

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, the following petition has been reviewed pursuant to rules 11(6) and (7) and has been found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature a list of people of Voyageur Canada 92 that are going to Peterborough. And in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, is the supervisor, Mr. George Marcotte from Estevan. And other people that will be going to Peterborough this year are Marie Ballenas from Weyburn, Jennifer Fichter from Estevan, Nadine Fichter from Estevan, Ken Kessler from Pangman, Sherry Kennedy from Radville, Lindsay Mitchell from Minton, Patrick Nielson from Parry, Heather Ribling from Estevan, and Rhonda Thomas from Alameda.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll point out that exchange students are coming to Saskatchewan from Peterborough, Ontario, and they will include the following: supervisor, Pat Simpson, Anya Annis, Marianna Boneshyn, Chris Cavanah, Heidi Haensel, Tanya Johnson, Laura Kennedy, Joanne King, Philip Saunders, and Darcy Werger.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Legislative Assembly and its members to welcome these people.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to extend my introduction to this group that is visiting the legislature today, Voyageurs. I met with them this morning when they came and we had pictures and had a chance to have a discussion. They are visiting in my constituency and Estevan and Weyburn area. Like I said, I met with the group this morning. The Saskatchewan host students will be returning to Peterborough in two weeks.

I hope both groups find that this is a very valuable learning experience and have a lot of fun on their exchange. And please join me again in welcoming the groups from Ontario and Saskatchewan here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask the members of the Legislative Assembly to bear with me as I introduce two or three groups to you. And as I introduce them, Mr. Speaker — they're in your gallery — I would like to start with two students who are very near and dear to my heart. It would be my son Noel and daughter Amber.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Noel is a part of the Voyageur 92 program, and has been very fortunate to have as parent guardian Laurianne Jacques, who's with the exchange group today; and parent helper, Donna Clarke. With them is Zuzana McDonald, who comes from Etobicoke with a group of exchange students on the Voyageur 125 program. And I'd ask the students from Etobicoke to stand. They're with also their host students from Regina.

With them also is Ms. Jessie Yee, Wannetta Yee, who are hosting exchange students from France. And the exchange students are Maxime Laisné and Oliver Morel d'Arleux. And I'd ask you to welcome them from France and welcome them to Canada, and also to the Assembly and to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — With the students that are visiting from Etobicoke, we have the Regina host students, and they will be going to Etobicoke at the end of this month. They've had a very busy schedule, and this evening they'll be going to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) sunset ceremony and to the museum. And they have many other things planned on their stay and will be returning this week. So I ask the members of this Assembly to welcome them and greet them to Regina with a hearty welcome.

As we were on tour, I also met with a Margaret Rippley who is here from Nova Scotia, and I would welcome Margaret who has been on our tour and in your Speaker's gallery as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, and wish everyone a safe journey home as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Gardiner dam on the South Saskatchewan River. This dam, like so many others that currently grace our province, was a dream founded in the dust-filled winds of the Depression, a dream of the then Liberal premier, Jimmy Gardiner.

The project cost \$136 million, went \$6 million over budget. Measured in today's dollars, the value of the dam is in excess of \$890 million, a testimony to the importance of careful planning and vision where projects of this nature are concerned. In the 25 years since its completion, the dam has provided many benefits: irrigation, hydro-electricity, tourism, and water supply. Although the dam has fallen short of meeting all of its expectations with regards to irrigation, it has produced immeasurable benefits in terms of hydro-electricity and tourism. The economic benefits of the project approaches \$1.7 billion today.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government, the planners of our province, the people, to support the development of policies such as this that will ensure that other dreams, coupled with careful management of public funds and our natural resources, will create a secure future for us all.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again raise the issue of off-loading. I believe it is worth raising again on behalf of the farmers of Saskatchewan and indeed all people of Saskatchewan to ensure that the federal government gets the message.

Mr. Speaker, in 1987 and '98 the federal government did take responsibility for major farm programs in Saskatchewan and Canada. But since 1989, in fact up until 1991, Saskatchewan had paid up to 50 per cent of what the federal had offered as financing for Saskatchewan farmers.

Since 1988 western provinces have been forced to pay costs of 25 per cent crop insurance, 25 per cent revenue insurance, and 25 per cent of debt income stabilization. Prior to that, federal and provincial government properly took major responsibility for price instability through western grain stabilization at 60 per cent federal, 40 per cent producer, and through other instabilities like crop insurance, 50 per cent federal, 50 per cent producer.

Mr. Speaker, western provinces, and Saskatchewan in particular, have a large agricultural sector — 43 per cent of Canada's farm land, 3 per cent of the population, and 2 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product).

Mr. Speaker, we also have a case where the last government mortgaged our future and now we're paying those payments from yester-year. It is not our fault, Mr. Producer, that we're in this state. On behalf of all farmers in Saskatchewan, I urge the opposition to join with us and go to the federal government and unanimously call upon them to bring forth aid to Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that education is important for a healthy environment. As part of its education program, Saskatchewan Environment and Public Safety recently developed a new poster series. During Environment Week the department distributed the posters to every school in the province. I'm happy to inform members of this House, Mr. Speaker, that for the rest of the school year teachers kept up a steady stream of requests for additional class-room sets.

As a teacher myself, I can attest to their value. Their message is that our environment is both fragile and beautiful and we must all take responsibility to protect this natural heritage. This set of five posters shows our air, land, water, flora, and fauna in striking photography.

Mr. Speaker, the Environment and the Economic Development departments shared the cost of photography for the posters. So far the Economic Development department has used the posters to promote the province's tourism features at the Calgary Stampede and it plans to use them to help sell Saskatchewan food products in eastern Canada this fall.

If your group or organization could use the posters to promote Saskatchewan, contact the Department of Environment and Public Safety. The posters are unique and truly beautiful, Mr. Speaker, and I believe they will

provide many years of effective use for both tourism promotion and environmental education in Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about the Hudson Bay Route and the Port of Churchill. Starting in July grain shipments will be allowed to leave the port. I've been aware of the Port of Churchill and its importance to north-central and north-east and east-central Saskatchewan for some time now. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I attended my first Hudson Bay Route Association meeting in Melville back in about 1965 or '66.

With the changing face of the Soviet Union the port becomes extremely important. It provides us a close and direct route for importing and exporting goods. For this port to survive and expand, the political will must exist. I firmly believe under the years of indifferent federal Liberal and Tory governments the port has just barely survived. The time has come to recognize the vital importance of Churchill and fully utilize it. This port is critical to our long-term economic viability.

And accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members to use whatever influence they have to see to it that the port is used to its fullest potential. I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Today marks day 3 since the loss of the traditional democratic rights for the people of Saskatchewan and for the members of this Assembly. The official opposition in this legislature no longer has the right to oppose the government with our traditional, tangible means, and any member opposite who would say otherwise is not telling the truth. These rights exist no longer because this NDP (New Democratic Party) government doesn't believe in preserving democracy and has no respect for our parliamentary heritage.

No longer can the bells ring when the government brings forward controversial Bills, even if the Bills themselves break the law. No longer can every person in Saskatchewan be heard in this Assembly.

Along with the people of this province, the opposition has been left with little to grasp until the people indeed politically revolt, and revolt they will. Far stronger than a cold-hearted, contemptuous NDP government is the will of those striving for fairness and justice and freedom.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On day 3 I'd like to report some very good news from Meadow Lake.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — The housing market in Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, remains one of the hottest in the province. When compared to communities of similar size, there literally is no comparison. Our market remains strong, Mr. Speaker, for a number of reasons.

Over the years there has been movement by federal government employees, Crown corporations, financial institutions, and the RCMP to Meadow Lake. The people of our fine community remain optimistic, and optimism, Mr. Speaker, is what contributes to our healthy economy.

As hard as it might be to believe, Mr. Speaker, houses in Meadow Lake are receiving a better price than they are in Saskatoon when comparing comparative homes. Prices are from 5 to 10 per cent higher than they really should be, based basically on optimism. There were 16 new starts in Meadow Lake to June 30 of this year, Mr. Speaker, with 37 permits issued so far. The 37 permits include 16 homes, one eight-plex, 15 residential renovations, and five commercial renovations. This year's permits so far are in excess of \$2 million.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the fine people of Meadow Lake for believing in themselves when the rest of the province is hurting in other areas. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wormsbecker: — Mr. Speaker, the focus of this segment of House business is provincial, just as the prime duty of its members is to debate the affairs of Saskatchewan. Mel Hurtig once said, the business of provincial politicians is to be provincial. However, from time to time, as the Leader of the Opposition did recently, we should lift our heads above the border and acknowledge affairs of the wider world of which we're also a part.

As a case in point, Mr. Speaker, is the current involvement by members of the Canadian Armed Forces from all across the provinces, in the United Nations effort to restore and maintain peace in that troubled part of the world which was once Yugoslavia.

It is a dangerous mission, its outcome doubtful. But if that region is not to degenerate further into bloody anarchy, there must be a moral presence there to uphold the values of civilization. This is why the UN (United Nations) was founded. This is why Canada has always been such a fervent supporter of the UN and its mandate.

As a Canadian I am proud to see that once again Canadian military forces are peace-keepers. They are inserting themselves between foes rather than engaging the enemy. This is a practice which I believe takes far more courage and intelligence than the historical function of war where ignorant armies clash by night, as Matthew Arnold once said. Our troops, under Major General Lewis MacKenzie . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members' statements have ended. Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I'd ask leave to introduce

guests, please.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly, representatives from the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. At the back of the Chamber we have students, along with a staff person, Jill Hunt. And in the Speaker's gallery we have a number of volunteers with the Abilities Council, accompanied by the staff person Kerri Buchberger.

If they would like to stand, and I'd ask other members to give them a warm welcome, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rail Transportation Policy

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Highways and Transportation. There seems to be some confusion regarding your government's transportation policy. Please go on record regarding what you think will happen to rural Saskatchewan if our roads and railways are allowed to deteriorate further.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, that's a very, very large topic, the transportation evolution in Saskatchewan over the years. There are I guess two areas of concern to the member opposite and ourselves. That is the ongoing discussions on transportation within the branch-line system that is clearly a focus and important discussion for all of our farmers who are grain producers particularly. And as the member opposite may be aware, it's been an ongoing topic of discussion at federal-provincial ministers' meetings. And we will continue to support the view of the Saskatchewan farmers that the present method of payment best secures a stable and secure system for transporting grains and making export markets accessible to farmers in every corner of the province.

On the question of roads, clearly there is a challenge as the branch-line system slowly becomes smaller and the road system takes on a larger share of the traffic. We have a road system that has over the years been built up — 11,000 kilometres of pavement, about 8,000 kilometres of thin asphalt, and about 69,000 kilometres of municipal road — that will require more upkeep and more construction as the loads on it increase.

And clearly it's a concern for us in discussions with the federal government that as we look at the interests of the Canadian economy, we ask them to address with us the needs of both our road and our rail systems in the long haul.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the people of this province would be utterly

outraged if they understood what your government's taxation policy on the railways truly means. And everyone in this Assembly agrees that the railways should be taxed. But you tell us: why does Saskatchewan have the highest rate on locomotive fuel on the North American continent?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I find it again an interesting contradiction that the member opposite would be apparently interested in the fiscal stability of the province and our ability to create a sound transportation system; on the other hand, express the concern she expresses.

As the member opposite may be aware, there was no increase in the taxation for locomotives in this spring's budget, that the rail system has continued to have its expenses paid through the calculations that are done at the national level in the provision of service for Saskatchewan, and that in fact the rail systems have done very well, thank you, having had access in a relatively monopolistic way to the various corners of transportation for Saskatchewan products here in Saskatchewan. And I'm . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, the previous government's policy was so intelligent that it cost 3,000 jobs in the railway system in this province in the previous nine years, and you're saying it was so good that you're going to maintain it.

Now there are people who represent the ridings of Moose Jaw, there are someone here who's representing Melville, there's someone here who's representing Biggar, and I want you to tell me what you're going to tell the people in those rail communities, who have suffered and continue to suffer under this policy, what they can expect from your government.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite I think fails to recognize that national transportation policy is very much in the hands of our federal government and the direction is set by them.

We have certainly seen the evaporation of our transportation system for people through the rail system. The rail system continues to be functioning in a regulated fashion across the province and the work that's done is a very significant amount of work here in the province in collecting grain and in taking other raw commodities to market and in bringing some produce into Saskatchewan.

I fail to see the point of the member opposite, that she would challenge the province's taxation policies when clearly the biggest sin of the last 10 years is that we failed to take the money required to pay the expenses necessary to run the economy in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I think you fail to realize what this means --

having 19 cents per litre fuel tax for the railway system. We're talking here about jobs — you have mentioned about moving products, the products that in fact create the backbone for our economy — and we're talking about peoples' lives here in this province.

I'm going to table a letter from you to me dated June 19 outlining your intention to continue levying the largest tax that there is on the North American continent on locomotive fuel. And what I'd like to do is to have you tell me how many more jobs you're willing to have lost; how much extra you're willing to have farmers pay for freight; how much more freight will have to be moved by trucks on already worn-out highways; and how much more traffic is going to have to go to the United States before your government is going to come up with any kind of sensible transportation policy at all?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite forgets that the railway continues to carry significant amounts of product from Saskatchewan to market. It is no less and no more than it would be under any other taxation policy.

The interesting fact is that we meet on a regular basis with the various sectors in transportation. And they respect the need of the province to collect taxation. They respect the need to maintain a transportation system.

I fail to see what the alternate system the member opposite describes that would be somehow different if all of a sudden the people of Saskatchewan paid more and the CPR (Canadian Pacific Rail) and the CNR (Canadian National Railway Company) paid less. I fail to see it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I doubt very much if your department has done any studies at all about how much longer the rail industry can sustain this.

And if you did your homework, you would know that 750,000 tonnes of potash are shipped annually from Esterhazy potash mines by truck to the United States in order to get on their rail service and go elsewhere because of the policies on taxation on locomotive fuel in this province.

Now what are you going to be doing to show us that you in fact are going to do something about this policy and your taxation policy before this industry becomes a memory in this province like VIA passenger rail?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite would seem to be on the same path that her predecessors in the federal government began in the 1970s in order to begin to speak against the farmers and the average taxpayers in Saskatchewan and in favour of the railroads.

The fact is that national policy has resulted in some changes in the rail system, but it certainly is not the Saskatchewan fuel tax. The Saskatchewan taxation is a reasonable return for the people of Saskatchewan for an immense amount of business that's done here.

We have at the national table, between Highways ministers and Transportation ministers and with the federal government, discussed the other dilemma you describe, which is the threat of the transportation system moving into other areas. But it has much more to do with the questions of level playing-fields and the manner in which other systems treat their people as opposed to us trying to run a system where . . .

The Speaker: — Order. next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Trade Mission Travel Arrangements

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Welcome back to Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. A simple question. Can you tell us which one of the 700 club of businesses did you meet with in New York? And can you be telling us which ones will soon be relocating to Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member that while in Pennsylvania and New York, Washington and New Jersey, we met with about 20 various groups talking to them about trade and economic development. We met with Julius Katz, one of the main trade negotiators in Washington on the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) agreement.

And members opposite who are pushing that agreement will be interested in knowing that there are some very, very difficult problems with the agreement. And in meeting with Mr. Katz, he's trying to meet an agenda basically surrounding the American election.

But yesterday in meeting with Mr. Wilson in Ottawa, it became very clear that Canadians in general are having a very difficult time coming to a resolve on that agreement because of the lack of definition that has been put forward.

I have a list here of some of the other people that we met with. We met with Bruce Wilson, the chair of the trade subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee in Washington. We met with . . .

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

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, we'd ask if you would table that list for us, please. And I'm also sure that the taxpayers and unemployed in this province will be just salivating over your successes in New York.

Mr. Minister, I understand a Mr. Stobbe accompanied you to the Big Apple. Mr. Stobbe does not work for you or the Department of Economic Development. Mr. Minister, can you tell us why you took this NDP political hack from Social Services department with you on an economic development mission?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, very clearly the members opposite, including the former premier, will well know that when ministers travel and when

individuals in government travel, they often take assistants. We had four people in total on the tour. One other person from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Mr. Don Loewen, was with us at a number of the meetings that dealt with pasta production.

We're trying to sort out a deal that was begun by the previous government in Swift Current, to find out whether they had any marketing for pasta when they made the announcement. And it's very clear that if we're going to build that plant, we have to have a place to sell it to. That had escaped the former premier when he made the announcement.

And so we're very anxious. We met with about five pasta companies in the area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York — in those three states. Hershey foods, for example, uses a large quantity of pasta in many of their products, and the member from Estevan would know that in setting up the deal . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I'm sure that everyone will be interested in finding out what Mr. Stobbe's expertise is when it comes to pasta production. In fact, Mr. Minister, the Gass Commission recommended that political hacks not be taken on missions like this, Mr. Minister.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I don't think the member can be heard. We need to just simmer it down a bit and let the member be heard. Order!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Stobbe is a political hack for the Social Services department. And, Mr. Minister, you also promised that you would abide by the Gass Commission's recommendation not to use political hacks from other departments in your department. You made that commitment to this House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stobbe is also the same gentleman who wrote a book about the opposition leader which contained as much inflamed political rhetoric as your budget address contains. You've claimed that you never . . . You also claimed, Mr. Minister, that you never attended the Democratic national convention, which Bill Clinton conveniently scheduled during your visit.

Can you tell us, Mr. Minister, if Mr. Stobbe attended the political convention? Was Mr. Stobbe researching another partisan book, or was he studying the food bank in Times Square?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it is true that Mr. Stobbe wrote a book that had less than glamorous things to say about the former premier. But the problem is that everything he said was right. And that's not our problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — But I want to indicate that Mr. Stobbe was with us as an assistant to the group. He made writing reports, calling back to Regina, attending meetings. Whether or not he attended the Democratic convention, he certainly didn't do it during the working hours. He was working with us during the day.

And I want to tell the members opposite that if we want to go through the litany of Christmas holidays that were taken by the then premier on . . .

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

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I understand you donated the convention registration fees to the Democratic Party. Mr. Minister, given your success on the economic front, may I suggest you also donate the entire cost of the trip to the Saskatchewan taxpayers. Mr. Minister, how much did this cost, and what kind of return can we get on our money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I want to say to the members opposite, that any of the arrangements that come as a result of our trip — whether it's the sale of lentils or wild rice or some of the pork products — it will not be a GigaText that came about as a result of trips to Montreal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say, as to the registration of the fee that supposedly some of the press people are carrying as a story, I had pre-registered for the convention, had planned to stop in. I didn't make it. And the Clinton-Gore team were good enough to refund my money, so I don't have to . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. New question to the Minister of Justice. Obviously we're not going to get anywhere with the Economic Development minister with respect to Mr. Stobbe, so I'll direct my question to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Minister, considering the NDP law firm of Oliver Waller & Waller engaged in law suits against former government employees, will you instruct them to also launch legal action against Mr. Stobbe to recover the costs of his trip to New York at the taxpayers' expense when he obviously, obviously did not work for the Social Services department which pays his salary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member that the . . . that people who were on the tour, Mr. Hart and Ms. Torrie, and as well as Mark Stobbe, were very, very attentively working while on the trip. The same as members of the staff of the Premier. I hope the former premier, while he was on tour in China and the long list of places he went to, worked while they were on the job on those tours. And Mr. Stobbe is a very excellent employee, works for the government, and has a work

ethic in record that is second to none. That certainly can't be said about the members opposite in the last month here in the legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Letter on Health Care Changes

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Minister of Health, I direct my question to the Premier.

Mr. Premier, last week your plan to close or convert 66 rural hospitals was finally uncovered. Now we understand your department officials are frantically changing the wellness plan to fulfil your minister's claims that the leaked copy was just a draft. Mr. Premier, eraser sales in Regina are rocketing right now, sky-rocketing just as they did in the leaks of the Minister of Finance's budget.

We also uncovered the fact, Mr. Premier, that you were engaging in a massive direct-mail campaign to do damage control. At that time, on July 9, we asked you if the letter that you were sending out would contain any inflamed political rhetoric. By avoiding your question, you implied that there would be none.

Now, Mr. Premier, could you tell us whether the taxpayers have paid for your political message? Can you tell us if that letter on government letterhead contained any partisan attacks on the PC Party? Can you tell us that?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for that question. I guess I have three points to make in response to the question. First of all, the leaked document was merely one of a series of proposals being considered by the cabinet. It is not in any sense definitive.

If a letter was sent out by the Department of Health, it was in response to a letter sent by the member opposite, which the government thought was very misleading. The purpose of the letter from the Department of Health was to clarify the situation.

And I guess my final point is, what the letter said is the clear position of the government. Whenever any changes are made in the health care system, there will be extensive consultation with the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the truth is that that document is valid. You admitted that yourself through your Minister of Health.

The wellness report, I remind the House and the people of this province, was not authored by us. You and your department planned and developed a comprehensive document which contained some very, very disturbing strategies. We merely did our job, in fact we did your job in telling the public about it. Scare tactics are the kinds of statements that your Minister of Health is very well aware of when it comes to choosing between groceries and drugs.

Madam Minister, we have received — and I say this to the Minister of Health now — we have received your damage control letter, and clearly its main purpose is a political attack on the PCs (Progressive Conservative). Why did you not attack the Liberals in the same letter? Is it because they agree with your devastation on the rural health programs? That's what I'm asking you. Madam Minister, a simple question: how much — how much did this latest round of political advertising cost the taxpayer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is there was a leaked document that was referred to in the Legislative Assembly and we pointed out that it was not government policy. The members opposite wrote to people across Saskatchewan stating that this document indicated the closure of 66 rural hospitals. That is clear and simple scare tactics and abusive with respect to the residents of Saskatchewan.

It has caused a lot of concern amongst Saskatchewan residents. People are concerned. They're upset because you have written to them and suggested that there are 66 closures of rural hospitals. Notwithstanding that in this legislature, before you sent that letter out, we explained it was not government policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, we did not send a letter out. The people were upset because we sent your wellness plan out to them. That's what they were upset about.

Now we have here, and I'm holding it in my hand, a message from the Minister of Health, government document, talking about Tory opposition — Tory opposition. A blatant, political, partisan approach using taxpayers' money to do that. That's what the problem is.

You have a caucus budget, you have a communication staff, and you have an extensive NDP Party communications network to do your dirty work for you, Madam Minister. That's who you should be doing your dirty work with.

Now, Madam Minister, if you wanted to allay the concerns of rural Saskatchewan, why did you not tell the thousands of people that this letter was sent to, that you would be holding extensive public hearings before any hospitals would be converted or closed? Will you commit to that, Madam Minister, that you will hold extensive public hearings and listen to what the people are saying?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have been trying to interfere with the government's plan with respect to reform in Saskatchewan by disseminating information throughout the province that is causing undue concern to people. That's what the members opposite are doing, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is this government will be consulting widely with people. We have made a

commitment to do that in the past and we make a commitment to do it again, that we will be consulting widely with people on health care reform in the months to come.

And this was the intent of the letter that was sent out, to advise people not to worry about the scare tactics of the opposition but to wait and see what we have to come forward with, what we will come forward with, and to wait for the consultation that will take place. We made that commitment in our letter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier with respect to his philosophy about fairness.

In the letter from the Minister of Health on government letterhead, Mr. Premier, clearly it's a partisan attack paid for by the taxpayers. The letter says:

. . . the Tory Opposition continues to circulate the document and to escalate their scare tactics in rural communities.

Mr. Premier, do you believe that it is right and proper to bring in partisan politics on the letterhead of the Minister of Health, the deputy minister of Health, in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that it would be my hope as Premier that although we understand there are times for partisanship and political ideological differences, that where possible we try to minimize that in the Legislative Assembly, even in the charged atmosphere of the various debates that we have. I would hope that he would subscribe to that view as well.

But as the Minister of Health has indicated, this letter that you're questioning about was prompted as a result of statements made by, if not yourself, members of your caucus on the interpretations about this leaked document. Now there had to be a response. And since you were the people who made the statements, the letter responded to those statements made by you people. And the result is that that is an answer that was made.

An Hon. Member: — What about the Liberals? What about other political parties?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — And the member says, what about the Liberals, because quite frankly, so far as I know, the Liberals did not make those kinds of outrageous statements that you people have done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, could we have leave to go back to a ministerial statement?

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Equipment to Treat Heart Disease

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to report on the steps my government is taking to provide better, more efficient health services to the people of Saskatchewan.

Heart disease is the biggest health threat to people in Saskatchewan and indeed across North America. Cardiac catheterization equipment is key to the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease and the need for this equipment has been growing steadily.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that my government has approved the funding necessary for the hospital to proceed with renovations needed to install new cardiac catheterization equipment at the Regina Plains Health Centre. The renovations are expected to cost 423,000 of which the provincial government will contribute a maximum of 350,000.

My government approved the purchase of the 1.7 million equipment in March and we will be paying 75 per cent or 1.3 million of its cost. The equipment has been ordered and is expected to be available once renovations have been completed in mid-winter.

As I have said, Mr. Speaker, cardiac catheterization equipment is used in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease. Catheterizations are done to examine the heart's arteries, valves, and/or pumping chambers and are used in a variety of treatments such as angioplasty.

(1415)

The prevention of disease is one of the fundamental goals of my government's health care reform initiatives. This new equipment will not only allow the hospital to provide vital treatment to the sufferers of heart disease by allowing for more sophisticated types of testing than is currently available, it will save lives by assisting in the early detection of this killer disease.

I am pleased we have been able to assist the Regina Health Board and the Regina Plains Health Centre to provide this valuable service to the people of southern Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Does the member from Saskatoon Greystone have leave to respond?

Leave granted.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly. I do wish to congratulate the government on its decision to bring forward more innovative equipment into the province of Saskatchewan and to allow for more thorough diagnoses and hopefully better prognoses for the people of this province who suffer heart disease. It just gives me pleasure to, first of all, thank the minister for making her words available; and secondly, to be able to join with the government in congratulating them on their move to bring better health

services to the people of our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly have no problem at all in the government using its resources and so on to improve health facilities in the province so that our people can indeed continue to have the best kind of health care possible. And I know the minister has already made some other announcements in this House of projects that they are undertaking, and as an individual project we would stand in our place here and commend the minister and the government for those kinds of initiatives. We have no problem with that.

But I understand, and with quick preliminary look at the statement that the minister has just said, that I understand that this is going to be put into the Plains hospital in Regina. Now a concern that we in the opposition benches would have with that is that we're not quite sure what the future holds for the Plains hospital in Regina. I don't know if the minister does, and if she does, we would, I'm sure, and many people in Regina would like to hear the minister's comments about the future of the Plains hospital in Regina.

The Atkinson report indicated five different options that we could pursue. Three of those five, which is 60 per cent of those options, indicated either the closing of the hospital or drastically altering the procedures and the medical facilities that would be available to the general public in the Plains hospital. That to me right now is almost a bigger concern and I'm sure to many of the people of this city of Regina.

So on the surface, Mr. Speaker, although we commend this particular step, we question some of the wisdom of the minister in making this announcement the way it was made. We have those concerns that I think, for the benefit, Madam Minister, of all the people of Regina, that you lay out as quickly, as rapidly as possible what the future does indeed hold in store for the Plains hospital.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member from Shellbrook-Torch River on his feet?

Mr. Langford: — Leave to introduce some guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Langford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce to you some people from my constituency. We've got the reeve from the RM (Rural Municipality) of Buckland, Lawrence Viala, Sid Zdrill, and Bill Richard, and Harvey McKeen. I will be meeting with them at 3 o'clock and I'd like everyone to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, ask for leave for the introduction of a guest.

Leave granted.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I noticed in the gallery opposite a distinguished Saskatchewan citizen that I met in my previous life involved in the school business and learned to appreciate, George Bothwell, who's been involved with the library trustees' association and many other important Saskatchewan endeavours in his career. I welcome you to the Assembly, Mr. Bothwell.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

BEFORE ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I wish to ask for leave to drop, under government motions, motion no. 1 by the Hon. Mr. Shillington to move a motion:

That notwithstanding Rule 3, this Assembly shall, following the adoption of this motion, meet from 1:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. and from 7:00 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Fridays.

The government would ask that that motion be dropped.

Motion agreed to.

MOTIONS

Granting Leave for Members to attend Conference

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move by leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted for hon. members in the constituencies of Saskatoon Wildwood, Meadow Lake, Saskatoon Sutherland-University, Bengough-Milestone, Wilkie, and Rosthern, from Monday, July 27, 1992 to Friday July 31, 1992 inclusive for the purpose of attending the Thirty-second Canadian Regional Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Kluz: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kluz: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, 23 students that are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are part of the Voyageur '92 program. We have 10 students from Ontario and 13 students from Foam Lake and area which is in my constituency.

They are accompanied by Donna Evans, Doreen McLinchey, Barry Howe, and the bus driver is Peter Kwasnitza. And I would like all members of the Assembly to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to make a statement on a point of order that was made yesterday.

Yesterday, the member from Rosthern raised a point of order. The point of order is well taken.

Yesterday the member from Rosthern raised a point of order stating that the government's response to question no. 43, tabled on Friday, July 17, 1992, was not a complete response to the written question asked.

When a question is called in the Assembly there are several possible courses of action available. The minister may table the answer, convert the question into an order for return, convert the question into an order for return (debatable), or refer the question to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations. In addition, the Clerk may convert the answer, once tabled, into a return, if the answer is lengthy.

It is a well-established practice in this Assembly that a question must be answered as written. It is not a motion and therefore cannot be voted on, debated, or amended. In order to change the wording of a question or to debate the matter, the question must be converted into a notice of motion for return (debatable) as provided for in rule 38. For an explanation of this process, I refer all members to the *Report of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedures of the Assembly*, dated December 1969, page 23.

Last Friday the minister tabled a response to question no. 43 which the Clerk converted into a return. I have examined the answer to question 43 as tabled by the minister. In my estimation the tabled response fails to answer one element of the question, that is, the names of individuals with whom the wellness team consulted. Only the number of individuals consulted was provided. This is not what was asked in this part of the question.

While the minister had the option to convert the question to a motion for return (debatable) in order to have it

amended, she chose not to do so but tabled a reply which, in my opinion, failed to answer one element of question no. 43. Therefore I rule that the member may resubmit his question at a later date.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to questions put by members, no. 45, I'd ask the question be converted to motions for returns (debatable).

The Speaker: — Motions for returns (debatable).

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 01 — An Act to provide for the incorporation of Ukrainian Catholic Parishes within Saskatchewan

Pages 1 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1430)

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Regina Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition Association, Limited

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 03 — An Act to amend An Act to amend and consolidate An Act respecting Saskatchewan Co-operative Credit Society Limited and Saskatchewan Co-operative Financial Services Limited

Clauses 1 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

The Chair: — Would one of the members move that the committee rise and report progress.

Ms. Hamilton: — I would move the committee rise and report.

The Chair: — It's been moved by the member for Regina Wascana Plains that the committee report progress. Is that agreed?

Mr. Martens: — My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe that a member of cabinet needs to be addressing that.

The Chair: — No, this is private members' day, these are private Bills and therefore is the purview of the members of the House and need not need any . . . need not require the assistance of the government and therefore the motion is in order.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 01 — An Act to provide for the incorporation of Ukrainian Catholic Parishes within Saskatchewan

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 01, An Act to provide for the incorporation of Ukrainian Catholic Parishes within Saskatchewan, be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Regina Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition Association, Limited

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that Bill No. 02, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Regina Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition Association, Limited, be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 03 — An Act to amend An Act to amend and consolidate An Act respecting Saskatchewan Co-operative Credit Society Limited and Saskatchewan Co-operative Financial Services Limited

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 03, An Act to amend An Act to amend and consolidate An Act respecting Saskatchewan Co-operative Credit Society Limited and Saskatchewan Co-operative Financial Services Limited, be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Wellness Program

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to address the legislature on the very important topic of wellness. As a psychologist, I was involved in various stress management and public educational activities to help people choose healthier life-styles. Much of my work was in community development, implementing community empowerment measures for primary prevention in the area of mental illness, so I am extremely pleased that our government will be moving toward a model of prevention and community involvement in health care.

You know, it is curious to contemplate that over half the world's population are dying of the diseases of deprivation, communicable illnesses, and infections, while Canada ranks among the top 10 countries in the world in life expectancy. Only Japanese women live longer than Saskatchewan women. Meanwhile Saskatchewan men are ranked sixth in the world.

Not only do we live longer than most people in the world, when we do die it tends to be from life-style-related causes such as various heart or respiratory diseases or

certain cancers. Research tells us that many of these illnesses can be prevented through greater life-style management. We've made great progress, Mr. Speaker, and we will make more as we work towards a healthy and responsible community, to halt cigarette smoking, reduce alcohol consumption, and improve road and work-place safety.

Our health care system is the envy of the world; however it is time for us to recognize some problems inherent in it and move on to the next generation of health care. We in Saskatchewan can be justly proud of having pioneered socialized medicine, first with insured hospital services in 1947 and then with insured physician services in 1962 — the birth of medicare in Canada.

The principles of medicare, Mr. Speaker — accessibility, universality, comprehensiveness, portability, and public administration — have served us well. It is time though to add another principle, and that principle is wellness. For too long our health care system has in fact been an illness care system. It is now time to move beyond our reliance on technological advances targeted at treating illness. Instead we must work actively to prevent illness and disabilities. We must view people in an holistic manner and recognize all the factors that affect our health.

Bricks and mortar, beds and capital construction, are simply no substitute for community involvement and responsible decision making. We have the highest number of hospital beds of any province in Canada, and an extremely intensive use of hospitals, physicians, and prescription drug services. At the same time, people want a greater sense of empowerment and involvement in decisions affecting their lives, including health care services. The wellness model is designed to respond to those trends.

As a board member of Saskatoon City Hospital, I became aware of the ironic fact that Saskatoon does not really need three hospitals. Despite the fact that over 50 per cent of patients admitted to City Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital, and 75 per cent admitted to University Hospital come from outside that city, Saskatoon still probably needs only about two and one-half hospitals.

Ironically, the reason for this comes from technological advances and day-surgery techniques, many of them pioneered at Saskatoon City Hospital. This occurred at a time when the former government was approving massive expansion and renovations in Saskatoon's hospitals — the bricks and beds theory of health care that is absolutely no substitute for quality patient care and decent home care services.

It will require the wisdom of Solomon and the community sensitivity of the recently appointed Saskatoon Health Board to decide where that adjustment to two and a half from three hospitals will occur. But I'm confident that they will succeed, Mr. Speaker, just as I am confident that we will see success with similar other community wellness boards across this province. The individuals who are working to change our illness system into a wellness system are genuinely committed to developing a system that prevents diseases and promotes health.

Mr. Speaker, we have many hospitals in this province, yet the pattern of utilization is not what many would expect or want from a modern health-oriented system. Too often people drive by the hospital in their home community to go to a larger, more modern hospital. Often these are the same people who want to see their hospital stay open as a means of employment in rural Saskatchewan.

I spoke recently with a woman who argued that her local, small hospital should remain open because she needed the \$300 per month that she gets as a cook for that hospital. That money supplements her farm income. Jobs are important, Mr. Speaker, particularly jobs that help women and their families stay on the farm. However, it is not a question of jobs or no hospital; it is a question of jobs and a modern, responsive health care system meeting the real health needs of people.

(1445)

Just think of the community benefit and health-enhancing activity this woman could be sharing by using her skills to provide nutritional advice and community education to seniors in their homes. Think of how this new wellness model can be used to expand and enhance the quality of jobs, the quality of life, and the quality of health care in rural Saskatchewan. Sociologically and demographically it is important to begin to deinstitutionalize the health care system, particularly for seniors. We're living longer. Let's work now to ensure that we're living better.

We anticipate that seniors will make up 15 per cent of Saskatchewan's population by the year 2000. Since seniors currently use an estimated 45 per cent of all public health resources in Saskatchewan, this could translate into increased service and cost pressures. We simply must be able to respond adequately and sensibly to those pressures. An evolution, the third wave of medicare, the wellness model, is the way to do that.

We know the public expectations about the provincial health care system are very high. There is a pervasive techno-fix-it attitude that is at odds with a compelling need to work on the prevention of disease and the promotion of health. The wellness model, Mr. Speaker, will establish a collective view of the health care system that emphasizes healthy life-style choices and individual responsibility within a framework of community-oriented decision making.

As we age, we must recognize that we will want and need health care for terminal illnesses. In many cases we will be faced with the need to provide those services at home. And in many cases those home services will be the most dignified and humane services that could be provided. But as long as we continue with a bloated system that over-emphasizes institutional care and cannot provide the necessary educational and support services for sensitive and loving care at home, we will never have the sort of system that can adequately respond to people's real health care needs.

I want to talk a bit about my experiences in providing home nursing care for my husband during his terminal illness, and the kinds of trends and evolving health care patterns that I foresee as our population continues to age.

Only through the adoption of a wellness model will we be able to respond adequately and humanely to the inevitable pressures that come from an ageing and ailing population.

When my own husband was dying of cancer, likely a preventable life-style-related disease, I was fortunate to have the helpful support of a number of friends and neighbours so that he could remain at home. Not only did he remain at home, he died at home. This was his choice, Mr. Speaker, and we were fortunate for the community support that allowed him to make that choice.

We were lucky to have that support because, Mr. Speaker, we could not obtain official home care services. At a time when hospitals in Saskatoon were engaged in renovation projects costing over \$80 million, there was not sufficient money budgeted for adequate home care services.

We have had too much of an emphasis on capital construction. Bricks and beds do not make a health care system, and bricks and beds do not heal — people do the healing, and people should be emphasized in our health care system. An expansion of home care services and a move away from institution-based services will allow other individuals to make the same choices my husband and I did.

My personal experiences have convinced me, Mr. Speaker, that only through implementation of a wellness model will we have a strong and healthy system of health care in Saskatchewan.

I am pleased to move this motion. And I do so with a strong sense of the critical importance of making the bold and innovative community-oriented changes that are necessary for an evolving wellness system that will fit the health needs of Saskatchewan people for the 21st century.

I do now move:

That this Assembly recognize the importance of broadening our approach to health care and support the introduction of the wellness model which stresses the need to improve our collective well-being by enhancing our social and physical environment, adopting healthier life-styles and working to prevent disease and disability.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to say a few words in response to the member from Saskatoon in her motion, and I will be getting to that in a few moments.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I give notice right now that I will be moving an amendment at the conclusion of my remarks. But before I begin that, I want to read the amendment into the record. And I would ask all members opposite to listen very carefully. It's rather a lengthy amendment, but I found as I perused the issues that we were talking about and discussing that a lengthy amendment was indeed necessary.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving the following amendment:

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

(1) Condemns the government for secretly creating a so-called wellness model that to date has included: (a) creating secret plans to dramatically reduce access to health care in the province; (b) unilaterally and without warning de-insuring optometric services; (c) unilaterally and without warning imposing user fees on chiropractic patients, and in consequence causing an immediate fee increase to patients of 30 per cent; (d) unilaterally and without warning imposing user fees on cancer patients; (e) unilaterally and without warning tripling the user fees associated with the Saskatchewan drug plan; (f) unilaterally and without warning increasing the charges against diabetics by 3,000 per cent; (g) unilaterally and without warning announcing the government will within two years absolutely cease to fund level 1 and level 2 care for seniors; (h) unilaterally and without warning changing the structure and dramatically increasing the fees to the sickest elderly in special care homes; (i) unilaterally and without warning removing the seniors' heritage grant from seniors in innovative and subsidized housing; (j) secretly scheming to close up to 66 rural hospitals and creating two classes of citizens — those with access to timely acute care and those who may die in transit to a major urban centre; (k) destroying the morale of physicians and surgeons by threatening to force them all to become government employees; and (l) using taxpayer money appropriated by this Assembly for health care purposes, instead to support the partisan exercises of the Minister of Health, including a recent letter campaign replete with political attacks on the opposition; (m) failing to act seriously on its own rhetoric, that the so-called wellness model requires action to reduce poverty and increase and create employment, and instead actively increasing poverty and destroying employment by cancelling intergovernmental agreements, and a complete failure to accept its responsibility as exemplified by such action as the cancellation of the AECL agreement and the refusal to meet financial obligations to farm families.

(2) Demands that prior to the government making any major changes to Saskatchewan's health care system, a committee of the Legislative Assembly holds full-scale public hearings to obtain genuine public input on the shape of their health care system.

Mr. Speaker, that is the amendment, and that is the litany of issues and concerns that have been created by this government as far as the citizens of this province of Saskatchewan are concerned.

I listened very carefully to the member of Saskatoon

Wildwood as she spoke, and there was a ring of hypocrisy involved in the remarks made by that member as she was tippy-toeing, tippy-toeing around the real issue, the issue that this is simply budget-driven. It's deficit-driven.

And I remind members and I remind the public who are listening to this debate about the position taken by the Minister of Health while she was the critic of Health in opposition. She roundly condemned our government of the day for our money that we were investing in the Everyone Wins program, which was a wellness program.

We have no trouble with the concept of the wellness model as long as the wellness model is designed to be preventative. Where our concern and our problem comes in, when the wellness model is designed to save money — to save money.

And the hypocrisy for the Minister of Health to claim the wellness model as her own, while when she was in opposition roundly condemning it at every twist and every turn of events, therein lies the hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker.

Now she made mention . . . or the member from Saskatoon Wildwood said we have such a wonderful health care system but that we cannot afford to support it. Using the documented evidence, the fact that we have as many hospitals in Saskatchewan, I believe she said, as does Ontario, but of course with only one million people.

But I'm sure the Minister of Health and the member opposite is not equating the circumstances that we find ourselves in Saskatchewan to the circumstances that the millions of people in Ontario find themselves in. Surely you members opposite recognize the uniqueness that is Saskatchewan. Our rural element — you cannot ignore that.

The member from Athabasca sits there listening very attentively and I appreciate that, but he's got to have concerns about what this could mean for rural Saskatchewan. I know he does, and so does the member from Cumberland. And I suggest that so do the members in the rural Saskatchewan. What does this mean for rural Saskatchewan?

Why are you telling and talking about the wellness program, about the closing and the potential closing or at least the converting of 66 rural hospitals, and who gets up and makes the motion? Who gets up and makes the motion? I want members of the audience and the public to notice this. It's a member from Saskatoon.

And all I have to do is say to the member of Saskatoon, why are you not only condoning what the Minister of Health is doing, you're promoting it? And I ask the member from Saskatoon Wildwood, how far do you live from the base hospital? Pretty close, she says with a grim smile. Pretty close.

(1500)

Therein lies the dilemma that we're facing as rural MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) here. Yes, the people in Saskatoon are close to those services but what

about the members who are representing areas that are now going to be how far from rural services or from acute care services? How long does the ambulance drive going to take? How much further is it going to take if this scheme is implemented?

And I repeat again, Mr. Speaker, therein lies the dilemma that this opposition has. If we could sit down and if the Minister of Health would screw up enough courage to come forward with this wellness program that she has been scheming about in secret, that she refuses on a daily basis to answer in this House . . . She blames us for scare tactics.

And I remind members of the public, it is not our document. The 66 rural facilities are not our figure. They are the figures of the Minister of Health appointed by the Premier of this province. That is what our concern is.

The Speaker: — Order. The member's time has elapsed. I need the . . . I hope the member has the amendment.

Mr. Neudorf: — I'll just move it then I'll have it all signed and ready, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Having been moved — I think the member clearly indicated that he was moving the amendment — I want the Clerks to have a look at the amendment. It's a fairly lengthy amendment and I hope the members give us just a few minutes to have a look at it.

Order. When the member was reading his amendment, I felt that part of it was probably not in order and I would ask the member if he would allow me to delete (m) from his amendment. I believe the rest would be in order; (m) is simply not relevant to the last part — the first sentence is, but the last part is not relevant to the motion that is before us. And we could either delete that last part and let the rest of it stand, or as Beauchesne's says, the Speaker can simply rule out the whole amendment and I didn't want to do that.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, while I was reading the amendment and concluding (m), the issue that you raised crossed my mind as I was reading it. So we will withdraw section (m) and go with the rest of the motion.

The Speaker: — The Speaker does have . . . Beauchesne's makes it very clear that the Speaker may delete parts that are not relevant and therefore (m) will be deleted from the amendment, but the rest will stand. And the debate will continue concurrently.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to speak to the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon Wildwood.

During the past election campaign, I talked about the need to carefully examine our health care system, to shift the focus from an over-emphasis on treatment to preventative medicine. I talked about evaluating the ways in which we spend our health care dollars to ensure that we are not duplicating services. I talked about the necessity to provide people with choices in health care and to involve them through consultation in making decisions about the future of their system. And I said that

not changing our health care system would threaten the future of medicare.

Contrary to allegations made by members of other parties, I did not talk about the need to close rural hospitals. I clearly addressed the fact that we do indeed have more hospitals than Ontario with 10 per cent of the tax base, and at that time, they paid health care premiums.

I spoke openly and honestly about how we should not be building one more hospital until we had a comprehensive health care plan based on a wellness model for health care. I discussed at a news conference in front of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon during that election campaign the irresponsible decision making that had resulted in the expansion of the hospitals in Saskatoon when there was no funding to staff the beds that they contained.

I want to make it clear that the Liberal wellness model was outlined through our policy committee; that a structure was put in place for providing for complete consultation with all affected groups from professionals to consumers of health care. And these proposals were made clear.

I did speak of rural hospitals. I talked about them in this context, Mr. Speaker. Throughout this province, I talked about them being palliative care units, emergency care units, and centres of wellness. That is the major difference in approach between the Liberal wellness model and the NDP wellness model.

While other politicians stayed away from health care, except to make very general and rhetorical statements, I told the people of Saskatchewan what the reality was and that they would be forced to deal with it sooner or later no matter who they elected.

The Conservatives took every opportunity to take things out of context and scare people in rural Saskatchewan about hospital closures. Indeed I still have copies of the advertisements that were taken out in rural newspapers during the election campaign. The NDP talked of its commitment to medicare and its wellness model, but never provided specifics.

It has now been almost nine months since the New Democratic Party promised its wellness model. Almost nine months since the people of Saskatchewan put forward a motion saying they had lost confidence in the previous government and wanted to see an end to the Conservative approach to the economy, to everything, including health care.

It has now been nine months since the NDP was given a mandate to take the wraps off its plans for health care, for the energy institute, for government reform.

People realize that the incompetent management of the province's finances will indeed force us to make decisions about the nature of our health care system and every other program that we have in Saskatchewan. It would be wonderful to undertake the process of re-evaluating health care, Mr. Speaker, without the pressure of onerous debt, but none the less the process must happen.

I hope that the Conservatives will indeed begin to shoulder the blame for the fiscal mess that we face in this province; and equally so that the NDP will begin to show the leadership that it promised during the campaign. To date I've seen no evidence of either and that disappoints me a great deal. Listening to the Conservatives continue to scare people about rural hospitals and listening to the NDP say nothing to put people's minds at ease is the height of irresponsibility on both sides of the political fence.

It is truly time that this government either unveiled their wellness model or admitted that they simply are stalling for time in a desperate attempt to create one. The people have a right to see where this government is taking them. For in the final analysis it will be the health care system of the Saskatchewan people which has been changed and restructured, not the health care system of the NDP or any other government of the day.

I find some irony in the member from Wildwood rising today and stating, and I quote:

. . .recognize the importance of broadening our approach to health care and (to) support the introduction of the wellness model . . .

With all due respect, I cannot figure out why the Minister of Health does not actually introduce the wellness model. This is the equivalent of having Jay Leno introduce Johnny Carson to introduce Billy Crystal to introduce the people who will be introducing the Academy Award winners.

People in Saskatchewan have been watching and waiting for the NDP to unveil its plans for health and energy and agriculture. And they are getting tired of the endless vagueness, tired of committees struck to study the reports that have already been produced. What the people are saying — since the 55 members of the government side appear not to be hearing them — is that what they really want to see is the wellness model, and a chance to have input and to offer constructive criticism.

The member from Rosthern has stated that the people of this province should have an opportunity to give input into how they want their health care system to be. In the meantime, this government's lack of information is causing fear and uncertainty. People are suffering as the result of cuts made to the prescription drug plan and to the de-insuring of optometric and chiropractic services. Seniors are writing to me, fearful that they will no longer have safe and affordable care if rumoured cuts to nursing homes and level 1 and 2 care are made. Diabetics are fearful that their health has been placed at greater risk as the result of irresponsible decisions made without consultation.

I appreciate that the member wants to go on record as supporting the nebulous wellness model which is about as non-committal as saying, I support apple pie and blue skies and clean water. All of us support those things. All of us support quality health care for all of our people in the province of Saskatchewan.

I would like to suggest to the member opposite that I

strongly support the introduction of a wellness model so that all of us can finally see what the NDP comes up with after nine years in opposition and nine months in government. But as the famous athletic equipment supplier says in its commercials: for Heaven's sakes, just do it.

Mr. Draper: — Mr. Speaker, sir, I'm very pleased to be able to contribute to a debate on the matter of health care. This is, after all, my own particular area of expertise, and it was largely because of my desire to take part in a new approach to medical care that I agreed to stand in last year's election.

Most of the members will know that I've spent 25 years practising medicine in rural Saskatchewan — the first 10 in a single-doctor town and the subsequent 15 in a two-doctor town. This has then given me a different view of medicine and nursing from that of most physicians, and it is bound to colour my views. Hence I'm particularly interested in the maintenance and delivery of health care services in rural areas. And I would like to point out to the hon. member from Rosthern there that there are a number of points that I would like to raise regarding ambulance service that I've given a lot of thought to but just don't have time to in the 10 minutes allotted to me.

I specifically mention health care services, sir, because it is the services that matter, much more so than the buildings that they are rendered in. I have visited several of the integrated facilities commissioned by the previous administration at Lafleche of course and at Maidstone in the Cut Knife-Lloydminster constituency and two more at Rockglen and Coronach that are still in the process of fitting out at this moment.

Sir, these facilities are extremely elegant and well built to such an extent that I suspect that the architect must be NDP. The snag is to find doctors and registered nurses to man them. The rural population is contracting. The demographics of our province have changed dramatically since the network of rural union hospitals was developed in the '50s and '60s. Those flat-topped shoe boxes that were the latest thing in hospital design and equipment at that time have done their turn. The roofs leak and the foundations have cracked, floating on our shifting clay soils.

In 1992 they are not only in poor physical shape, their equipment is out of date and they do not come up to the present-day fire regulations. None of them has any kind of climate control. New medical and nursing techniques have eclipsed them, and the whole concept of the delivery of health services has to be thought out again.

(1515)

This province is uniquely situated to do this rethinking. It was this province under Tommy Douglas that introduced the revolutionary idea of universal, prepaid and tax-based hospitalization in the 1940s. It was this same province of Saskatchewan that under the leadership of Woodrow Lloyd introduced universal medicare. The opposition at that time was enormous, as you, sir, know much better than I do. You were here and I had not even heard of Saskatchewan.

The opposition was incredible. Yet, sir, within a few short years a Liberal federal government had spread the ideas of health care to Tory, Liberal, and even Social Credit provincial governments from sea to shining sea, as the song goes.

Saskatchewan was right in 1947; it was right again in 1962. The first universal hospitalization plan; the first universal medicare plan, not only in Canada, sir, but in the whole American continent from Arctic Circle to the Antarctic Ocean.

We, or rather you, sir, and the hon. members, have been vindicated time after time — far ahead of the pack and proven right, the envy of this continent. And now, sir, in 1992 we are once more ahead of our time with an entirely new vision of health care — the wellness model.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — As yet, sir, it is not perhaps fleshed out completely, but the chassis is there and the driving force. But there are many features not yet included. We know what we want but the details may elude us just now, but they will come.

This requires work and thought and co-operation between all parties. And when I say parties, sir, I mean parties with a small "p" — not political parties. Health care, sir, should not be a partisan matter, nor should education or roads for that matter. We need everybody's assistance on both sides of the House to design a better vehicle of health care delivery.

We know how to diagnose, sir, and we know how to treat. We even know how to prevent disease. The problem is that we cannot persuade people to do what is sensible and right for them to do. We know that smoking is the major cause of lung disease and a serious contributing factor to both heart and stomach disease. We know that poor eating habits lead to high cholesterol and high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes. We know that colon cancer is directly linked to our lousy diet. But we have to get the message out.

But, sir, there are other factors which cause disease that are preventable, and these are not due to individual culpability. These are poverty and its complications. And the immediate complication of poverty, sir, is hunger.

To help alleviate poverty we've already increased funding to the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan by \$28 million. We have introduced the community employment program to try and create a thousand new jobs. We have also increased funding for child hunger programs by 35 per cent. The Saskatchewan child tax reduction for low income families has been increased by 25 per cent to \$250 annually. In themselves, sir, they are not earth-shaking but they are indicative in the way we intend to move.

As a consequence of increased industrialization, our environment is being more and more polluted. The air, our water, and the land itself are being degraded by gaseous emissions, liquid and solid effluent, and

chemicals we are using deliberately on our land. We are now recognizing the harmful secondary effects of our fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides. And it is to counteract some of these that the Charter of Environmental Rights and Responsibilities has been introduced.

Occupational health, sir, has long been recognized as important to the employees of factories, mines, and quarries. We are now realizing how many accidents are occurring on farms and causing severe disability. One of the major problems with farm accidents is they occur to farmers working alone, often miles away from assistance. These problems need to be addressed seriously.

What we have done in our area is to band together into a group that we have called the central six — Gravelbourg, Lafleche, Kincaid, Mankota, Ponteix, and Vanguard. The hospitals have agreed to one set of common bylaws and every physician has admitting privileges in each of the six hospitals. One member from each hospital board meet as a sort of super-board to co-ordinate services in the area, and we are actively recruiting a physiotherapist who will spend one day a week at each hospital. No hospital alone can afford such a service but six of us together can.

If this proves a success, we hope to recruit a dietician or perhaps a mental health nurse. We are working on integration of public health and home care services.

But here again, we are bedevilled by problems of overlapping boundaries. All of us are anxious to get going on a system of delivering preventative services, using the buildings we already have but being flexible as to how we use them.

Our population is gradually getting older. Our children are leaving the province, leaving fewer people to look after the elderly and infirm. There's a smaller tax base. We cannot abandon our pioneers after all the years and work they have given to us. The time passes and they will need more, not less services. We have to devise ways of delivering these services at lesser cost if taxes are not to rise even higher.

One way of attempting to do this is by increased accent on home care. We want to keep those who would now be admitted to level 2 homes in their own homes as long as possible. But they cannot do yard work or major cleaning; therefore these services will have to be provided for more and more people.

Twenty-five years ago, centennial homes were built in many small towns as low rental for the elderly. Many of the widows — and they are largely widows — that moved in in 1967 are still there, a quarter of a century later. I've watched so many of them grow more and more frail; many have died and . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to speak to the amendment moved by the member from Rosthern, an amendment which so accurately outlines

the NDP government's attack on our health care system — actions forced on the people unilaterally in the NDP budget without any consultation whatsoever, actions opposed vehemently by not only the residents of Saskatchewan, but also by the health care providers affected.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP betrayal continues. We, the official opposition, were provided with a copy of the NDP government's new health care proposal, a proposal known as the wellness model. As we've become accustomed to, this NDP health model does not even come close to what the NDP continually promised the people of Saskatchewan while they were in opposition and during the election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have always claimed to be the only political party who could save the health care system as we know it in this province. A party well known for their use of the medicare tactics in the past, they claim to now have a new program, the wellness model for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They are going to give birth to the wellness model.

But, Mr. Speaker, I say to the people of Saskatchewan that they are not going to give birth to a new model. They are going to abort hospitals all over this province; 66 hospitals are on the list of hospitals that they have presented in their wellness model of hospitals which will be closed or converted in this province, Mr. Speaker. A new definition of the wellness model — closing hospitals, aborting hospitals all over this province.

Now that they're in government they have changed their tune from when they were in opposition, Mr. Speaker. The NDP's secret plan for health care states that up to 66 hospitals are going to be closed in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, they are supported by the Liberal leader, the member from Saskatoon Greystone, in the number of closures that they want to see in this province.

The Liberal candidate during the last election in Kindersley said that the people of Eatonia, Saskatchewan, should not be allowed to have a hospital, that the hospital in Eatonia should never open. That's the same type of thing that we're hearing from this government opposite now, Mr. Speaker. They want to close also that hospital in Eatonia.

And I'd like to tell all members of this Assembly today, Mr. Speaker, the people of Eatonia raised \$1 million — \$1 million for the construction of that hospital in Eatonia, Mr. Speaker. They raised it in the town of Eatonia and surrounding municipalities and put that \$1 million towards the construction of that hospital. And now those members opposite that are now in government, who claim to be the defenders of medicare and claim to be the defenders of the health care system, want to close it, and they have the support of the Liberal leader, Mr. Speaker.

That's the type of thing that the people of Saskatchewan are concerned about, the health care system in this province now, Mr. Speaker. And ironically, ironically, Mr. Speaker, two days ago I received an invitation to attend the opening, the official opening, of the hospital in Eatonia, the same hospital that these members now want

to close. It's going to open August 5. The official opening of that hospital is August 5. And the Liberals and the NDP feel that that hospital should never be opened, even though the people of that community and surrounding area contributed \$1 million to the construction of that hospital.

Last fall, Mr. Speaker, they had a sod-turning. They had a sod-turning for that hospital, for the construction of that hospital. And I was proud as a candidate to be able to attend that sod-turning ceremony, Mr. Speaker. And what happened? I'll tell the members opposite. The entire community turned out. The entire community turned out. They closed down the school for the afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and every school children and every person in that community attended that celebration of the sod-turning event for the construction of that hospital, Mr. Speaker.

And this now we see in the NDP's wellness model, they want to close that hospital, Mr. Speaker. That's what you people want to do; you want to close that hospital in Eatonia. They claim to support the health care system and are the great defenders of that system, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Eatonia, now they know what the government's agenda is. They know what the government wants to do, and they know that the Liberal leader supports them in the closure of their hospital.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Kindersley — myself — and all of the people in the constituency of Kindersley and all of the people of Saskatchewan oppose, oppose the closure of hospitals like that one in Eatonia, the type of closure that they want to do.

This doesn't sound like something the provincial government would propose to its constituents. No, Mr. Speaker, but their report is legitimate, a fact confirmed by the Minister of Health herself. She claims it is a month or two old, this report, and has been changed considerably. Yet she continues to refuse to table the newest version of this plan which could devastate many rural communities by the loss of their health care facilities and the jobs associated with them, Mr. Speaker. The secret plan remains secret.

The NDP proposal, if implemented, would not only close rural hospitals, it would also radically change rural health care boards, Mr. Speaker. All existing boards would be fired, and seven huge health planning areas would be created and appointed personally — personally appointed by the Minister of Health. It is wrong for one person to take that kind of control over local health governing the entire province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at least previous boards included the election of regional boards. But the NDP government will have no part of democratic elections in the health care system, Mr. Speaker. I ask why can people in this province elect school boards, but not hospital boards? Do we really want in this province one cabinet minister to rule the entire province? When that happens, we are likely to see a lot more closures of rural hospitals, Mr. Speaker. What hospital in your constituency, I ask each member, will be next? Which one will be next?

In my constituency, two hospitals have been identified, Mr. Speaker, so far — the hospital in Eatonia that I spoke of a few moments ago and the hospital in Dodsland. Those two have been identified so far, Mr. Speaker. Which one will be next? Eston is just over the limit — the 10 acute care bed limit that they have imposed — just barely over the limit. So I say now to the people of Eston, they better be careful because their hospital may be the next one on the list, on the NDP's wellness model list, Mr. Speaker.

(1530)

It is so blatantly obvious that if the NDP health plan was not leaked to us that the NDP government simply would have imposed it without any public consultation, Mr. Speaker. This would certainly be in keeping with all the other of their budget decisions, Mr. Speaker — decisions unilaterally imposed on us.

For example, Mr. Speaker, user fees for cancer patients; user fees on chiropractic and optometric services; increased deductible for prescription drug plan from 125 to \$380, Mr. Speaker; the removal of diabetic care from the drug plan, Mr. Speaker; and a freeze on all health care projects.

This doesn't sound like the type of thing that the NDP, the great defenders of medicare, would be doing, Mr. Speaker, but that is exactly what they're doing. The last budget promoted all of those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, the kinds of things like user fees on chiropractic and optometric services, Mr. Speaker. Diabetics now pay huge increases in insulin, Mr. Speaker.

And this all comes from the great defenders of medicare — the great defenders of medicare sitting opposite, who like to stand in their place and say that the only party in this province that can possibly defend the medicare system is themselves.

And what are they doing, Mr. Speaker? Piece by piece by piece, they're tearing down this system that's been built up over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've not even mentioned the detrimental, purely budgetary-driven decisions that the NDP government will soon be forcing on our province's senior citizens through legislation — through legislation without consultation, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they should have even . . . perhaps that should have been the NDP's government slogan.

Mr. Speaker, and the member from Shaunavon pipes up there now, Mr. Speaker. I find that amazing. How many hospitals in the wellness plan, Mr. Speaker, will be closed in his constituency . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to me that the Leader of the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan

can't recognize that the Government of Saskatchewan is doing it today, and talking with people and consulting every step along the way.

It's also very interesting to me that someone would base their whole speech on the closure of Eaton hospital when the member from Biggar for the government will be opening that centre — community health centre and hospital facility that is basing their programs and delivery service on the wellness model in Saskatchewan.

And so we have members opposite who indeed are taking to new levels the scare tactics for the people of Saskatchewan, rather than wanting to join with us once again in taking out an exciting vision for the people of Saskatchewan.

But I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to support and discuss a holistic and a broad-based approach to health care, something that neither of the members opposite perhaps can recognize. And I can tell you that many people in Saskatchewan are looking at this as an exciting opportunity, a time for closer relationships with the government and much ongoing consultation when we try to look at the conversion of some institutions in the province of Saskatchewan and also talk about the possibilities of what good quality care will mean to all people in the province.

People in Saskatchewan are ready to vision and to move in this area. As we've heard, the constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is moving and the Eaton facility and we talk about . . . my members from Cut Knife-Lloydminster and those in Redberry who have worked to develop papers and to present their ideas of wellness to the wellness group in Saskatchewan. And my own constituency of Wascana Plains has done some visioning.

Those are just to name a few of the constituencies who've already begun to take this principle and to run with it and to say wellness means whatever it can for each community in consultation with their idea of what good quality health care can mean to their areas of the province.

We brought people together who had experience and an interest in the area of health to develop a working paper which was presented to the Minister of Health and the wellness team. So today I'd like to speak in three areas.

First, I'd like to look back and compare speeches that the minister has made recently, not only in this Chamber but outside the Chamber, to what we said prior to October 21, and to expand on what we've done in our own constituency with regard to wellness.

I would ask the members opposite to join with our constituency and develop the same process so that they can be a positive force in the wellness model and in the development of a model for their constituency. Or they may lose that opportunity because their people are ready to discuss the wellness approach.

The minister has said that the model stresses the need for public input and community co-operation in designing

the health care policy based on community needs, for the public health care needs in the community and the preventative care approach, and refocuses health care away from the reactive to preventative approach.

Programs emphasizing prevention are the key to lowering health costs in the future. For example, good pre-natal care dramatically lowers both the health risks for the mother and child; in turn, lowers future demands on the health care system. So that not only are we looking at basic reform in the systems when we're talking about trying to handle the numbers of line-ups and people who are coming into a curative care mode, but we're trying to stop the numbers of people in that line-up by looking at the prevention model.

And you can ask any municipality across this province, because their mandate is the preventative approach and they can tell you clearly that the wellness model will work and work well for Saskatchewan.

This new direction is required to improve care and raise the effectiveness of health services. Between 1987 and 1991 health care spending increased by 34.7 per cent — a total of \$410 million increase.

Problems in the health care sector continue to grow and worsen as the members opposite tinkered around the edges and did not know what to begin to do to approach the second generation of health care as contemplated by Tommy and others. A shift is required now. We have to view and manage the health care system in the future. Changing life-styles, social conditions, and our physical environment is the key to better health for Saskatchewan people. Studies show that 90 per cent of health problems are related to these three factors. Many of the leading causes of death are cancer, heart disease, accidents, and suicide. All can be reduced or prevented through preventative models in place.

Health care strategies have been predominantly aimed at treating illness. We're going to shift the emphasis away from treating illness to promoting health. This concept is based on the view that the natural human condition is one of health and independence, and it's the function of the health system to maintain its natural state of wellness.

So our minister acknowledges that the birthplace of medicare is the leader in the field of health care. We are carrying on that legacy by taking the next step: a health system based on wellness. What the model also acknowledges is the challenges of poverty, alienation, stress, and family and community disintegration that are creating problems for our health care system. These are critical factors influencing health and well-being of our individuals. And the sources are social, but their treatment is often medicalized.

Our new health system will incorporate the fundamental principles that they were based upon, the five principles of comprehensiveness, universality, portability, accessibility, and public health administration. Saskatchewan is committed to a high level of health care in the province. To have that, we need a health system which provides co-ordinated and integrated services and which is based upon the needs of the people and of the

community. That's what the minister has been saying inside this Chamber and outside this Chamber when we've been talking about the wellness model.

But prior to October 21, 1991, we as a party expressed our commitment to address the basic social, economic, and environmental conditions that cause health care problems. Our goal is not only to protect and sustain life, but also to enhance the quality of life. And as we said during the election time, we were going to look at all the factors in the community that had a bearing upon that; income security, employment, education, housing are to name just a few.

When we look at what the Minister of Social Services has presented to us, we've increased funding for feeding programs by 35 per cent. We've created a committee employment program which created about 500 jobs so far. And by March 8, 1993 there will be about a thousand jobs created. We have increased SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) rates to \$25 per person in the North as a way of reinstating the food subsidies that were cancelled by the members opposite.

With respect to Saskatchewan Housing initiatives, six regional co-ordinators have been established to co-ordinate and deliver extended services to people in seniors' housing projects. For example, health services, leisure services, and home care services will be provided. As well there is \$4 million each year for two years in providing new and improved water and sewer services toward northern communities — all part of a wellness approach because wellness, after all, is talking about healthy public policy.

We talked about expanded role in the communities for health centres that would be similar to the community-based, community-controlled organizations that we have in place, and a few in the models that we have in Regina and Saskatoon, Prince Albert.

Now there's the community clinic. It's a model for achieving our goal of a community-managed health care system in the cost-conscious environment of the 1990s. It's not the big bang, regional theory that was contemplated in the Murray approach. It talks about district-sized home care, district sizes of change that will look at continuing the health costs in the future and talking with people in those districts as we're going about that job to provide a seamless approach so that people will feel that they're part of the process and they're addressing what they need when they're talking about health care.

Not everyone can be handled in a preventative mode and we know that there are people, through no fault of their own, that will also be wanting to be treated in an emergency situation or in a situation where you want to have hospital care that meets the needs of some of the illnesses that would be looked at such as heart, long-term illness, and care.

But we're also talking about working with those communities to say how we can best deliver that, either through trauma teams, through conversion of their centres, and looking at what care we can provide in a

regional system that would be good quality care when they do go into a hospital.

New Democrats, during the election campaign when we talked about all of those, we also talked about a commitment to promoting and assisting the development of community health centres and similar types of community-sponsored health service organizations that will provide permanent, improved systems of funding and will provide permanent and improved systems of funding for those organizations. Those were all part of speeches that were made during the election campaign and that we are now carrying forward.

When you talk about wellness, you talk about healthy public policy; you talk about reform to the system as it now exists. And when you talk about wellness, you talk about talking with communities. And that's exactly what our constituency has done.

In our approach we began with a quote from Dawna Markova that said:

For the woman who found a chicken and lifted it up to the sky;
For the child who believed it really was an eagle;
For those who are willing to risk believing they can fly
beyond their beliefs
that they can't fly.

And that's exactly what the people of Saskatchewan are talking about — changing their beliefs from a curative and an illness approach to a wellness approach that maintains universality of medicare, but also gives good access to health services, but also considering full employment for people, adequate housing, social well-being, and recognizing values.

And as we in our constituency talked about that, we wanted to recognize the five pillars — that medicare system of comprehensiveness, universality, portability, accessibility, and public administration — because they were essential principles to medicare when it was founded. But there are other guiding principles of today that are equally important when we talk about wellness.

Our discussions centred around also the idea and the principle . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments regarding the motion that's been brought forward and also the amendment brought forward by my colleague, the member from Rosthern.

First of all I would just like to remind the government of a number of the initiatives they talk about, and they indicate that they brought forward, or that their wellness model is addressing.

Number one, I look at the constituency I represent, and I look at a number of initiatives that were talked about and were worked at and yet were not imposed, but we encouraged boards to take a very serious look at the fact that we must amalgamate or look at bringing boards together. And every one of the communities that I represent, the hospital and the care home boards have effectively over the last four years amalgamated into one board. And they've included the ambulance board.

The one board that we're still working together with is trying to bring the home care boards in line and creating an avenue that would allow them to work together with the hospital and care home boards. The problem we have there is the board districts, or the districts that have been set up don't quite line up so it creates a little more difficulty.

But when we talk about a wellness model, I would suggest over the past number of years, during the '80s specifically, the government of the day was certainly looking at ways of creating an atmosphere and an avenue through which preventive medicine could be instituted and brought forward and enhanced.

Certainly we can look back over the late 1980s and the government of the day introduced the breast screening program, a program that I think, Mr. Speaker, many women across this province appreciate. And I will acknowledge the fact that the government have expanded that program, but I must also remind people that it was the initiative taken by the former government that introduced the program to enhance the well-being of women across our province.

I think we should also be reminded of the fact that in the home care area, the home care field, the former government created a number of initiatives to enhance the ability of men and women to remain in their own homes, as that was one of the things that seniors talked about and brought to my colleagues and brought to my attention: the fact that they would prefer to remain in their own homes as long as it was physically possible, and asked the government of the day to encourage and look at the home care program, first of all, in the way of enhancing the program so that it would meet the physical needs that they face while remaining at home.

(1545)

And so, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the '80s, there were substantial increases put into home care. Even though the government today talks about increasing funding for home care, I want to remind the members, as I did the minister the other evening, the fact that the 19.5 or 21 per cent increase that the Minister of Health has talked about, many home care boards have all of a sudden found that even though they budgeted on a 19.5 per cent increase, the actual dollar value that has come to their specific board . . . and one particular board I'm thinking of turned out to be 5 per cent, a 5 per cent increase which is 14 per cent less than what they had anticipated, the result being their board is overbudgeted by \$50,000. Now they have to go back and review their budget process.

And I would think that it would be appropriate for the

minister and for the government to indeed let boards know exactly where they stand and what they can expect and where the major increases are coming from, rather than to lay out a broad statement that so much funding is going to be available and that that is part of their wellness model, when indeed it may not be the actual figures that we've seen thrown out.

And I think it would be appropriate for the minister to address and to consult with people, let people know where they stand.

As my colleague from Kindersley mentioned, talking about hospitals, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency there are a couple of communities that are going to be faced with the possibilities of hospital closures, and certainly it's been raised and brought to my attention already.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, I think if you sat down and talked to the people of those communities, talked to the people of small communities around this province you would find, Mr. Speaker, that many of these people realize that we cannot . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time has elapsed. As agreed to under the new rules, the question and answer period . . . a 10-minute question and answer period will begin right now.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member who has just spoken, the member from Moosomin, or perhaps one of the other members would like to answer, and perhaps the member from Wildwood might want to make her comment on this as well — this is with respect to the former government's planning or lack of planning when they put into . . . when they ordered and authorized the building of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon.

Did you have a plan in terms of how much money you were going to spend on that hospital? And did you come on . . . Was the cost projected and was it built according to cost? We know we're in a position where we're way overbudgeted in health in government. And could you comment on that, please?

The Speaker: — Before the member answers that question, I really think that that question was not appropriate. No one mentioned St. Paul's Hospital on this side, and in our rules we had agreed that we would . . . the questions should pertain to the discussion that we have held. And it's really unfair to direct that question to the member from Moosomin. But if he wishes to answer it, I certainly will allow him to answer.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just answer him this way. First of all I wouldn't, as has been indicated, have the direct numbers involved at my disposal at this time. But I would like to indicate that the former government made a commitment to people in Saskatchewan to create a healthy and vibrant health care system, and made a commitment to the people of Saskatoon to upgrade the facilities that they felt were very appropriate in their community and in their city. And I believe over the years you saw the commitment that the former government had towards

health care facilities, not only in Saskatoon, but in Regina and across this province.

Ms. Lorje: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that the project at St. Paul's Hospital was originally thought to have come in at around 20 million or less. Now again I'm going from hearsay discussions that I recall from various health care professionals at the time, but that the project actually came in at \$53 million — a factor of about two and a half times what had originally been thought that the project may cost. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, many of those beds have not been fully staffed or fully utilized since that time because there have been major changes in health care in this province and indeed all across the country.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the member from Saskatoon Wildwood. In her opening comments she referred to the change in governance that will occur in Saskatchewan with the wellness model. And I would simply ask her: do you feel it is appropriate that St. Paul's in Saskatoon, which is an affiliated Catholic institution, should maintain governance in the new format when the Catholic hospital in Moose Jaw — which in combination with the St. Anthony's Home project will be a leading-edge type of institution — is being told that the Sisters of Providence should not have any governance in the new health model?

And I'm wondering if you consider it fair for your city for a Catholic hospital to have governance, while we don't have governance in Moose Jaw.

The Speaker: — Before the member again . . . I would, as I did with the member from Prince Albert-Carlton, that question really is unfair. We are on the wellness model. And I know what members are attempting to do, but really we should stay within the spirit of the rules that we have established. If the member from Wildwood again would like to comment, fair enough. Otherwise we'll go to another question.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to comment because I think that the very way that the member opposite has put his question, he's seeking to create an argument and a fight where in fact there is none.

I am aware that there are discussions with the sisters in Saskatoon, just as there are discussions with the sisters in Moose Jaw. There are negotiations, and no one is attempting to push any group out at all. What is happening is that this, the wellness model, will be a true community consultation project. And if the Sisters of Providence want to leave, quit ownership of their hospital and go on to different things, then the government is willing to entertain those kinds of discussions. If they want to see a changing role, the government is willing to entertain those kinds of discussions as well.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for my colleagues in the opposition, since we are talking about wellness. As my colleagues probably know, that if one acquires HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) and you develop full-blown AIDS,

you probably will cost the taxpayers, in terms of medical care costs, in the neighbourhood of over \$70,000 per year.

There's a group of people in this province that are concerned that IV (intravenous) drug users — and there are IV drug users in this province — should the HIV or AIDS virus get into the IV drug user population, that in fact we could have over 500 citizens in this province that would develop AIDS. This group of people is pressing the government . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Does the member have a question?

Ms. Atkinson: — This group of people is pressing the government for a needle exchange program so that IV drug users don't use the the same needle and therefore could acquire HIV. And I'm wondering if the opposition would approve of a needle exchange program in terms of the wellness model.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member, but I would also like to indicate, I think when it comes to drug abuse and when it comes to the problems that our society and certainly society in general is facing with AIDS, no one will argue the fact that the use of separate needles is appropriate.

I think one of the major things that we should be talking about though is educating our teenagers, educating our children to the problems that they face by abusively . . . or abusing their bodies by using drugs. And I think a lot of times we face . . . sometimes when we try to address the problems we face out there, we tend to, rather than addressing the long-term goal, we look at just the immediate. And whether we just throw more needles on the market isn't going to address the long-term problems that the member is talking about.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the member from Saskatoon Wildwood. I was going to ask the member, in your wellness program, how do you convince the people of Macklin that stopping construction of a hospital that would replace a hospital that's been there since 1922, how does that square with your wellness program? How are you going to convince the people there that that's really a wellness program?

Ms. Lorje: — It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, under the wellness model, what we have to do is to have people in communities, people in regions take a look at the total amount of money that's being spent on health care in all its various forms in their particular region or particular community and then ask the people themselves how they would like to see that money best spent to enhance the well-being of all citizens in that community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, another question to the same member. How do you square what you said when you

look at the facts? This hospital predates medicare by 41 years. It's been there since 1922. The people of the district . . . It's run by the Grey Nuns; they run that hospital for many, many years before you ever thought of wellness.

Now you're suggesting that they can close that, and they even agreed to down-size from 25 beds to 17. They've spent \$200,000 already. And how do you square that with a wellness program? How do you square that by saying those people will be better off with a wellness program that closes their hospital that's been the hub of the district for 41 years before medicare was thought of?

Ms. Lorje: — Well I would say first of all that we have to recognize that there are changing demographics in this province and there are also changing health care needs in this province. As I said in my remarks, bricks and beds don't heal people. It's people that heal people, and we have to recognize that our health care system is more than simply institutional based.

I would suggest to the member opposite that what we need to be looking at is enhanced home care services, enhanced community education, and community development services. And I think the people of Macklin will be well served by asking themselves what kinds of real health care needs do they have and what kinds of real services do they want.

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Economic Development in Tourism and Housing

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to move a motion at the end of my remarks as follows:

That this Assembly recognize the Saskatchewan government's early initiatives in re-establishing a stable provincial financial climate which is strengthening our economy and is encouraging economic development, especially in the areas of tourism and housing.

Hon. members, and Mr. Speaker, I have attempted over the last number of weeks to get this motion on the floor. I want to just point out that there was an opportunity for me to speak on this motion I believe Tuesday last, if I had universal agreement from the members of this House. And I want to just remind members that I was a bit disappointed because the members of the opposition did not allow me to speak on this motion. So I plan to perhaps talk about a number of things that will encourage them to . . . next time they have the opportunity to meet, to speak, they will certainly comply with that most willingly and most co-operatively.

I note it is about 4 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to remind the members that the motion talks about economic initiatives. I would most happily like to commence my remarks by going over the litany of achievements of this government in a very short time that

we've been in power, but I think what's more appropriate at this point — I'll get to that shortly — but what's more appropriate at this point is that we talk about what happened prior to us becoming government and what has transpired in the short period thereafter the election.

(1600)

And I want to just say to members that prior to the 1991 election, Saskatchewan was very, very unusual in terms of its government's practices and initiatives. As a matter of fact, people now ask — things may be difficult in our economy now; they're getting better — but what was it like prior to the 1991 election?

And of course people do not need to be reminded about what it was like, but for the record, Mr. Speaker, we can recall the privatizations which occurred in this province. We can talk about how Saskoil was privatized, how 35 per cent of the equity of the Saskoil Corporation was given away without one nickel in return for its 35 per cent controlling equity. And members will recall that 40 per cent of the corporation was sold for \$75 million.

Members will recall that the government's equity fell from 60 per cent down to 25 per cent through the issuing of new treasury stock without giving the taxpayers one penny for that 35 per cent equity. If anybody's ever followed the stock market, or anybody's ever been involved with holding shares in companies traded on the stock market, they will know full well that any company that gives up a controlling interest to another group usually gets a premium for the stock. They don't normally give it away for nothing. They normally have to pay a premium of about 150 to 200 per cent on the stock.

But not the former government. The former government indeed didn't take a premium on the 35 per cent they gave away. They didn't even take dollar-for-dollar value the stock was traded on the market. What the government did, what the Conservative government did at that time is they gave away 35 per cent and controlling interest of a major, successful oil corporation that belonged to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

That was one example of their privatization. And of course that was one of many examples. We can talk about how Sask Minerals was given away. We can recall in the economy of the Conservative government prior to the 1991 election, the privatization of the Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation, how that cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. We can talk about the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan which cost the taxpayers of this province about \$490 million all told.

These are significant economic decisions by the former Conservative government which they would like us all to forget. But this was part of the decision-making process of the former government that got us into this serious economic position that we were in in the fall of 1991 and that we're now trying to address through a number of New Democratic Party government economic initiatives.

Of course in these privatizations, they weren't just numbers on paper, Mr. Speaker. These privatizations cost

the taxpayers significant amounts of money. They in essence passed on control of the corporations to private hands, in most cases private hands outside of the province of Saskatchewan. We've seen in our review, and I'll get to that in a moment, of our current financial situation, that not only have we passed the control out of our hands with no reimbursing value, but we've also lost revenues to our treasury.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, because prior to the 1982 election, Crown corporations use to give about 50 per cent of their profit to the treasury of Saskatchewan. That profit sharing enabled the governments of the day to keep the tax levels relatively competitive, relatively low, and in fact they were the lowest in all of Canada in this province, because of the major contribution in the Crown corporations. Many of them making profits not in Saskatchewan from Saskatchewan people but making profits on international markets in the mining areas and in the oil business as well.

So we lost money; we lost control. We've lost and will continue to lose significant revenues to this province. And of course the bottom line also you can compare in almost every case of the privatizations — not all but almost every case — we also had fewer jobs in the province of Saskatchewan. So that was the privatization economic atmosphere of the former government in the later days of its reign.

We also witnessed many secret deals. The government was very secretive. We've seen in this House, the Leader of the Opposition stand and talk about loss of freedom and talk about a government that does not allow debate and discussion on issues that are important to the taxpayers in this province. We've heard them time after time rail on about the lack of democracy under the NDP government. Well that, Mr. Speaker, is so far from the truth that it makes people laugh if it wasn't so serious.

What we saw under that former government were secretive deals. We saw them letting tenders in unfair way through bribes and through corrupt practices. We saw them in example after example, literally thousands of people appointed to the public services through patronage appointments. We saw the massive waste of taxpayers' money and the total government mismanagement. We saw the Conservative premier from Estevan travelling around the world in 80 days a number of times every year on the taxpayers' expense. We saw the population of this province, Mr. Speaker, decline year after year after year. We saw record bankruptcies from 1982 to 1991. Every year they increased to Saskatchewan provincial records under the former government.

In terms of economic development, it was a disaster. We saw the out-migration have very major effects on our province, and as a result some very severe economic hardship for our businesses and for our people.

But on October 21, nine days . . . or nine months I should say, prior to today — today is the nine-month anniversary of the last provincial election in this province — but nine months to the day today, Mr. Speaker, nine months ago, we saw the New Democratic Party get elected on the basis that we were going to open the books, that we're

going to get our financial house in order; that we're going to end the waste and mismanagement; restore open, honest, accurate, and accountable government; and renew Saskatchewan's fundamental values of compassion, fairness, and co-operation.

And in nine months, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk to you about some of the major things we've undertaken to get our economy back on track and to create an economic atmosphere in which businesses and individuals can govern themselves unhindered and freely without the government on its doorstep every day.

In the election campaign we talked about a number of things. And I have here — I'll share with the members later — some of our election planks. When we took office, Mr. Speaker, simply put, we were faced with an economy which was in a shambles and a government that was in total disorganized disarray. After nine years of an absence of leadership, after nine years of waste and mismanagement, patronage and corruption, Saskatchewan and many of its businesses were virtually on the verge of bankruptcy.

What steps did the Premier of this province and the NDP government take to address this financial disaster? Well, Mr. Speaker, we took a number of steps, and I wish to share those steps with you today. We took some major steps in terms of financial management, responsibility, accountability, and in terms of the economy.

Our first objective was to get the House of the government in order. That was our first objective, Mr. Speaker. We wanted to re-establish a sense of order in government and in the province so that we could commence the rebuilding of our economy because we were burdened with an incredible amount of debt, which I'll get to shortly.

And our major purpose and any government's major purpose when it deals with business or the economy is primarily to establish confidence in a government and confidence in a government's economic program and other taxation programs so that business know where the government's going. The purpose is to ensure there's an atmosphere that is not full of surprises, as the previous government often had. And basically if those kind of criteria are established, we are faced, Mr. Speaker, with opportunities for business to do business in the province to the benefit of all the people in this province.

Our early initiatives, Mr. Speaker. We took office November 1, but in November and December we took 12 basic decisions with respect to our economy, which in my view sent the signal out to the taxpayers and the business community that our economic initiatives were going to be consistent, were going to be predictable, and were going to be accountable.

We appointed the smallest cabinet in Saskatchewan's history — 11 members — saving about \$100,000 a month. We appointed a Financial Management Review Commission, called the Gass Commission, which was to report back to us in February. We repealed the new expanded portion of the 7 per cent provincial sales tax, saving about 7,500 jobs in this province over the first

three years.

We ended unconscionable severance packages which were more than double the industry standard and were abused time after time by the former administration. We passed a law requiring by-elections to be held within six months of any vacancy. We started regular and open consultations with business community and with stakeholders in the economy.

We eliminated \$8,000 a year salaries for legislative secretaries. The former government had 12 of them — at least 12 — plus all the expenses that they could accumulate on the taxpayers. We closed the Premier's office in Prince Albert at a cost saving to the taxpayers of about \$150,000.

We started doing very sensible, administratively responsible things that were . . . in hindsight and actually in foresight were quite simple to do. For example, we mailed SaskPower and SaskEnergy bills in the same envelope, at a cost saving of \$725,000 a year. We cancelled Fair Share, which saved about \$15 million initially and probably about that much each year. We undertook spending cuts on advertising and travel and other supplies, saving about \$28 million a year. We closed the trade offices in Hong Kong and Zürich and Minneapolis, saving about \$2 million a year.

And when you look at these 12 things we undertook, Mr. Speaker, in the first legislative session of the first six weeks of our government, we saved about \$52 million. That's \$52 per man, woman, and child in this province — about \$208 for a family of four — of taxpayers' money that we didn't have to spend on many of the things the former government spent on, which produced nothing in terms of value to the people of this province.

Our second step, Mr. Speaker, was to get our economy back on track. And we started doing this by reviewing again some of the practices of the administration so that we could make them better, make them more efficient, make them less costly to the taxpayers, make them more accountable and more open.

One of the first things we did is that we called the Crown Corporations Committee. This sounds like something that may not be too important to many people. But as chair of the Crown Corporations Committee and as a member of the committee for many years, I can tell you that this was the first time we had called the committee together because the previous government wouldn't do it for about, oh, I would say 14 or 15 months. The year 1991 was the first year in 43 years in this province that the government failed to call the Crown Corporations Committee to meet. It had to be the new NDP government elected to make this initiative responsible, Mr. Speaker.

Well we met, Mr. Speaker, in January and we met a number of times in January, February, and March, and we found a number of examples of PC government waste and mismanagement and all the things I just talked to you about that the Conservatives opposite wish us not to talk about because they're getting boring to them, they're getting boring to them. Some of the people think that

perhaps we should not talk about them, but we found a number of things in Crown Corporations Committee and our review of the Crown corporations that I must share with the taxpayers of this province.

Many people may not know this, but the Crown Corporations Committee is one of two public accountability committees of the Legislative Assembly. The Public Accounts Committee deals with the public accounts of the government, agencies, and departments and commissions. The Crown Corporations Committee deals with the expenditures of the Crown corporations which constitutes about 50 per cent of government expenditure.

But we found, Mr. Speaker, a number of things which I will share with you but which in my view were quite incredible. The Crown Management Board in our review reported that they spent \$322,000 to pay the salary and severance of one Otto Cutts who was the former president of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. Now that may sound like a lot of money. It is a lot of money. But what is even more incredible is that this Mr. Cutts was president for one year. He was president of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation for one year at a salary of about \$120,000 a year.

(1615)

He was given about a year's severance package, \$120,000, which made it 240,000. And the other \$80,000 was spent on things like, oh, \$30,000 out-of-pocket expenses with little or no documentation attached to the expense account; \$45,000 of that was used to move him to Ottawa. I'm not sure if he picked up his house and had somebody physically move the house, but to spend \$45,000 to make one move to Ottawa sounds to me to be quite exorbitant. But perhaps that was contracted out to one of the Conservative friends and they looked after him.

The Crown Management Board, Mr. Speaker, spent \$705,000 — do you think the first figure was incredible — \$705,000 was spent to pay Wolfgang Wolff, the president of the board of directors of the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) . . . I'm sorry, I'm sorry; I've missed a line here. We paid Mr. Wolff \$401,000 with a severance package of \$236,000. I'm sure everybody who works in the insurance business in this city, everyone who works in the retail business, and who works at IPSCO, and those who are carpenters and painters can relate to a severance package of \$236,000 to somebody who is merely a chairman of the board of directors who kind of had meetings from time to time and didn't have any responsibility but collect a pay cheque.

One thing the Tories could do when they were appointed, one thing the Tories had incredible amount of skill, which I commend them on, they had the great skill and the great ability to sign their names on the back of these huge cheques and deposit them in their bank accounts. They did that very well. They did it very, very well and I commend them on that. That's very little I can commend them on.

And the member from Morse . . . I'm waiting for him to get into this debate because everybody knows in this province that there's only two things wrong with the Conservatives and the Conservative Party, and that's things that they do and things that they say. That's the only things wrong with you guys. But everyone knows that and we'll wait for you to get into the debate because I think you'll have a great amount to contribute. And the member from Morse, as we all know, was a minister of many of these Crowns that abused the taxpayers. And I have a great deal of empathy for him whining in his chair because he's hurting a great deal over this.

The \$705,000 that was spent by the Crown Management Board was paid to a British firm, N.M. Rothschild & Sons, for general advice on privatization. And I underline the word general, because the advice on privatization was pretty general to them. But I mention this because about \$500,000 of this \$705,000 price tag was for expenses, much of which were not documented or receipts provided therefor. And everyone knows that that is something that is just unconscionable in any business. If you're going to claim expenses, you should at least have a receipt to provide to the accountant so you can issue the cheque.

And of course we have the \$29,000 spent by the Crown Management Board on its legal counsel, Mr. Terry Leier, to spend eight weeks in Stanford University to take a course. Now this is done in 1990, I believe, which was after many privatizations, but he was taking a business administration course on how to manage corporations. Unfortunately he was employed by the Crown Management Board for much of the GigaText affair and I think he had a lot to do with the decisions that were taken with respect to GigaText which cost the taxpayers over \$5 million.

I could go on and on and on about some of the numbers we've got here. But, Mr. Speaker, the point is, in my view, well made. We have, in review of the Crown Corporations Committee, uncovered example after example of hundreds of thousands of dollars that the former government spent without authority, without authorization, and without public accountability and responsibility.

And this affects our economy. It affects the fact that this kind of money is spent not on encouraging economic development or getting businesses to invest in their province, but it discourages them from doing that because it drives up the tax rate and of course the tax burden is spread out to the individual taxpayers as well as business taxpayers in this province.

The next step we took was we had the Gass Commission report to us. And they basically opened the books and reviewed a number of issues including those in the Crown corporations sector. But I want to just quote from a paper that I have here, and I'd be happy to provide it to the members if they wish. It's an analysis of the Saskatchewan Financial Management Review Commission prepared in March of '92.

The Gass Commission report documents the actions of an administration (under the former

premier, under the former government) gone wild. The PCs abused their power and bent rules to maximize their own interests. They did not have standard procedures that they followed (and if they did they broke them). Decisions to spend money were made in a haphazard, random approach, dependent often on the whims of the minister. Rules were used to justify actions that were irresponsible.

The accounting methods the Gass Commission reported on of the former government as such:

The Conservatives used outdated, inappropriate or inadequate accounting methods. This resulted in misleading information to the public about the financial situation and government expenditures. The Tories may claim that they were just using the same methods used by the Blakeney administration, but the fact is that they were in power for almost 10 years . . .

And they changed some of them but only to their own advantage.

The accumulated operating deficit was confirmed in this review to be as of March 31, 1991, about \$7.5 million, not as 3.7 billion as the former minister had reported. He may have got his numbers mixed up when they were punching them out on the computer. Instead of 7.5, he reversed them and made them 3.7.

The province's total public debt stood at \$12.7 billion as of March 31. This was uncovered and confirmed by the Gass Commission. And of course the annual budgetary deficit of that year 1991-92, was \$975 million, not the \$360 million the former government had stated.

What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that the former government played tricks, they played games with numbers. They misinformed, they hid numbers, they were secretive about what the real picture was financially. And in fact what they did was injure the economy of this province.

Yes, they injured the taxpayers and they will have injured them for the next 25 years because of this dead-weight debt they built over 10 years. But they also injured — not crippling, but almost so — the economy and the business community in this province. Because they know that taxes come from taxpayers, and if you're an individual working or if you're a business person working, you pay taxes.

But if you've run up this debt in a very irresponsible manner that the member from I believe it's — not Kindersley, but Souris-Cannington . . . No, no, it's not Souris-Cannington. No. What's the member from that . . . beside D'Autremont there?

An Hon. Member: — Maple Creek.

Mr. Solomon: — Oh, the member from Maple Creek, right. He's the new member — new member from Maple Creek. He does not remember all of these things. And I see that he's being very attentive with my remarks and I

commend him for that. He's getting a very good education here with respect to some of the numbers. And I hope that he has a little meeting with his colleagues when the session . . . the House adjourns at 5 and asks some more detailed questions about some of the practices of the former government.

The Gass Commission uncovered a number of things, Mr. Speaker, including the debt guarantees which totalled about \$1.7 billion.

The . . . report shows that in light of the provincial financial situation, most of these loan guarantees were irresponsible. Combined with the remaining accumulated deficit, this kind of financial risk has a serious, negative effect on the ability of the province to borrow sufficient funds to meet ongoing financial requirements. Decisions to increase the exposure to the taxpayers were made at a time when it would not be possible to raise revenue through taxation. These decisions (these decisions of the former government) were also made without review by the Legislature (where they could have been held accountable and responsible).

The highlights of the findings are many and we've heard a litany of the findings. But in essence the province did not receive any payments from the privatization of PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company).

The commission uncovered several examples where the former government entered into transactions or financial commitments without doing a full and complete financial analysis of the deal.

And we can talk about the GigaTexts and the Cargills, how these have cost us literally millions and millions of dollars.

The province's cost share of the Rafferty-Alameda dam project has ballooned from . . . \$42 million to more than 155 million, a cost overrun of a mere 200 per cent.

And that of course . . . in their accounting practice, anything within 200 per cent was usually pretty close, as close as they ever got. Unfortunately for their lack of attention to the details, the taxpayers of this province are paying a large amount of their money towards the interest on the debt that they accumulated.

And I can go on about the highlights of the findings of the Gass Commission, but in essence they talked about a number of severe major problems that the government inflicted upon the business community and the economy and the taxpayers of this province, which make governing in terms of economic influence very, very difficult.

But they did make some recommendations with respect to bad management practices, and the government is now reviewing many of these and would likely be in a very short order adopting many of them.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see the key recommendations

coming out of the Gass Commission which will impact on our economy and impact on the business community of this province. And many key recommendations including the . . . the budget should include a solid plan and strategy for reducing the deficit. And we've indicated to the people of this province in our budget that we're doing that.

Tendering and leasing policies should be reviewed. That is being done. The mandate and role of various agencies involved in economic development and diversification should be reviewed. That is and has been done. The operations of SEDCO should be reviewed. That is being done. And we can go on about some of the recommendations they've made to our government, which in essence would make the government more responsible and more accountable to the taxpayers of this province, and provide an atmosphere for business and others to do their business to make decisions based on no surprises from their own government which would injure their financial decisions.

So the Gass report in summary, Mr. Speaker, shows that the previous administration were "extremely incompetent financially." This is words right out of the report.

The report also indicates how, frequently, their incompetency was tainted (if not smeared) with corruption. It is almost impossible to tell which mistakes resulted from stupidity and which from greed.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, both of those are I think in the majority when it comes to characteristics of the former government's, including their premier and the member who was a minister in their government, from Morse.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we had a provincial auditor's report which came down. This contributed to our financial position. And we also had a budget which we brought down, Mr. Speaker, in early May. And the budget made some very, very important announcements and it sent the message to the business community that the NDP government is prepared to work with them in terms of economic development and in terms of a fair taxation policy. It also sent the message out, Mr. Speaker, that we have a very significant debt that we have to address.

And I could get into some of the very major, major programs of our budget, but I won't do that, other than to perhaps highlight one or two points that we introduced.

For example, the deficit goes from \$975 million of the previous administration on an annual basis down to \$517 million. And of course we see as well the budget paying about \$760 million in interest payments on the Tory debt. And if you exclude that interest payments that they ran up we would have had a surplus budget of about \$243 million.

But the budget, Mr. Speaker, sent the message to the business community that they should proceed and do business based on decisions which affect their business, not to worry about a government that would be

nationalizing things or giving the taxpayers huge debts to consider to be paying in the future, but a government that is responsible. That is the message we sent out, and that we're prepared to work with the business community. And we have been doing so, Mr. Speaker, in many ways, and I'll get to that very shortly.

But in the budget we decreased our expenditures by 3 per cent. The average for the past 10 years was a 6 per cent increase. We felt that was, under the circumstance, the best we could do. We, as I talked about earlier, slashed advertising and communications budgets by 29 per cent. We dissolved 40 boards and commissions, and others are being reduced, which would eliminate 500 government appointments. And on it goes.

We talked about . . . we undertook to cut cabinet salaries by 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We cut MLA communication allowances by 25 per cent. We froze out-of-scope management salaries and reduced Crown corporation executive benefits quite substantially, as well as reduced their salaries of the management at the upper level. And MLA salaries are frozen for a third year.

(1630)

So we've undertaken to do not only, in my view, very cost-effective things like saving \$52 million in the first eight weeks of our government with respect to waste and mismanagement, but also doing some things which were, in my view, very symbolic that in terms of a message that the business community have received and have responded in a very positive way.

Well we've undertaken to do all of these things, Mr. Speaker, and I've just gone over them for the past half hour. And now I want to take some time, if I can, to talk about the results of our actions, the good news emanating from the decisions of the NDP government

An Hon. Member: — Good news.

Mr. Solomon: — Well there's a lot of good news, and I'll just touch on a few of them because the members opposite, in my view, would perhaps like to get in the debate.

But for example, after eight years of regular decline in terms of our credit rating, Moody's bond-rating agency for the first time in eight years didn't downgrade our credit rating. Now that may not sound like a big deal to a lot of people, but that was very important to the taxpayers because every time our credit rating is downgraded it affects the business community. It affects the taxation rates that people have to pay to sustain a higher interest debt. That results in a lower credit rating.

Also Standard and Poor's took us off credit watch, which is an indication from them that we're prepared to listen to the government. As a matter of fact, they commented during one of the meetings that they weren't quite sure whether they could believe the financial report of this NDP government. And the question was, well why would you question us? Here are the documents; they're all in writing.

And they said, well the former government would come here every year and they'd lie to us. They would mislead us in terms of the information. And this, Mr. Speaker, was something that was quite revealing, that they in essence said, well we're going to believe you because you're a new government, and we're going to trust you to do what you say you're going to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, our government is going to do what we said we're going to do, and that is to be an open and accountable government, to create a business environment in which business people can take decisions based on their business, not just taking decisions based on the business of this House.

Confidence, Mr. Speaker, breeds optimism. Optimism spreads, and growth follows. That's been our priority purpose regarding the economy. And there is good news. There are many signs of optimism, indications that things are beginning to turn around.

And my first example, after the Standard and Poor's example of course, is the population. We've seen the population numbers increase in the 1970s to a very significant amount. And we've had two periods of substantial depopulation in Saskatchewan. From 1969 to 1973 we had a substantial amount of depopulation. We reversed that trend and increased the population from '73 to about '86.

From 1987 to about 1991 the population of this province declined quite dramatically. For example, in 1990 Saskatchewan's population shrunk by about 6,600 people. But in 1991 we went down by only about 187 people. And here's the interesting part. In the last three months of 1991, Saskatchewan's population actually grew by about 250 people.

Now some could say this might be a coincidence with the election, with all of the people coming into this province as a result of the government, but figures into 1992 show that this increase is being sustained. So in essence, there is some confidence in our government. There is some confidence in the fact that there's optimism here that there are some jobs.

And the theory is — and I choose to believe it, Mr. Speaker — that people don't necessarily come to where the jobs are. People come to where they think jobs will be. And since the election campaign, people have had confidence that there will be jobs here. In fact the statistics show very clearly that the number of jobs have increased quite significantly in this province.

Another sign of optimism — people are showing an increasing interest in visiting Saskatchewan. And during the month of April we've had a number of inquiries in our Department of Tourism. And the numbers of inquiries have more than doubled. Inquiries from the United States have more than tripled. And inquiries from Saskatchewan have increased by 400 per cent. And my colleague, the member from Meadow Lake, will share some of those numbers with you.

Another significant sign of optimism, Mr. Speaker . . . and my colleague, the member from Meadow Lake, is very

anxious to speak on this motion, and I will allow him to speak right after I'm done here, which will be very shortly. And I can hardly wait to hear what he has to say about the economic situation of our province, in particular his fine constituency of Meadow Lake.

But there's another significant sign of optimism, Mr. Speaker, in this province. And the good news is that housing starts are on the rise. We talked about a few moments ago the number of bankruptcies that increased year after year under the former administration, record numbers every year, each year breaking the record of the previous year. Well the record they also broke every year as government was that every year they had fewer and fewer housing starts. They had the record lows. They had fewer houses built in this province. They created an economy where the fewest houses were built in this province — year after year, breaking records that had been set in the 1930s when people were moving out by the thousands.

And we have some good news in respect to report on housing starts. The Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association recently put out a news release which reported that Saskatchewan was the most improved province in the housing market. In the first five months of 1992, housing starts in urban centres were up by 123 per cent over last year. So things are happening.

We also have some newspaper reports. The *Star-Phoenix*, July 7: "Home prices rebounding":

Buyer confidence is nudging Saskatoon house prices higher . . . The survey shows improvement in house prices in all parts of the city (of Saskatoon).

Prices are also rising in Prince Albert and North Battleford.

And we heard about the good news from Meadow Lake earlier today, and I think the member from Meadow Lake will share with us in more detail some of the good news from his constituency with respect to housing starts.

So the increases for all types of houses, even in Prince Albert, are on the rise, Mr. Speaker. This is a significant economic development in our province.

We see in another article, the *Star-Phoenix*, dated July 7 that housing starts in Saskatoon rose 40 per cent in the first six months of 1992 and pumped an extra \$17 million in the local economy, according to CMHC (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation). And of course, provincially the number of starts has more than doubled to 569 units from last year's 238. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a very significant factor as well in determining an economic trend and reflecting confidence in the economy of Saskatchewan.

In Regina, my home town, the constituency I represent is Regina North West, Mr. Speaker. And there's good news to report here in this city as well. We have here the citizens of Regina, according to this report of the *Leader-Post*, July 2, are staying put. They're not moving out of the city like they were under the former regime.

And the moving companies are saying that business is very, very good.

We have real estate home sales in Regina are up almost 25 per cent from a year earlier; that's for the month of May. And they're up 38 per cent, Mr. Speaker, over the first five months of 1991 compared to the first five months of this year. As well the price of the homes have increased by 7.2 per cent.

So the signals, Mr. Speaker, are out. We are an open and accountable government with a number of advantages going for us at this point. We've undertaken to introduce a responsible budget — one that's open and accountable. We've undertaken to set up financial management reviews which are making our government more efficient and making us a great deal more productive.

And I want to get into a couple of final things before I sit down. We want to just go over some key economic indicators and that is another indication of how well our economy is doing.

For example, employment compared to Alberta and Manitoba is, I guess, 10 times greater than Alberta in terms of job creation on a per capita . . . or on a percentage basis. Our retail sales are at 4.4 per cent increase over the previous year compared to declines in both Alberta and Manitoba. The Canada average is 1.6 but ours is 4.4.

Urban housing starts were way up over the other provinces, 10 per cent in Canada, and we're at 121 per cent increase year over year. Consumer prices as well have only risen four-tenths of 1 per cent compared to Alberta at 1.3 per cent and Manitoba at 1.2 per cent, and a national average, 1.3 per cent. So in spite of the economic activity that is transpiring, we're getting some very good responses in our economic indicators.

And I want to just maybe get into a couple of other items before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, and that is the economic track-record. We have seen a leading agricultural bio-technology company announcing its location of a Canadian research and development facility in Saskatoon. Plans for the facility were announced by the president of Plant Genetic Systems Canada Inc., which is out of Belgium. And the company specializes in crop quality improvement, pharmaceutical proteins and hybrid seed, and will be located in SEDCO's (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) building in Saskatoon. And there's an opportunity here. At the moment the company will employ 10 people, but the operation will become the central office for their canola seed sales in the North American market. And there are new job possibilities there.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, the mining company, the Total Minatco Ltd. relocate from Calgary to Saskatoon moving its head office there. We've seen Fort Storage and Burnham International building a series of farm chemical facilities in Saskatoon at a cost of about \$11 million. And the Speaker and the members from Saskatoon would be appreciative of this fact, that the industry would eventually create hundreds of jobs and projects worth up to \$50 million.

We've seen other indications, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan savings bonds sale netted for the government about \$565 million. And this is a reflection of the confidence not only of the business community, but of individual taxpayers in our province. The savings bonds program keeps the money in Saskatchewan; it lets the government borrow at a reduced cost, saving about, I believe, 5 or \$6 million; the Associate Minister of Finance might correct me on that. It also provides for interest payments to remain in this province.

The economists of the country will tell you that when government spends a dollar, it generates three more dollars in the economy. So if we're spending this money in Saskatchewan, we're generating three times that in terms of economic activity. If we're spending it in Zürich or New York or Toronto, it generates zero economic activity. As a matter of fact it's a negative effect on our economy.

And as well it's shown that through this savings bonds issue that Saskatchewan people are recognizing our debt situation and helping us in participating in addressing it in a very responsible manner.

We've also got some projects to come. We've got a number of co-generation projects that are being reviewed at this point, and these co-generation projects will use home-grown resources and home-grown talents to provide power to industrial gas users and to the Saskatchewan power grid at a savings to the taxpayers of this province.

We also welcome, and I wish to do this officially as a member of the legislature representing the city of Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan, the Crown Life employees to this city. They are in the process of moving to our city right now and over the next year there will be about a thousand new jobs in our city. And we welcome them and look forward to working with them in the months and years to come.

And also the same welcome is extended to the employees of the Farm Credit Corporation who are moving here from Ottawa.

So we see, Mr. Speaker, things keep happening, slowly but surely, in our province. Debt — the massive debt that we had, the poor economy that we inherited from the former administration — didn't happen in a week or a month or a year. It took them 10 years to destroy our economy, to build this debt to a massive amount that we can barely administer.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it will take more than a day or a month or a year to resolve the debt situation. But I think the good news you heard today with respect to economic development clearly indicates that the road that we're on is the right road. It indicates that the road that we're on is one that is supported by the business community in many ways right now.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we're on a steady, optimistic, positive route with respect to addressing our economy. We have established an environment in which

business can comfortably make their decisions that affect themselves based on business decisions, and less and less on crazy, wild-eyed government schemes that the former administration cost the taxpayers billions of dollars.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to sum up by saying that I believe that the economy of our province is on the road to recovery, slowly but surely. And I would move:

That this Assembly recognize the Saskatchewan government's early initiatives in re-establishing a stable provincial financial climate which is strengthening our economy and is encouraging economic development, especially in the areas of tourism and housing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the brief time left in today's debate, I will be making a number of comments and I wish to make an amendment during my remarks.

The amendment, and I'll read it into the record now and be moving it later on, is:

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

Condemns the government for de-stabilizing the provincial financial climate by refusing to present an economic development plan, increasing taxes contrary to election promises, and gutting the agricultural sector, all of which are directly responsible for Saskatchewan's massive increases in job loss and declining population.

It was interesting, Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member opposite move his motion that he didn't touch on the areas dealing with the motion until about the last five minutes of his remarks. It was that the . . . he was commending his government for strengthening our economy in the areas of tourism and housing.

And tourism and housing were something that was sadly lacking from the member's dissertation for almost an hour. And I suspect that they were sadly lacking because the member doesn't have a whole lot to crow about — that any housing starts that are occurring, for instance in the city of Regina, are directly the result of the former government's initiatives; that any developments in tourism, such as Big Valley, the Hootinanny in the Hills, various things that have been going on in this province that were basically nurtured and brought to fruition by the former government, I might say at great cost, given the criticism of the members of the New Democratic Party in this House over a number of years . . . I never forget every time that one of these particular initiatives was talked about — the developments around Lake Diefenbaker, the things that would draw tourists to our province, and had the then opposition almost universally condemn each one of those initiatives today that they like to take credit for.

So I suspect that's why housing and tourism didn't enter into the member from North West's comments until he was in the dying moments of his dissertation. And basically we had another litany of self-serving fiction that New Democrats like to talk about in this Assembly — fiction that the public simply doesn't believe any more, Mr. Speaker.

It was all right in opposition, I suppose, to be so roundly critical of everything that goes on. But every four or five years in this province, political parties have to sort of put their stock on the line and have the folks judge them. And I'll never forget, Mr. Speaker, the stock that the New Democrats put on the line in this province. And unfortunately we have had time, as taxpayers and as citizens, to take a look at that stock. After all of the promises, the naysaying, the condemnation of New Democrats in this legislature and around the province over what the former government did, we then had a whole series of promises to the Saskatchewan electorate.

And I think because the member from Regina North West was able to take such licence on a motion that originally started out on tourism and housing, that it is proper that I respond in kind because obviously the hope for a stable provincial financial climate is not going to occur. And it's not going to occur for a number of reasons.

And I must go back to the promises of the NDP Party. And we'll see how many of them have been kept and how many of them have been broken, and whether those broken promises are going to create a stable financial climate in our province. And I won't be able to get through the entire list, I'm sure, in the next little while but we'll give it a good shot and see if any of the members of the government can remember some of these promises that they made to Saskatchewan people, that they said would contribute to a stable financial climate. Well we were promised that we would have no new taxes. As a matter of fact we were left with the impression in the last election campaign, as were most voters, that even the expanded E&H (education and health) . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. What's the member's point of order?

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Thunder Creek indicated that the New Democratic Party's campaign promise was that there would be no new taxes. And I have the campaign document here, and it makes no reference to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. That's debate, not a point of order.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, obviously very early on in my remarks I have struck a point with the member from Regina North West, and I appreciate that it's tough to sit here and listen to the truth. But that is a fact of life in this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, there were even people in this province that viewed the total repeal of the E&H tax as a platform in the New Democratic Party because they were just on this no new taxes; we can live within \$4.5 billion. People are overtaxed; we simply have got to quit taxing away the

ability of Saskatchewan people to build our economy.

But the sad truth has now come home to us, Mr. Speaker. We have increased phone rates. We have increased power rates. We have increased natural gas rates. We have increased SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) vehicle insurance. We have an increase of 1 per cent in the E&H tax. We have a new surtax on personal income tax — 10 per cent. We have increases on fuel tax. We have increases on tobacco tax. We have increases of 1 per cent corporate income tax. We have an increase of 1 per cent in the corporate capital tax surcharge rate. We have an increase of 25 per cent in the corporation capital tax rate. We have imposed user fees on chiropractic services. We've imposed user fees for optometric services.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, when one takes the sum total of all of these tax increases to Saskatchewan people, it's easy to see why we aren't going to get a turnaround in our economy.

When one couples that, Mr. Speaker, with some of the almost dramatic changes that have occurred in rural Saskatchewan, an area of our province that has traditionally had a great deal to do with how our economy goes, which supports the urban areas that makes things like tourism and housing starts in our larger urban areas possible, one can see the further damage that has already been done in a short eight-month period.

And I refer to such things, Mr. Speaker, as the elimination of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, a plan now that is only being brought back because of the dissension in the government caucus.

Freezing and elimination of health facilities in rural areas. The member from Wilkie talked earlier today about the hospital in Wilkie, half completed, being . . . or Macklin, being shut down.

Cancelling of the natural gas distribution network in the province. People that could have taken opportunities on economic development or tourism to use natural gas to lower their costs to make their services more readily available to people simply can't get it now unless it's at great cost.

We have the gutting of the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program, after we promised rural people that we were going to have cost of production built in; that the GRIP program would be improved; that people in rural Saskatchewan would be able to have a secure income base from which to work and build our province.

Reduced municipal revenue sharing so that our smaller urban centres don't have the ability to do the infrastructural things that will make their communities appealing. Now they have to go back to their taxpayers and another wave of tax increases in order to get the necessary revenue.

We have the threat hanging over the heads of Saskatchewan rural municipalities that the minister, by a stroke of the pen, will do amalgamations, further cutting the numbers of jobs that are available in rural

municipalities. Eliminating Crown lease surface rights fees. People in the ranching community relied upon some of these lease fees that were accruing to them to support the livestock industry. Breeder fees, up 21, 31 per cent in our pastures. Further taxes on some of the basics in our province — the people that produce basic commodities.

Cancellation of the feed grain adjustment program. We've heard in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, that we're talking about thousands of jobs. You want to see the housing market in places like Moose Jaw and Saskatoon take a tumble? Just have Intercon shut down. Just have Moose Jaw Packers shut down because there is not enough red meat feed stock going into these packing plants.

We've had university professors say that there's an impact on the provincial economy of \$200 million. This, Mr. Speaker, in a short eight months. And I guess the fear out there is that in four years time, when one takes a look at what they've done so far, that in four years time there'll be absolute economic devastation wreaked upon this province.

Increased pasture rental fees, cancelled all cash advance programs, cap fuel rebate for farmers. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite likes to talk about some of the economic initiatives of the former government, but places like the replacing of PAPCO and some of the large Crown corporations that were into our industrial sector by privatizations have wreaked havoc on our province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say the jury is still out, that time will tell whether Saskferco is going to pay back the taxpayers of this province in the two years that was predicted. They haven't produced a pound of product yet. Time will tell how our forest industry in 10 years from now looks in comparison to their competitors around the world.

Time will tell in 10 years of whether the taxpayer was better served, better served owning all of the natural gas distribution pipelines in this province, or if that were better done by the private sector.

Those things, Mr. Speaker, are down the road. But what we're seeing here today in this province in the short eight months is for sure, and that is massive tax increases — massive tax increases in all sectors. It is devastation in rural Saskatchewan. It is devastation to 60,000 men and women who produce many, many of the basic commodities that this province exports for a living.

Those things are true, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I think it was very prudent of the member from Regina North West to simply fall back on the litany that we so often heard in this legislature over years and years and years, the old socialist line about how wonderful back in the 1970s when we had all these extra dollars from resources and we could spend it foolishly, nationalizing and buying up farm land and all those sorts of things.

And I know why the member from Regina North West did not want to talk about, did not want to talk about the economic agenda of this government. I mean, why didn't he talk about the 700 companies that the government brags about coming to the province of Saskatchewan.

Those 700 companies, I'm sure would be buying houses. They would be creating economic development on the tourism side.

But no, we didn't hear about those 700 companies that they brag about because I suspect that there's nothing happening. The Minister of Economic Development goes off to the Democratic convention in New York City, supposedly talking to people on the side, and yet we see no positive proof, Mr. Speaker, in this legislature that anything is happening at all. And that's why I think it's absolutely incumbent, Mr. Speaker, that there be an amendment to the motion from the member for Regina North West. And I will move, Mr. Speaker:

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

Condemns the government for de-stabilizing the provincial financial climate by refusing to present an economic development plan, increasing taxes contrary to election promises, and gutting the agricultural sector, all of which are directly responsible for Saskatchewan's massive increase in job loss and decline in population.

I so move.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I move that we now adjourn debate on this motion.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.