deal with debt. They brought up with processes, but we still have foreclosures, and we still had VTs (voluntary transfers). It's now time to say to farmers: three years isn't enough; one year isn't enough. You want to talk about stress. You go talk to your farmers out there that are sitting on a one-year lease or a three-year lease, and they don't know what's going to happen down the road.

The Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa stated that farmers are participating in a leaseback program that FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) is putting forward. They are. They are because that is a worthwhile option. We're taking the next step forward.

The question I ask in terms of the members opposite, and maybe they could find the answer out, is the question of equity building program. Will FCC finance the purchase of that land after that six years, after that person's built up that equity? Or is the equity program simply a transition fund, Mr. Speaker? Is it simply a transition fund so the farmer has a savings account so he has some money to walk away with? That question hasn't been answered. That question hasn't been answered.

The question I ask then is: where does the member sit on farm debt? Where will they sit when we bring forward this farm debt legislation? Where will every member sit? Where will the member from Saskatoon Greystone sit? Because when action comes forward, this will be the question. This will be the test when we come to the question of farm debt, when we come to the question of protecting family farms, and when we come to the question of protecting rural life in Saskatchewan.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, as I stated, I will support the resolution but I will vote against the amendment. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, as I view the motion presented today, I view it with great regret. It bothers me, Mr. Speaker, that a motion would be brought forward and simply singling out another government or another

person and laying all the blame at the feet of one individual.

Mr. Speaker, certainly agriculture, and not just agriculture but the whole business sector across this great nation of ours, is going to need the co-operation of governments in all sectors; not only governments but political parties of all . . . or people from all political persuasions in order to address the major concerns that we have before us.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard for I think far too long the fact that we continually put the emphasis on blaming someone else rather than accepting our responsibilities. Certainly being government is not an easy proposition, especially in light of a period of recession or in light of the problems that have been facing this country and this province for a number of years.

As we have seen in Saskatchewan, we've seen the efforts made by many groups and communities co-operatively to work together to develop policies that help them, help their businesses, build up their communities, and in working together have created a livelihood for families and men and women across this province.

Mr. Speaker, a number of speakers prior to my standing in the Assembly today indicated that the provincial government would be bringing forward a Bill which would guarantee a six-year leaseback.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate today that I've not only been contacted by farmers but I've been contacted by credit union managers and board members in my constituency and certainly a message waiting for me last night when the House adjourned. When I followed up on it, Mr. Speaker, was addressing the very question, the fear the credit unions have in the fact that the legislation, if it comes forward, is going to dry up funding and borrowing or lending to the farmers across this province. This manager of this credit union went so far as to say . . . I asked him, well what do you see perceive happening or why would this dry up your lending? And he said because of the fact from what we understand of the legislation, as it will be introduced, it will take away our ability to have any security on the investment or the lending that we are going to be putting out in the field.

(1545)

Mr. Speaker, I also asked the manager of the credit union, well okay, in any lending that you do give out, what kind of interest rates do you think you'll be seeing? You know what I was told, Mr. Speaker? He indicated to me that they would be looking at least between one and a half, 1.5 and 2 per cent higher than the normal lending rate to consumers, not only in my constituency but certainly towards all farmers across this province. And, Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned, and a number of members have indicated we are concerned about the agricultural situation in this province.

My colleague from Maple Creek mentioned this morning . . . or this afternoon in question period, Mr. Speaker, the problems that the ranching community are facing in the Maple Creek area — the fact that they are already looking

at other areas in which to move their livestock because of the lack of rain, the lack of spring run-off, the lack of moisture this winter which has dried up their pastures, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, those are questions and concerns that we should be addressing in this House, not just bringing forward a motion that condemns the federal minister and that asks the federal Prime Minister of this country to fire his minister and put someone else in the position of being federal Minister of Agriculture.

I believe the federal Minister of Agriculture was on provincial news last night, Mr. Speaker, and I watched, listened to some of the debate that took place. And certainly the question was raised regarding a question brought forward, the motion that was brought forward in the House today about his resignation. And he indicated to anyone who was viewing the program last night regarding the problems that we're facing in agriculture, and certainly regarding the dismantling and the disruptions to the GRIP programs you see in in this province, that they have been consulting with provinces all across Canada. And they have . . . of all the provinces across Canada, there's been only one province that really has given them a problem this year in trying to negotiate an agreement on GRIP and looking at next year when they would get into some major changes to try and upgrade the program. And that province, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately happens to be the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of farmers in my community, in my area — and in our area I just would like to also indicate that we are fortunate in the fact that we do have a lot of moisture. But it is creating a problem for us in the fact that very little seeding has taken place. That, Mr. Speaker, becomes a concern to the farmers in my area because the longer seeding is delayed, what happens next August? If we get an early frost, what happens to the producers? If we get an early frost, with the changes to the GRIP program, where will producers be next fall in that case, in that scenario, Mr. Speaker?

Not only are we . . . producers facing a problem in getting their crop in, not only are they facing a problem with low prices, not only are they facing a problem in not knowing where their bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, we continually have a government that continues to put the blame at somebody else's feet instead of accepting their responsibility. And I want to remind them of the fact that they have also indicated that the . . . and raise the concern of the federal government off-loading programs onto the provinces.

But let me remind the members that in the agreement with the GRIP program, because of the fact that they changed the GRIP program, they have said no thank you to some \$200 million that would have been coming to this province had the provincial government made some minor changes and continued in the format of the 1991 GRIP program.

And I would also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if farmers out there had the 1991 program to work with, there are many farmers who had secured their credit, secured their line of

credit, on the basis of the old program. There are many farmers who had been able to negotiate with the lending institutions based on the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I must remind members that according to the new rules that we have implemented for this week, at this particular time since your 65 minutes has expired, that we now begin a 10-minute comment and question period. And I want to remind members it will be conducted similarly to question period. So your comments should be relatively brief and your questions should be directed to those people who participated in the debate.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to direct my comments and question to the member from Nipawin, Mr. Speaker. He made the statement that the Agriculture minister wants people off the land. Now that's an absurd statement because I don't believe anyone in Canada wants anybody off the land. Why would you make an accusation about FCC not wanting to go along with the six-year program when, Mr. Member, they already have a six-year program in place? There's thousands, and I say literally thousands of farmers, have three-year leases and then the next three years is the leased equity. FCC . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. This is simply not going to work if members are going to interrupt immediately when the member gets up to ask a question. It simply can't go on. And if it is, this experiment is not going to work. So I ask the members, let the member ask his question, and would he put his question directly. And then I'll ask the member from Nipawin to respond.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that the PCs (Progressive Conservative) in the last election came out with a lease-to-own program. So I ask the member from Nipawin, why don't you table your farm legislation? It's the banks that you have to get at. They're the ones that only had the . . . give two-year leases. Get at the banks.

Bring your legislation in. Why don't you bring it in now, Mr. Member, and let's see. Get it passed. Because you have said very clearly that this Bill will pass, and you can control all lenders. Mr. Member, bring your legislation in and show Saskatchewan that you can get this legislation through — control the banks and control farm credit. Bring it in and we'll see.

The Speaker: — Before the member continues, it was the intent of the committee that it should be a comment and question, but it doesn't need to be a question. If the member simply wishes to make a comment and the member from Nipawin wishes to respond, then we should allow the member from Nipawin to respond to either the comment that is made or the question that is asked. It would be preferable to have a question, but the member doesn't need to ask a question.

Mr. Keeping: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are going to bring in legislation, and it's being prepared every day now with consultation. I know yesterday there was consultation with the banks, and tomorrow they're consulting with some of the leaders in

the credit union organization.

Yesterday afternoon I met with credit union managers and credit union presidents in my constituency. I've been on the board of credit unions for some time. And when the legislation is prepared, it will be brought in.

One of the problems . . . And I don't take it . . . your comments about, you know, criticizing the federal Minister of Agriculture I think are fair. And I tried to in my previous speech, I tried to be fair and recognize that it's not simply productive to demand someone's resignation. That's not the answer.

But our legislation is forthcoming. And in my opinion it's not proper for a federal Minister of Agriculture to prejudge, prejudice legislation that is not prepared. He may have been quoted misaccurately, but he said that he had saw the draft legislation, which cannot be, because there is none. And he prejudged it and ordered the Farm Credit Corporation not to co-operate. That was my complaint.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I get a lot of calls from my constituents every day — young farmers aged 25, 35, 40 years old in support of a longer-term tenure program — farmers that have a chance of survival, Mr. Speaker, a chance to succeed on their farm, a chance to continue their way of life, a chance to keep their young family on the farm.

My question is to the member from Souris-Cannington. How can he agree, or does he agree, with the federal minister's decision that Farm Credit not participate in the Farm Debt Review Committee recommendations?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not exactly positive where or how Farm Credit has phrased their responses to the minister of . . . for Farm Credit has phrased his responses. The Farm Debt Committee has come back stating that there should be a six-year leaseback.

I do know, Mr. Speaker, that FCC has been providing six-year . . . three-year block to start off with, and then another three-year term. They've been only three years per group, but they have gone for the six years, Mr. Speaker, depending on the circumstances. Some farmers have not wanted to carry on with the three-year lease after that point. They may have purchased their land back. FCC in fact has refinanced those farmers that were in a position to do so.

Mr. Kluz: — I have a question for the member from Souris-Cannington as well. In his comments he was talking about co-operation; it's time for all governments to co-operate together. And as you all remember in this Assembly very early in this session we had an emergency debate, and it called for a GRIP extension. And it called for designing a new committee to take this flawed program and try to make a decent program out of GRIP — we all know it's a flawed program — but to get this new committee together and to call on Ottawa again for the \$500 million third line of defence.

My question is simply to the member of Souris-Cannington: why did your entire caucus vote against that motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, we did not vote against that motion. We voted against the amendment as presented by the government side.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the former associate minister of Agriculture. I'd be interested in knowing why his party is supportive of Mr. McKnight's view that FCC should not participate in this legislation. And I'd be interested in knowing why his caucus has not relayed to Ottawa that FCC is a major forecloser in this province. And in order for the debt question to be dealt with, Ottawa, through the federal Conservative Party, must participate.

Mr. Martens: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that the individuals who have spoken earlier have indicated that Farm Credit has moved in that direction. I'm not going to defend their actions in any way. I just want to say that I would be prepared to take a look at your leaseback options.

I just know that the credit unions in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, have contacted me already and told me that they are in serious, serious problems if what they understand in the leaseback program that you're initiating, that they will not be able to offer lending to those people on a leaseback basis. They will not be able to do it. And therefore they will be in serious financial difficulty.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the member from Morse a question. Mr. Member, your amendment that you put forward basically says that you do not agree to farmers having security of tenure. That's the net result. Mr. McKnight says he doesn't agree with farmers having security of tenure through a legislative leaseback program. So it's obvious that even though you and the federal government say that you want to support farmers, that you are not supporting them in terms that would give them a security of tenure position on their farms.

You ask us whether or not . . . you ask us to co-operate with the federal government. And we say it's the federal government that has to start co-operating. Now seeing that you've asked us to co-operate with the federal government, seeing that you are opposed to security of tenure, I have a two-point question. One, why do you oppose security of tenure? The member from Arm River says Farm Credit already has a six-year leaseback, but I mean we all know that the six-year leaseback with the value added, or the . . . What's the word I'm looking for?

An Hon. Member: — Equity building.

Mr. Upshall: — Equity building, that's right. Thank you. The equity-building component is useless because all you're doing is giving your money away because the value of the land at the end of the term will increase and you're giving money away.

The second point is, do you have any correspondence that you could table with the federal government encouraging them to co-operate with the Government of Saskatchewan?

(1600)

Mr. Martens: — Well, Mr. Speaker I find it interesting that you raise the point of co-operation. Your constituency will probably have the largest feedlot in the province, and it probably does. You talk to me about what your Minister of Agriculture is doing to that feedlot in two very important items. One is the livestock cash advance. That's going to cost the Sask Wheat Pool; it's going to cost those farmers who are investors in your feedlot there a whole pack of money. Second point: in the feed grain assistance program, you're way out to lunch on that one.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what your Minister of Agriculture has proposed in his budget in the province of Saskatchewan, and I think that that's wrong. That's why I raise the point. Not from whether I agree with Mr. McKnight or don't disagree with Mr. McKnight. It's the point that I don't agree with the Minister of Agriculture from the province of Saskatchewan cutting those programs that are going to diversify agriculture in this province.

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

The Speaker: — Order. Time's up.

An Hon. Member: — I have a question . . .

The Speaker: — Sorry. Wait till next week.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Resolution No. 20 — Sunset Clause on Government Programs

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce this motion which urges this Assembly to adopt sunset clauses on all programs involving expenditure of public monies.

Mr. Speaker, for far too long the chain of accountability that extends over the spending of public monies has been too short. Politicians watch over the bureaucrats, but the links between the public and the government remain weak. People still view the ongoings of government with mystery and suspicion.

The time has come to open up the process much further so that the people know that there is regular evaluation of programs implemented with their tax dollars. We must encourage our representatives to be more accountable to the people of Saskatchewan by forcing them to justify their actions, their governing, and their management through sunset clauses. Allowing legislation to lapse with a sunset clause will serve the people of this province well, Mr. Speaker. It will complete the chain of accountability.

At no time has it been more apparent that we need additional tools, new checks and balances to ensure that our money is spent responsibly. In this time of financial

crisis, never has it been more imperative that new programs be successful.

Mr. Speaker, just this session the government introduced programs to fight child hunger. I commend the government for these measures. But we need to ensure that four years down the road this program is achieving its aims and has been successful at wiping out child hunger. We need to acquire baseline data and take the next step by implementing a sunset clause to complete ongoing checks and balances.

Lord Renton, the chairman of the Committee on the Preparation of Legislation at Westminster noted that with each passing year a smaller number of Bills fill a greater number of pages in the statute books. Acts of parliament involve greater spending and attempt to cover every loophole.

While the volume of legislation grows, public accountability does not keep pace. Mr. Speaker, although reforms in education do allow the residents of our province to know more about how government spends its dollars, governments continue to grow larger and more complex.

Government, Mr. Speaker, should not be difficult to understand. We should make every effort to ensure that we make this place approachable. Only then will people have a chance to feel that they can influence how their money is being spent. Only then will they begin to regain their faith in their own representation, their institution, and their programs.

Mr. Speaker, with a sunset clause, we'll be able to give everyone a second chance to see that their government has done well. Every parent needs to know how each child is progressing. Likewise every person in this province deserves a report card on how their money is spent on each program. This indeed would provide a way for government to act as though it's able to produce a report card on itself.

Mr. Speaker, while I support making government more open and accountable and more approachable, I also believe that we all should have a chance to learn from our mistakes. Unfortunately often the only time that we get to see how programs have fared is in the after-the-fact autopsy. Only when governments are defeated is the public told how programs introduced by the previous government affected the public and the public purse.

In some cases, programs become an entity unto themselves, and we've seen this kind of discussion particularly when it comes to federal government programs that have gone on for many, many years. People actually see that these programs have become their own purpose for existence rather than fulfilling the needs for which they were created.

All too often as well, Mr. Speaker, government report cards are shrouded by partisan rhetoric as one party condemns its predecessors for their incompetence or their lack of concern. But, Mr. Speaker, I know that everyone in this House does care for our province very much, and I know that we can demonstrate that care and

concern by removing this kind of cloud of partisanship most of the time.

We can illuminate with truth instead of clouding it with rhetoric. And we can analyse program spending every four years instead of offering a fruitless autopsy report after a government is gone. With a sunset clause we can provide understanding where mystery now reigns.

Mr. Speaker, if governments must justify their programs every four years, the ministers will get an opportunity to learn from the deficiencies in the programs as well as the strengths. Ministers would have to analyse their programs to see if they had indeed achieved their goals, to see if the tools used were the best possible, to see if the money spent was spent most effectively. Most importantly, officials too will have great reason to see how their programs truly affect real people — the real people who live and work in this province, the people who pay the taxes, and those who are most in need of the services.

By having to justify programs, civil servants will have an opportunity to improve their own program delivery. Accountability will be served, and people will feel assured that government truly values their input, even after the Bills are passed. Truth and fact will replace political condemnations and rhetoric, and we will be focussed on what we're all here for — managing and good governing.

Mr. Speaker, across the world people have responded to the growing of government and the growing of government spending by creating large, effective auditing agencies. The United Kingdom created the National Audit Office; the Netherlands has its Court of Audit. Our own country has the Office of the Auditor General, while Saskatchewan has the able services of its own Provincial Auditor.

These dedicated persons and agencies have given elected representatives a better chance to question the actions of government, but we must go beyond questioning to take concrete action. While questioning and evaluation are at the heart of accountability, government should have to do more than answer questions. The people of this province want their elected representatives to do more than answer questions; they want them to act on their concerns.

As elected representatives, we can encourage government to take action to solve problems that surround programs. If government must abide by a sunset clause, they must not only answer for their performance, but they will also be given a second chance to act.

In closing, I wish to remind people that we are merely tenants in this legislature, that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are our landlords. They indeed should have a right not only to feel comfortable in entering this particular edifice, but they should have an understanding that what we will do is to put forward mechanisms by which they know that there will be checks and balances and built-in accountability into the system.

As I brought forward in December when the Minister of Justice was talking about the implementation of particular

legislation, Mr. Speaker, that I felt would have a long-term effect on the province of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Justice agreed that in fact it could have been very valuable to have had a sunset clause included in that legislation.

I would like to urge everyone in this House to remember the great trust that's been bestowed on each of us by the people of this province. Our constituents deserve to know how every dollar of their money is being spent. They deserve to know how each program affects them as a taxpayer or a recipient. They deserve a system that not only allows government to learn its errors and from its errors, but compels it to take action to right each wrong.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my fellow members to rise to the great responsibility entrusted to them and support this motion to introduce sunset clauses.

Thank you.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to address the motion of the member opposite. I hear her calling upon this Assembly to urge the government to place a sunset clause, a four-year sunset clause on all new programs so that we can indeed be assured that they're accomplishing their intended objectives. That, I believe, is an honourable and reasonable thing to do — to make sure that programs are accomplishing their intended objectives.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that the whole question, the vehicle that the member opposite puts forward, that of having a four-year sunset clause program, is a little misguided and facile to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, the member opposite sits on a great many committees in this Assembly, and amongst these at her request are the Public Accounts Committee and the Crown Corporations Committee. So quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I'm a little surprised, not to say a little disappointed, that the member opposite seems to have learned so little about her responsibilities in the seven months that she's been in this Assembly. Because it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that out of all the many committees that function around this Assembly, these two in particular should be remembered by the member from Saskatoon Greystone as she moves adoption of a sunset clause on new programs.

She ought to remember these two committees in particular, Mr. Speaker, because they are specifically mandated to fulfil the very purpose that the proposed sunset clause would have done to ensure that programs are indeed fulfilling their objectives.

So we already have the vehicle in place, Mr. Speaker. We don't need the kind of motion that the member from Saskatoon Greystone is proposing.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, not only do we have that vehicle in place already in this Assembly, these two committees function on an ongoing basis, year after year. And they address not only new programs but existing ones as well. We don't have to wait four years to have an analysis and an evaluation of programs.

Further, Mr. Speaker, these two committees help to ensure that public monies are indeed being spent wisely and not in a foolhardy manner, particularly in the last six and seven months when we have seen active work by the Crown Corporations Committee and the Public Accounts Committee. We've witnessed the ability of both these committees to operate properly and to fulfil their own intended objectives. We will continue to see that over the next months and years.

But the member opposite seems to have forgotten this, Mr. Speaker, or otherwise she would realize that her proposed sunset clause is not only redundant but it's a step backward. It's a step back into the dark ages of the previous administration which saw so many government programs operate without openness, without ongoing accountability, and without public scrutiny. And we need all three — openness, accountability, and public scrutiny.

(1615)

So I would ask, Mr. Speaker, is this what the member opposite is suggesting? That we wait a full four years before permitting our programs to be evaluated, just as the other members opposite seemed content to have done. They waited four years. They would only want their programs evaluated by the general electorate of Saskatchewan, rather than doing an ongoing, consistent, and timely evaluation of programs.

So I wonder, Mr. Speaker, is this the real hidden agenda underlying this motion before us, so that her own ideas can lie unchallenged by full public scrutiny? Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware and as the people of Saskatchewan are well aware, that is not the approach from the members on this side of the House.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the moves that we are making towards democratic reform and the many changes that this government has already made are changes that will ensure openness, accountability, and public scrutiny. These are strong measures, and measures that now more than ever need to be in place in this province as we try to grapple with the mountain of debt that we have been left by the previous administration.

This government is doing that, Mr. Speaker, and it's a government that doesn't need an artificial sunset clause to be committed to openness and accountability. We are constantly and continuously working on public disclosure, public examination, and public debate. But perhaps that's not the kind of scrutiny that the member opposite feels comfortable with, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are many problems associated with a sunset clause legislation. I said earlier that I believe it's a shallow analysis that we're being delivered. It is also facile and trendy. Some people run around and say, well if only governments would do this, then somehow we would solve all our problems.

Quite frankly I would suggest to you that what would happen if we had a sunset clause in place is that we would simply see a bunch of bumbling bureaucrats running around trying to justify their own existence. We wouldn't

have people doing services. We would have people simply analysing programs constantly.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that if a program isn't accomplishing its objective, it should be changed or discontinued as soon as possible, not four years from now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Unlike the member opposite, we don't need four years to determine the efficacy of a program. You know, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Greystone constantly reiterates her desire to take the politics out of politics. However, it seems to me that this motion would do just the opposite. What it's going to do is put politics into almost every government service we have. The sunset clause would put programs in jeopardy every four years. It would encourage short-term partisan programs instead of long-term rational ones.

The sunset clause would create uncertainty for all sectors in this province particularly, I would think, for businesses. They wouldn't know if a program was going to be changed, discontinued, abandoned, or what after four years. And so they would have a great deal of difficulty making long-term forecasting and business decisions. It would create a very unstable investment climate.

It seems to me that sunset clauses, as proposed by the member opposite, would simply entrench partisanship in every government program. And that is wrong, Mr. Speaker, very definitely wrong. It would create uncertainty. People would be stopping and looking at every government program and saying, what's going to happen after four years. Maybe we shouldn't put any faith and hope in this program. From one day to the next people would have to say, well are the government programs going to carry on?

Unemployed people and those on assistance of any form wouldn't be sure if there were going to be income security programs from one four-year term to another four-year term. Seniors and retired people wouldn't be assured. A person would be 61 and saying, oh my heavens, I wonder if there's going to be a pension program for me when I'm 65. Nobody could rest assured the programs vital to their health, their education, or other facets of their life would exist a mere four years down the road.

Just think of the great number of programs which need more than four years before they can begin to bear proper fruit — things like pension plans, unemployment insurance, even education. I mean is the member opposite suggesting that a nine-year-old child might be able to come home to his or her parents after four years and say, whoops daddy, I think I'm going to pack in it because this program doesn't seem to be accomplishing its intended objectives. It's absolutely absurd.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in this motion and in the member's other public statements, the member from Saskatoon Greystone seems to be insinuating that now government spending is out of control and the taxpayers' money is being wasted. And yet, Mr. Speaker, this same member is criticizing the government for many

cost-saving measures.

In her reply to the Speech from the Throne, I note that she criticized us for closing the trade offices in Hong Kong, Zürich, and Minneapolis. That saved nearly \$2 million. Is that the kind of cost-saving measure that she disagrees with?

She criticized us for eliminating the Saskatchewan Pension Plan despite the unfunded liability. She criticized us for eliminating the department of Science and Technology. I'm not certain why that one is so near and dear to her heart. She criticized us for cutting 500 civil service jobs. She criticized us for eliminating the feed grain adjustment program. She criticized us for decreasing funding to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and to the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. She criticized us for increasing deductibles for the drug plan and for partially de-insuring optometric and chiropractic services.

But where was the member opposite when this House voted on the budget? It's easy to criticize. This government is going to act constructively and co-operatively to get this province once again back on a sound financial footing. You know the criticisms of the member opposite make me wonder just exactly where she would make the cuts. She's not in favour of tax increases. And indeed it seems, reading her speeches, that she favours tax reductions. So you can only conclude that somehow she's an advocate of voodoo economics. Now you see it; now you don't.

And one of the members on the government side says, yes she is looking for more grants for her caucus. I'd like to address that one because it does seem to me it's time that the member from Saskatoon Greystone made up her mind. Do you want to save money or do you want more money for yourself? It's very easy to sit back and give the government self-righteous lectures about what you think should be happening, but at the same time it is important to take a look at one's own personal behaviour and to try to be consistent.

The member from Saskatoon Greystone seems to think that she's the only one who cares about this province or can ever have a brilliant idea. Well let me tell you, she's wrong. Just because she's sitting over there by herself without a caucus, without anyone to be accountable to, without anyone to temper the individualistic, unrealistic attitude of individual greed that seems unfortunately to have permeated some aspects of this province doesn't mean that all members of this Assembly are afflicted with the same notion of rugged individualism that she would have us have.

The member opposite stands here and self-righteously lectures us. And it is so hypocritical. And as an example of that hypocrisy, I would point, Mr. Speaker, to the demand put by the member from Saskatoon Greystone to have the taxpayers of this province hand her over more money for her own individual partisan cause.

She's demanded that this Assembly pay her another \$175,000 in funding. She's already receiving a basic \$38,000 in salary as a member, plus per diems for sitting

in this Assembly, plus a travel allowance, plus a telephone allowance, and an office constituency allowance. As well she receives nearly 70,000 additional in support funding, plus an additional 51,000 . . . the support funding for your constituency office plus an additional 51,000 in additional research support as recently approved by the Board of Internal Economy.

And yet what does the member opposite say as well as demanding that we implement sunset clauses on programs? She says, give me more money. What does she need more money for? Does she have any greater needs than any other member in this Assembly? I would say no.

Mr. Speaker, that's an attitude of greed that is inappropriate in this province at any time and particularly now as this province is facing such grave financial difficulties.

I'm tired, Mr. Speaker, of the tele-evangelical approach taken by the member opposite. She lectures us in this Assembly on the evils that she sees in our budget — a budget that is designed to protect the future children of this province. And then she turns around and demands more funding for herself. I want the member opposite to know she can't have it both ways. She's promoting the appearance of moderation and indulging in the luxury of irresponsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my remarks. I want to mention that we need ongoing programs, but we do also need continuous evaluation of programs. We need to ensure that we have fiscal responsibility in this province. It's been something that's been sadly lacking over the last nine and a half years. We will now as a New Democratic government, bring back fiscal responsibility. We will have continuous monitoring of our programs. We are not going to limit it to simply a shallow four-year evaluation.

So I would like, Mr. Speaker, to move the following amendment, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton. The amendment is:

That all words following "Assembly" be deleted and replaced with the following:

commend the government for engaging in continuous monitoring of all programs involving expenditure of public monies and amending or discontinuing programs only when the need arises.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. The members are well aware that the new rules do not require seconders and therefore I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm only going to make a short few remarks so I'm sure there'll be time for the member from Prince Albert to get

on his feet in this debate.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I see a great deal of merit in the motion as proposed by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. And I'm really quite taken aback, Mr. Speaker, to stand . . . to be in this legislature and hear the member from Saskatoon Wildwood, a newly elected member, lecturing the rest of the members in this legislature on the merits of the Public Accounts Committee and the Crown Corporations Committee.

Mr. Speaker, until 1982 the Public Accounts Committee in this legislature wasn't even open to the public or the media. It was all behind closed doors. In 1983 finally people were allowed to see exactly what was going on in there.

And, Mr. Speaker, the merit that the member from Saskatoon Greystone talks about is not the fact that you simply apply sunset clauses to government legislation, it's the fact that in most jurisdictions where it is used, it works in conjunction with the existing institutions, and it works quite well.

(1630)

I remember very well, Mr. Speaker, back in 1975 when the use of sunset clauses was part of the PC Party of Saskatchewan's election platform. And the very same reaction took place from New Democrats across the province when sunset clauses were talked about. And the reason for that, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is that these people have this terrible urge to be sanctimonious; that only New Democrats know how to govern people properly; that only New Democrats, who have brought the biggest government in our history upon the taxpayer of this province in the 1970s, know how to govern people properly; that only large Crown corporations staffed by thousands of people, the family of Crowns, can govern and provide services to people properly; that the most civil servants that this province has ever had in its history were with the New Democratic Party government.

Mr. Speaker, that attitude was personified in this legislature today by the member from Saskatoon Wildwood, a brand-new member in this legislature who sat and lectured all of us of how wonderful New Democrats were; that they would use the existing institutions and that not one taxpayers' dollar would be wasted.

Well that member should review those wonderful institutions during the '70s and just see exactly how the taxpayers' dollar was protected by a New Democratic Party government who believed that big was better no matter what as long as the government was in control.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the idea that the member from Greystone has put forward in this legislature is that as the Government of Saskatchewan goes through the process of changing from accrual . . . or from cash in to accrual basis of accounting, that we will be making significant changes to the way the government operates in this province, that we will be going through government section by section by section in order to achieve that end.

The government has stated that they are going to take the recommendations of the Gass Commission — 40-some of them — and apply them to the workings of government. At the time you are doing that, it would make sense I believe, Mr. Speaker, to take sections of existing legislation, existing programs and apply sunset clauses to them. They work in other parts of the world where people aren't quite as sanctimonious as the members of the New Democratic Party in this province. They seem to work well.

It means that besides your existing institutions where members and indeed the public are allowed to view the expenditure of public monies, that you automatically at the end of a given time — and it doesn't necessarily have to be four years — go through a review process. It is a well-known fact, Mr. Speaker, in the British parliamentary system that programs tend to take on longevity because of the election periods that are necessary in the British parliamentary system, because of personalities, either through the minister responsible or the bureaucrats that are in charge of that particular agency.

And we have example after example after example. The federal Auditor General has gone through programs. I believe he found payments made to buildings since the Second World War just a few years ago that were in munitions production and arms production because programs were not sunsetted. And in fact came through with a recommendation that they bring in sunset legislation at the federal level so that programs cannot take on a life of their own, that bureaucrats cannot take on a life of their own, and people that believe in big government is better cannot take on a life of their own and foist that on the taxpayer of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are many examples. A classic one in our province done under New Democratic Party government, done under PC government, and I believe done under Liberal government, is the whole question of international aid. It's a question that is bandied about in this legislature every couple of years to the level of international aid — should it be more or should it be less; is the delivery system proper; are the people at the other end getting the bang for their buck.

It's a classic example, Mr. Speaker, of an area that should have sunset regulations attached to it. It isn't in the public's eye every day, but it's there when we in this province are cutting back dollars to agriculture, when we are cutting back dollars to the point that farm families may go out of business because of government moves.

I think it's only fair that before we send dollars overseas that there would be some type of regular review taking place instead of simply the minister each year looking how to fix the line item in the budget. That is a prime example, Mr. Speaker, and there are many more items that simply have taken on a life of their own that any reasonable-minded person would say it is important to review.

And I would say to the member from Saskatoon Wildwood: stick around here a little while, attend your Public Accounts and your Crown Corporations meetings

and realize that they aren't the be-all and the end-all no matter how diligent the members are; that there are opportunities for us as legislators to regularly review certain aspects of the things that we do.

We can put the partisanship aside in certain things and I think come up with some pretty reasonable solutions. If it's good enough for the federal Government of Canada and the Auditor General, if it's good enough in many countries around the world that have similar democratic systems as our own, then surely to goodness we in Saskatchewan should at least look at it, review it, and not think that we're so darn smart; just because we happen to be a New Democrat, that we don't need to look at it.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it was really unreasonable of the member to propose that amendment. What the member did with that amendment was simply try to wipe completely off the slate of debate in this legislature the idea of having sunset legislation or clauses attached to government issues. And I think that is an awful, small-minded, partisan approach to an issue such as this.

If this government is truly serious — truly serious — about reform, about changing the way that the taxpayers' dollars are accounted for in this province, then they would have not had that member stand on her feet today in this legislature and absolutely out of hand reject — reject — any mechanism that will save taxpayers' dollars in this province.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, shame on the member for absolutely rejecting mechanisms which maybe philosophically don't sit well with her party, but maybe common sense-wise appeal to a lot of people in Saskatchewan.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that it's appropriate that the member for Saskatoon Greystone be supported in at least bringing the idea forward. That it be discussed, and that we have some ability to take this issue, at least discuss it further, and look at the options available to us. And not simply reject it out of hand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — I will be brief, Mr. Speaker, because there is another motion which I would like to have the members speak on this afternoon. But I do want to make a couple of comments, Mr. Speaker.

It's very interesting to see the Tories opposite join hands with the Liberals on a sunset clause, and together hand in hand, walk off into the sunset and fade away completely on a mission that is completely dogmatic and seems to have no practicality onto it whatsoever.

The essence of the motion, the substance of the motion, Mr. Speaker, was well spoken to by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Wildwood. She pointed out that putting into place some definite time that a program should be evaluated and fade out is not a practical thing to do, but instead you should be monitoring on an ongoing basis. All programs which involve public expenditure and public monies should always be subject to amendment or discontinuation whenever the

government sees that the need arises.

And that is a position that we are taking, Mr. Speaker. And that is the position that I want to endorse as well. And because we would like to proceed on to the next motion, Mr. Speaker, I now move that debate on this motion adjourn.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 21 — Established Programs Financing Freeze

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on a motion that is having serious impact on my constituents and the citizens of this province. At the end of my speech I will move a motion to the effect:

That the Assembly urge the federal government to end its three-year freeze on established programs financing, which has seriously impaired the province's ability to provide education and health services to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has recognized that federal standards for health and education require federal funding. But the federal government has been decreasing funding as they are off-loading to this province.

Let me first give a brief history of what has happened to this funding. Prior to 1976 this funding was provided through a cost-sharing arrangement in education and health. In 1976-77 cost sharing gave way to the current EPF (established programs financing) program — a non-conditional transfer of funds to the provinces. These funds are collected by tax points and cash transfers.

The basic problem with EPF as a revenue source for provincial health care and education funding, it is in continual decline with no sign of improvement. The eventual outcome will be that with the end of cash transfers, EPF funding will become solely dependent on income tax revenue.

In the 1991 federal budget, a three-year freeze on EPF funding was imposed. This was in addition to an already two-year freeze which in fact has resulted in a total freeze of five years.

The losses in established program funding due to federal unilateral changes to the plan, have and will have, a serious impact on education and health services in this province. Saskatchewan has lost millions of dollars of federal funding since 1986. In 1990-91 Saskatchewan lost \$111.2 million; '91-92, 149.8 million; and for '92-93 an estimated loss of \$247.7 million.

The federal government will now be paying only 38 per cent of the province's expenditures on health and post-secondary education. This is a very significant drop when one considers that as of 1976 the federal government was still responsible for 50 per cent of spending in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, I have established what has been happening to the EPF funding — a continual decrease in funding

from the federal government. This federal off-loading has serious impact on our programs in this province. And not only has the federal government off-loaded in EPF funding, we have also seen off-loading in agricultural programs by 218 million, and other programs by 51.2 million. The federal off-loading on Saskatchewan for '92-93 is estimated at over \$500 million.

Mr. Speaker, this off-loading has serious impact on the citizens of our province. Just earlier today, Mr. Speaker, I spoke of the co-operation of federal and provincial governments in funding the emergency command post for the communities of Bengough and area. Federal-provincial co-operation can produce positive results.

Why then are we seeing this federal government, on the other hand, withdrawing its responsibility to health and education funding? The impact of over 500 million less dollars in federal funding to our province is critical. If not for federal off-loading, our budget would have been balanced. Ottawa is abdicating its responsibility to vital social programs like health and education. Ottawa's failure is hurting Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, but in spite of this off-loading, in health care we are moving towards the wellness model. And within our limited financial resources, we are launching new initiatives to enhance wellness and prevention. These measures reflect our commitment to community-based, community-driven health care founded on wellness and prevention.

(1645)

But at the same time, we've had to make some difficult choices, choices that no government wants to make. There is no joy in raising the drug plan deductible, and there is no joy in reducing funding for chiropractic services and optometric services. There is no joy in reducing third-party funding to school boards and hospitals. But, Mr. Speaker, these choices are part of the result of less federal funding to the citizens of this province.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency of Bengough-Milestone, I have visited hospitals and nursing homes who are willing to adapt to the wellness model. And in fact many have been using several of the principles of wellness already. They are budgeting carefully and are working hard to run their facilities with cost efficiency and yet meet the needs of the patients that they serve. Many of these communities on their own initiative have raised money to add equipment to their facilities as their funding is limited. They have concerns about maintaining adequate staffing levels. For some of the facilities there are waiting-lists.

Mr. Speaker, federal off-loading has put a greater burden on our provincial health care system and the citizens of our province. With proper federal funding, the options we faced would have been different. We could have looked at strengthening and improving our drug plan, optometric and chiropractic services. The school-based dental program could have been implemented more fully. The need for improvement of facilities and

equipment of many of our health care facilities could have been addressed. Mr. Speaker, health care must be a priority of both federal and provincial governments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, I now want to take a brief look at education. As a teacher, a parent, and a member of this legislature, I cannot emphasize enough the value of quality education for our children and citizens of this province and this country. As never before, we must have a well-educated society in order to meet the challenges facing our country today. The federal government would jeopardize our position if funding is decreased.

The performance of our education system gives us a barometer of the kind of future we as a province and a country can expect. When our schools succeed we all succeed. Our schools, our teachers, and our citizens are meeting increasing demands. We know now more than ever learning is a lifetime process. As a teacher I know the value of resource-based learning and the need for ongoing curriculum development.

But resource-based learning can only be implemented if we can afford to equip our resource centres and teachers with the necessary materials. Our curriculum development has had to be slowed down because of budget restraints. In my constituency the school divisions are conscientiously trying to maintain a high quality of education within tight financial restrictions.

Schools have made tough choices too. Some have closed. There's amalgamations have occurred. But the communities of our province know the value of education, but they must wonder if the federal government does.

The facts and figures of the federal government tell us one story on the off-loading that they've done — \$517 million story this year alone. It is a sorry tale. But, Mr. Speaker, if we only speak in those abstractions, if we talk only in numbers, we can miss sometimes the real impact that this is having on our health care and our education system.

Mr. Speaker, let me now talk about my university, the University of Regina. Compared to most universities in Canada, it is new. Most of its buildings were built in the 1960s. But they're having problems. There's a lot of deterioration happening.

If you walk down the hall from the library to the laboratory building on a rainy day, you will get wet. And that walkway is inside, Mr. Speaker. You will also have to walk around all of the wading pools and tin cans the staff must put out to catch the drips. Funds for wading pools but not for proper maintenance. That's the plight of the university and that's the consequence of underfunding. Jokes can be made about leaks in the roof and they are. But, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing funny about the inevitable deterioration in the quality of education caused by underfunding.

My degree is in science. To study science properly, students need adequate equipment in order to conduct proper research. In order to teach their students, faculty

needs the proper tools. Notice I said adequate and proper — not elaborate and not extravagant. At our university the tools of the scientist are rapidly becoming shop-worn and outdated. You can't teach the scientists of the 21st century with the relics of the Diefenbaker era. Increasingly, that's what the university is being forced to do.

Mr. Speaker, there are dozens of other details which tell the same story. Class sizes are increasing, which means less individual instruction; library materials are being slashed, which means poorer scholarship; materials are being rationed, which means fewer hand-outs to the students and so on.

Mr. Speaker, you, I, the other members of this Assembly who are fortunate enough to have secondary training, we were all provided with the best instruction, the best tools society could provide. We were privileged as were Canadians of our generation right across this country.

One major reason we were given the best education possible is because the governments of the day believed in federalism. They understood that the citizens of this great land could be best served through the co-operative efforts of all levels of government. With cost sharing, citizens of wealthy and of less wealthy provinces could be provided the same educational opportunities and the same quality of health care.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, what was given to us, what we rightfully assumed was our due as citizens of Canada is no longer true. The Government of Canada is penalizing my children, all our children for being born at the wrong time. Mr. Mulroney with his five-year freeze on EPF is not just off-loading on the provinces; he's off-loading on a whole generation of children. I find that incredibly short-sighted, and I find it despicable.

The members opposite often blame us for our budget decisions. Our decisions must be put into the context of a province driven to the edge of bankruptcy by the previous administration and to a federal government who has off-loaded its responsibility in EPF funding.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is important to know how the provincial Tories felt about this decrease in funding. How did the former premier represent us, the people of Saskatchewan, when the Mulroney government imposed the current transfer payments scheme? Did the member from Estevan stand up for Saskatchewan and the vital programs in health and education in this province? Did he protest this decrease in funding affecting every citizen of our province? And I'm sad to report the answer, Mr. Speaker, is no.

And in matter of fact it was widely reported that he played the role of advocate and conciliator during the crucial federal-provincial negotiations; that the former premier sympathized with the Prime Minister's desire to reduce transfer payments in order to attack the federal deficit. And, Mr. Speaker, in fact that the former premier had some praise for the Prime Minister and at one stage told Mulroney, keep up the good work. Keep up the good work, as education and health and other vital services will receive less federal money in the province of

Saskatchewan?

I challenge the former premier and the members opposite to tell that to the health boards, the school boards, the universities, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and other post-secondary institutions of this province which are facing very difficult decisions because of restricted funding.

The members opposite are quick to criticize the tough decisions we've had to make in the areas of education and health. If they truly care about the people of this province, I challenge them to join us in support of this motion, put the political games away, and fight for the people of this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, because I believe in the concept and the practice of federalism, because I want my children and the children of this province to have the same educational opportunities and health care that we have enjoyed, and because I believe the present federal government is woefully abdicating its responsibility, I move the following resolution:

That this Assembly urge the federal government to end its three-year freeze on established programs financing, which has seriously impaired the province's ability to provide education and health services to the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — I see I've only got about five minutes left. That usually isn't too long for me, Mr. Speaker, but I'll try to make some relevant comments.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House and support the member from Bengough-Milestone. It is important that the people of Saskatchewan realize that the federal government has abdicated the responsibility that it has for transfer payments to this province.

Mr. Speaker, the off-loading of the federal government on the province of Saskatchewan has resulted in a loss of \$668.8 million since 1976. This puts a severe strain on Saskatchewan to meet the needs of the health care system and our educational system. The most recent freeze combined with the reduction means that the federal government will now only be paying 39 per cent of costs to education and post-secondary, and it used to be 50 per cent. This decline is of significance to a province like Saskatchewan who is experiencing severe economic conditions.

Mr. Speaker, may I refer to the future educational plans. I believe that the way we must compete in the global village is by having a highly trained and skilled work-force. We will attract investors if we have the workers to fill the high-tech, modern needs. As we have seen, throwing money at megaprojects has not been successful. Proportionately our tax dollars were not used properly. What we need is a highly trained and educated work-force. So to secure proper training and education for our future needs, we must spend more on our education system, not less.

For obvious reasons, post-secondary education funding should be financed by both the provincial and federal governments. It makes me sad to see the province of Saskatchewan losing out due to an insensitive Tory federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we have provided well-trained, educated people to many provinces in Canada. Saskatchewan people are recognized all over North America as excellent workers — versatile, well-trained, and tenacious. We are sad to see our taxpayers loaded down with taxes to pay for something the whole country benefits from.

Folks in my constituency are trying to consolidate and make the health system more efficient and effective. The Lloydminster health care boards are working with both the Saskatchewan and Alberta governments to amalgamate under one board.

So I guess my time is up, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to support the member from Bengough-Milestone and I would like to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.