

The Assembly met 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7), they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that Your Honourable Assembly would be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Job Creation Strategies

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade.

Mr. Speaker, the latest labour statistics are in, and they are a clear indictment of the NDP's (New Democratic Party) abysmal record in economic development and job creation. The number of unemployed is up 5,000 people from July of last year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP Premier has betrayed those who voted for him with his promise to enhance health care. The NDP Premier has betrayed farmers who voted for him with his pledge to help farmers. Now the NDP Premier betrays the unemployed who voted for him for his vow to create employment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister of Economic Development has any plan, any plan to create jobs and economic activity in this province. This province, Mr. Speaker, has been . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Let the minister answer.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the member in terms of exciting job-creation proposals and announcements that have been made recently. Obviously in Saskatoon the expansion of Hitachi which was announced two weeks ago — a program and a plant that was built to do some construction on Shand 1, then intended to shut down — not only staying open but expanding. The first major industrial plant by Hitachi outside of Japan in the world being announced and expanded in Saskatoon, that is very, very good news.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday, yesterday the announcement by Mr. Phillips of an expansion at IPSCO that he said very clearly could not have been built under the previous administration because of the tax laws that they refused to change to allow him to expand here in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that the

member opposite, who raises this question, yesterday indicted that that expansion was a result of their planning — was a complete falsehood, a complete falsehood by Roger Phillips's own declaration yesterday that he could never have built the plant in Saskatchewan under that previous government's administration and taxes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister's command of economic development policy is overwhelming. The 5,000 people your bungling government has put on unemployment insurance, I'm sure, are all heaving a big sigh of relief at your comments, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, you promised the world in job creation and delivered absolutely zip. You stood in this House yesterday and proudly declared your government's success in developing two industries — industries that you had absolutely nothing to do with.

Let's talk about businesses you did have something to do with, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister please update the 5,000 additional unemployed people in Saskatchewan on the progress of relocating Piper Aircraft to this province, the business you claimed would be building planes within weeks of your announcement this spring.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, on two points. One, obviously the member doesn't understand much about statistics and jobs. If he did he would know that the number of people employed in Saskatchewan has increased in the last month. He would know that the labour force has grown in Saskatchewan considerably in the past year. True, unemployment is up but we still have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and we have more people working, and we have more people working than there were a month ago.

Mr. Speaker, in today's *Star-Phoenix* . . . pardon me, on August 12, new home construction up in Saskatchewan, an increase of more than 100 per cent from last year under their administration. Talk about confidence in the economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Talk about confidence in the economy. That member from Kindersley is speaking through his hat when he talks about the economy of Saskatchewan going down. When it comes to Piper he can run at Paul Hill and the private sector all he wants, but I'll tell you clearly, Mr. Member, you would get a lot more done by co-operation, working together, than running at the private sector who are trying to negotiate a deal to bring Piper to Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Five thousand people more unemployed in this province since last year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could you explain to those

5,000 people, as a result of your bungling of the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) agreement, an agreement incidentally that may have been able to provide jobs for that entire 5,000 people if you would have went ahead with it, Mr. Speaker, would you please tell the 5,000 people that are unemployed in this province what your job-creation plan is for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, what I'll tell the member opposite, that the plan certainly isn't things like GigaText and Supercart and Promavia.

I want to say very clearly, I want to tell the member very clearly that in a recent chamber of commerce publication, in a recent publication by the chamber of commerce there's a picture of one Don Pringle, the former chief of staff to the former PC (Progressive Conservative) government, who is receiving a certificate on the issue of doing and being able to get into business in Saskatchewan as a great place to do business since the election.

Even former PC staffers are saying Saskatchewan is in fact a great place to do business. So I say to the members opposite, instead of the gloom and doom that you are trying to perpetuate, the despair that you find yourselves in as a result of losing the election, I say lighten up. Try to come along with those positive people like Paul Hill, like Roger Phillips, and get a handle on . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister likes to talk about how housing starts are up. Well housing starts are up as a result of the relocation of FCC (Farm Credit Corporation), the relocation of Crown Life, and much, much lower interest . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the member and I would ask the member to conduct his questions through the Chair please.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are all of the reasons why housing starts are up in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would explain to the thousands of unemployed in Saskatchewan today what your foot-dragging with *Saska Pasta* . . . and how that fits in to your economic development plan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, obviously we're very interested in getting the *Saska Pasta* plant going. And as soon as the private sector wants to start that plant in Swift Current, we'll be more than happy to go there and work with them — just as we were yesterday at the IPSCO sod turning, just as we were in Norquay at the alfalfa plant, starting it up — local people, entrepreneurs, local people putting their money on their table.

If you have any influence with the private sector people

and the *Saska Pasta* deal, get them to build the plant, and we will very much facilitate.

When it comes to housing starts, you say that it's in Regina where they're occurring. Well I want to correct that. Estevan housing starts, '91 — 5; '92 — 22 per cent, a 400 per cent increase in Estevan. Part of the optimism in Estevan is getting rid of the Tory government and that premier and electing a New Democrat and the leader we have now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now the minister's taking credit, again, for lower interest rates that are helping housing starts all over this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, this government's relationship with business leaders, with business leaders in this province, is at an all-time low. These are the people who in co-operation with government generate thousands of jobs. Mr. Minister, one meeting, one meeting with a few business leaders and now you people think you are captains of industry. It takes a little more than that, Mr. Minister.

Now I wonder if the minister would be so glad to tell us a little bit about the famous 700 club, 700 businesses that you promised were going to be relocating in Saskatchewan following your election. Mr. Minister, how many of the unemployed you created will soon be employed in your famous 700 club?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I'm sure what brings this question period about is all of the good news in the *Leader-Post* and *Star-Phoenix* in today and yesterday.

I know this does not make the member from Kindersley happy. He's wishing for economic failure in the province. The premier is wishing for frost to kill the farm economy. And they just can't stand it, for example, when Mr. Phillips in today's *Leader-Post* says . . . And the members opposite say that the plant would have been expanded under their government, but he says:

Phillips said a change in provincial government tax policy (that was in the last budget) erased Ipsco's ideas of installing the new mill in the United States.

They were planning, under their government, to expand to the United States. And as a result of the member, the Finance minister bringing forward proper tax changes, we have a new IPSCO plant being built in Regina. That wouldn't have been done under your operation.

And I say to the member, try to be more positive in your approach to economic development, and it just might work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the 5,000 extra unemployed in this province

can't be quite as optimistic as you are, sir. You have misled them. You've betrayed your own voters. You have broken contracts with your own employees; you've extinguished GRIP contracts with thousands of farm families; you've thrown out the AECL agreement, dragged your feet on Saska Pasta, and refused to honour the contract with Saskatchewan's partners in the Bi-Provincial upgrader, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, is this the kind of economic development plan we've all been waiting for? Is this the new order of co-operation between business and government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say again, that if the member opposite knew anything about statistics, he would know that the labour force grew by 8,000 in the period from June to July in 1992 — up by 8,000. Up by 8,000.

Now the members opposite shout from their desks . . .

The Speaker: — Order. We have shouting on both sides. When the member was asking his question, we had the same problem here. Now the minister's answering, then the opposition starts. When the opposition member asks his question, we've got the government members starting. I ask members to let the member and the minister ask their question, answer the questions.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the members opposite, that if they knew how to read the StatsCanada numbers they would find that the number of people in the labour force grew by 8,000 from June to July of this year in Saskatchewan. That is exceptional and phenomenal to have that many more people in the employment group.

In fact the out-migration from Saskatchewan is down, and down not as much as we would like, but down from where it was last year. That's significant.

When it comes to housing, I want to say that in the community of Estevan, housing starts are up by 400 per cent. In Moose Jaw, they're up by about 300 per cent. In The Battlefords, they're up by about 900 per cent. In Swift Current, they're up from 2 to 6. In Yorkton, they're up from 7 to 10. In Saskatchewan as a total, housing starts are up from 305 to 729.

That is no small amount, my friend, and you should recognize . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ties Between Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Government

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday, Mr. Minister, I asked you a number of questions concerning the secondment of one Nial Kuyek from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool to the Department of

Agriculture. The minister stood in this House, Mr. Speaker, with a lot of indignation and claimed that his hiring practices were totally above-board, that this individual was simply a good civil servant. Well, Mr. Speaker, after the media asked for proof of Mr. Kuyek's political affiliations, a little research revealed that there are several fairly large donations to the NDP Party over the past several years.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, now that these donations, these financial donations to your party have been revealed, will you admit today that the main qualification was not the status as a civil servant but the fact that he was seconded to your department because of his political affiliations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite ought to be aware that I had friends from across the province who were Conservatives who made donations to my election campaign because they were needing to get rid of the mess that you guys were creating.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The lesson that the members opposite have obviously not yet learned is that they are insulting one of the most significant business organizations in Saskatchewan, run by an elected group of officials from across the province by the 60,000 farmer members, members who have . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The members of this organization respect their leadership. The organization functions in a democratic fashion. The organization hires significantly loyal and competent civil servants, and in this case one that, as I answered yesterday, who previously worked for the federal government and now is working for us. I continue to be dismayed at the depths to which you would grovel to ask questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister.

Well, Mr. Minister, after your protestations yesterday about the unfairness, I had a phone call from a Wheat Pool person in my constituency who was quite concerned about my raising this issue yesterday.

And he asked me: did this individual have any donations to the federal Tory Party seeing as he worked for them. But upon checking there aren't any donations to the federal Tory Party. There are only donations to your party, sir, and they average about 300 bucks a year.

Now, Mr. Minister, the bottom line is here: what is the level of political donation to get a senior civil service job in your government? Because we've established that boards in your government . . . it requires a certain level . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Let the minister, let the

minister answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I just . . . I didn't want to do this but I think I'm going to have to ask the member from Rosthern to please cease interrupting. You've been doing it now, sir, for four or five times today, after I've been getting up. I've been getting up asking members not to interrupt.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are obviously accustomed to a management style that involves this kind of practice they're suggesting, that has everything to do with incompetence and patronage, and nothing to do with the value of a civil servant. I continue to be dismayed that the members opposite would ask those kinds of questions.

The logic that says a person contributes here and not there even though he works for both parties and that somehow there's something wrong with that, is absolutely insane. And that's information that I personally don't have and I'm interested that the member opposite would go find it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Well, Mr. Minister, I can tell you that Wheat Pool members and farmers all across this province want to know why the individual that you would select to get you out of your GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) mess as a senior policy advisor in your department would not have been someone selected through a public process, after you and your party promised them last fall that that's the way your hiring would be done, that there would be no political patronage.

Those same farmers, Mr. Minister, want the absolute assurance that Mr. Garf Stevenson doesn't have the inside track through your political appointment. Can you assure farmers of that today in this province, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite continues to degrade himself and those he represents with the kinds of questions he asks. He continues to try to exhibit towards a good public servant the kind of negative characteristics that obviously led to the demoralization of a civil service under the government of the members opposite.

And I would hope they would begin to have a more reasoned and respected approach to people in the province, respect their right to have reasonable political affiliations, whatever they are, and respect the competence of individuals who've clearly demonstrated their competence through broad service in a variety of areas of public affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, there's only one thing

will demoralize the civil service, and that's knowing that with a certain financial contribution to your party, one attains certain status within the organization.

Now, Mr. Minister, no one is casting aspersions on the individual. I know him personally. I know him personally. He's an intelligent individual. But the fact is, sir, that he is a big donor to your party. He is a partisan of your party and I don't think, given what farmers want in this province, and the promises that you made, that this is the appropriate practice. Don't you agree, Mr. Minister, that you should have publicly advertised in the agriculture community for a public policy individual like this to set your government straight? Don't you believe so?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite ought to be aware that if Executive Council manages the affairs of selection of senior civil servants, and regular practices were followed in this case, it is neither a concern of mine that there may be donors in our departments to your party, or donors to the Liberal Party, or donors to the Reform Party, or donors to the New Democratic Party.

The object of creating a competent and respected civil service is to respect the rights of individuals who have a freedom to engage in political process in this country, and who have a competence in the area for which they have been selected. I will continue to respect that tradition, a tradition much disrespected by you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Well, Mr. Minister, I appreciate your discomfort with this, but I take it from your answer, I take it from your answer then that these political hirings and this patronage that we're talking about in the civil service is directed from the Premier's office.

Is that what you said, that it's the Premier of Saskatchewan and his officials in his office that directed the hiring of Mr. Nial Kuyek, the secondment from Saskatchewan Wheat Pool to your department? Is that what you just said, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — No, Mr. Speaker, it is not what I said. I hired the person. The selection and the advertising and the identification of candidates for our process happens in a regular way. The quarrel I have with the member opposite is that he somehow continues to want to, while saying he respects this person and says he is a good civil servant, on the other hand attacks him for working for our government.

It's my objective to have good and reasonable and competent people working for government, who are selected because of their competence, and we'll continue to follow that practice.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, yesterday I asked you to table in this Assembly this individual's contract, how he was hired, is he still an employee of Sask Wheat Pool while the government is paying him — all the details of his secondment.

Today in question period in the answer you just gave, you talked about an advertisement on hiring. I would like you also, Mr. Minister, to table the advertisement that went with the senior policy position in your department that Mr. Kuyek answered in applying for this job. Would you do that today, Mr. Minister — table those things in this legislature?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I will confirm to the member opposite that we have hired a competent civil servant for the department, that he has a record of good service to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, a record of good service to the federal government several years ago, and I am confident he will serve the people of Saskatchewan well in his present role.

And I continue to be absolutely astounded that the members opposite would even consider questioning the propriety of a member such as Mr. Kuyek as a leader in our Department of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Well, Mr. Minister, in the absence of a public advertisement, in the absence of any documentation, would you then tell this Assembly: was Mr. Kuyek hired at your request, was he hired at the request of the Premier, or was he hired at the request of Mr. Stevenson? Which one of the three then requested his employment in that very senior position in the Department of Agriculture? Would you answer that sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the hiring of Mr. Kuyek was done in consultation between the deputy minister and myself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, is Mr. Kuyek still an employee of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kuyek is an employee of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool to the extent that he, as the member opposite knows from his question yesterday, to the extent that he's seconded to the Department of Agriculture for a two-year period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Husky Bi-Provincial Upgrader

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to update this House on the successful completion of an agreement to fund Husky Bi-Provincial upgrader at Lloydminster.

I say successful, Mr. Speaker, because after months of negotiations and pressures brought to bear by other governments, Saskatchewan's unswerving position that it would not put any more money into the project has been vindicated.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Husky Oil announced today, out of Calgary, plans for the upgrader would go ahead, despite no further injection of money from the Saskatchewan taxpayers and without any penalty to this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, this marks an important victory for the people of Saskatchewan for two reasons. First, we have saved \$33 million of taxpayers' money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Secondly, Mr. Speaker, and more important perhaps, we've established an important principle of the taxpayer not accepting cost overruns. If a project is approved based on a budget, then it must come in on time, on budget. The people of Saskatchewan have indicated they will no longer tolerate a government which blindly hands out taxpayers' money to projects which don't provide an adequate rate of return.

This is a precedent-setting agreement for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It is proof that investments and business activity will continue in the province of Saskatchewan without massive government hand-outs of money. It's also proof that other governments are beginning to get the message. Saskatchewan is serious about getting its financial situation under control.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government which intends to proceed on sound business principles and has proved that sound business principles work and work well. This is a government which requires government business to put as much stake into a venture as the people of Saskatchewan. That is the only viable way to proceed, Mr. Speaker, and this case proves such an approach is successful.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Associate Minister of Finance talks in glowing terms, Mr. Speaker, about the wonderful deal that they've been able to strike.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1430)

Mr. Boyd: — Let's examine this deal for the people of Saskatchewan a little bit, Mr. Speaker. Let's examine it for

the people of Saskatchewan.

Let's take a look at what you've done here, sir. You have reneged on yet another contract, the same way you've reneged on contracts with farm families. You've broken another contract with the partners of the Bi-Provincial upgrader, Mr. Speaker. You've broken another contract with Husky Oil, the people of Alberta, the Government of Alberta, and the federal government, Mr. Speaker. You've weaseled your way out of yet another contract.

And, Mr. Speaker, what did the partners have to do? What did the partners in this agreement have to do? The partners have to garnishee the provincial treasury in order to get their investment back, Mr. Speaker, that's what they have to do. Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no return on the investment for Saskatchewan people until all other partners are paid out in this wonderful deal that you've struck, Mr. Speaker. That's the kind of deal that you people have put together for the province of Saskatchewan. You should be really proud of that, the partners garnisheeing, the partners garnisheeing the provincial treasury. Not one dime of return on investment for the people of Saskatchewan. Wonderful deal, folks, wonderful deal.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Could I call the member from Rosthern to order, please. I believe the Minister of Agriculture wants to make another ministerial statement. It certainly has been the tradition of this House that at least during ministerial statements and the response that is given, in the past as far as I can recall, we had the courtesy to give those two people the right to stand and make their statements. Surely we can at least have patience to do that.

Could I call the member from Rosthern to order.

Possible Merger Between Canada's Two Airlines

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about a very serious matter facing our province's airline industry. For the past couple of weeks, Mr. Speaker, there has been considerable talk in the news about a possible merger between Canada's two airlines. We understand that both Canadian Airlines International and Air Canada face serious debt and are losing money which puts into question the future viability of both airlines.

Understanding all this, Mr. Speaker, and the need of both airlines to find a cost-effective solution to their problems, we on this side of the House do not see a merger of the two airlines as that solution. It doesn't take a rocket scientist, or in this case an industry analyst, to figure out what a devastating effect a merger would have on Canada, and especially Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is our understanding that a merger between Air Canada and Canadian Airlines would immediately see the loss of about 10,000 Canadian jobs. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that even though such a merger may not have its major impact on Saskatchewan, the possible loss of 200 jobs is of serious concern to us as well as our western provincial counterparts. We understand that all western provinces face a serious threat

when it comes to losing jobs in the airline industry.

So in the interests of economic growth for the western region, we support any effort by western provinces to find a solution that will not only save jobs, but strengthen and improve competitive service and bring stability to the industry. Without stability, Mr. Speaker, people and businesses who rely on the airline industry would experience a loss of service and higher ticket prices.

The government of Saskatchewan is committed to economic growth and jobs. We are not convinced the joining of our two national airlines is a way of creating economic growth and job stability.

Mr. Speaker, employees from both airlines are concerned, the travelling public is concerned, and we as a government are concerned. That is why we want all possible options for the survival of our national airline industry to be identified and scrutinized by the federal government. And those options should be discussed at public hearings throughout Saskatchewan and the rest of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the future of our airline industry, and the many economic spin-offs it brings to the province, is at stake. We urge the federal government to help come up with a solution that will save the industry and protect our workers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to say that we've heard a statement by the minister that we can, in most part, agree with today. On this subject, he has done his homework well by reading the papers and getting the feeling of the people, and we're happy that we were able to contribute in some way to spurring his thoughts in this direction with our questions in question period some days back.

We too had agreed that the services to Saskatchewan were extremely important and that they would be lost. We had agreed and realized that the prices of tickets would probably go up if we saw this merger go ahead, and we were extremely worried about the job losses as well, Mr. Speaker.

We do kind of wonder about the fact that there seems to be an open division between the provincial NDP and the federal NDP on this issue and we hope that they are able to heal their wounds in some way there.

But the fact of the matter is that the federal government has been reported as being in favour of keeping two airlines and having that competition. And I'm sure that they will receive this news and this invitation with a great deal of anticipation of being able to accomplish these ends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Neudorf: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

SECOND READINGS

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Bill No. 87

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to raise a point of order and then I would appreciate your ruling directly thereafter or at your convenience.

We've seen an example, Mr. Speaker, today of what ministerial statements are supposed to be and what ministerial statements are not supposed to be. My assumption of ministerial statements are that if the minister gets up and gives . . . sets a course of direction and makes a policy statement for the government, a new policy, that is the intent of a minister's statement. And then our member has the opportunity to reply.

What we just saw from the Minister of Agriculture . . . pardon me, the Minister of Highways in this case, was a classic example of a good ministerial statement. It was a policy statement. Our member reacted to it and it was a done deal.

Mr. Speaker, my point of order is that the previous minister's statement was a political rhetoric argument which got in like turn, and then it destroys what the purpose of a ministerial statement is and we get ourselves into the political rhetoric and uproar in this Chamber that we have just witnessed.

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to speak to the point of order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, it's to speak to the point of order.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member from Churchill Downs, who is the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation, he outlined how, in light of the fact that we have a huge, huge deficit in this province — \$14 billion in total — that the elimination of a further commitment of \$33 million to the Husky oil upgrader in Lloydminster is significant not only to this Assembly but, more importantly, to the taxpayers of the province.

And I want to say very clearly that while the members of the opposition may not like that announcement, I think the vast majority of taxpayers in the province will find it significant.

The Speaker: — I just simply want to advise the members that I'm going to reserve my judgement on it. I want to go through *Hansard* and analyse the two statements that were made by the minister and I'll bring a judgement back. I'll bring a judgement back.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wiens that **Bill No. 87 — An Act respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by mentioning the fact that it wasn't that long ago we had a former long-time member of this Assembly speak at a function and talked about the ability of members in their debate to relate stories and bring them in to bring a point.

And as we adjourned at lunch time or just prior to lunch time, I was attempting to bring a story in to relate to the session. However, Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having not done such a good job on it. But anyone who's interested, the member from Wilkie would certainly be willing to inform them about the story and about the punch line that was there that I missed on.

However, Mr. Speaker, getting back to the GRIP Bill, Mr. Speaker, we see from this Bill, and we've seen over the past number of days and certainly a while not that long ago where — and I'm reading from an article — “NDP will use closure again on GRIP bill.”

We see how the NDP government continues to abuse or take advantage of the authority that they feel was placed and entrusted to them back on October when I think most members and many members of the House will indicate that some of the added . . . additional votes and seats that they received were because of a lot of annoyance with the former government. But I don't believe people really at that time intended to give the NDP Party the type of majority in this legislature that they have today.

And what the NDP government has done is use this massive majority to their advantage or to push whatever they feel led to push through this Assembly. The article says:

The nine-month-old NDP government has now twice used closure to choke off debate in the legislature — (it says) a feat the Progressive Conservatives took close to a decade to accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, what we have seen . . . and that was when this article was written there were two items of . . . or two uses, moments of the use of closure. We've now had a third and today a fourth time the government has used its majority to bring forward a closure motion to limit the debate in this Assembly on certain items, motions, or questions brought before the Assembly.

The article continues with the . . . by saying:

. . . we're seeing is a further classic example of an arrogant government that is bound to get its way.

It also says:

Government House Leader Dwain Lingenfelter said the PCs have stalled the legislature for months now and don't show any willingness to get down to work, either on bills or budget estimates.

And even as the House Leader was indicating this morning, the lack of work that had been accomplished. But I must remind the Assembly and must remind people that some 44 Bills have already received Royal Assent.

In fact it was about two . . . I believe it was two weeks ago when the House Leader spoke up and invoked closure on a motion, I believe it was on the bell-ringing question, and used the rhetoric that we haven't been able to accomplish anything in this House. And then shortly after that motion was brought forward then Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered this Assembly and gave her approval to 27 more Bills. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very inaccurate of the House Leader or even the government to indicate that no work has taken place.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest problems we do find in this Assembly, and having been in the Assembly for some six years now, I believe we find the biggest problem has been created with, through the House Leader and even the present House Leader for the government, was the House leader while he was in opposition.

And on many occasions when the House Leaders tried to negotiate, this certain member . . . it seemed that every time you turned around what you had agreed to would change just prior to the working of the Assembly. And you can just sit back now and look very closely and begin to realize the scenario that is taking place.

When the House Leader stands in his place and tells us we haven't accomplished anything through all the debate, I must also remind the House Leader and government members, and many members of this Assembly, that over the period of time — and certainly many members of this Assembly have been here long before I was here — there was a process where House Leaders would get together, would discuss matters of business and the different Bills or committees or where the House would proceed.

On numerous occasions I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, there were times when members found that what they had kind of agreed to prior to orders of the day or coming into question period, when they came here for question period maybe something had changed, maybe a minister was called out and wasn't available to come forward with their committee or forward with their Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the opposition has accepted that and usually there has been a bit of a debate that has taken place on the floor between the House leaders negotiating to work their way around, to try and keep a rapport within the House.

(1445)

However, Mr. Speaker, that has not existed to date in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and it hasn't existed because we

find that every time we turn around, and we would make a move to proceed on a Bill or a motion, or in committee, the rules may change. Sometimes we've been left to wondering, Mr. Speaker, whether even the government ministers have been aware what the process . . . and what Bills and motions were coming forward in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the House Leader on August 4, '92 when he talked about the Conservatives not showing a willingness to get down to work . . . is indicate that was why he was using the closure, why he brought in closure on a supply motion, brought in closure on a motion which had very little debate or opportunity for debate in this House. And he indicates, and as he continues to indicate, the public is demanding that the government . . . is demanding that the government get on with the agenda of government.

Now I wonder who the public really are. Is it the public in general, or is it friends and workers and all the people who worked so hard to get this government elected, who are now finding that the election of this government is hurting them?

And yes I can appreciate the fact that many members in this Assembly, back-benchers and the Executive Council and ministers as well, would like to get out of the Assembly. Not simply because it's summertime. Not simply because possibly the 70 days of paying per diems are going to be coming to an end, Mr. Speaker, but because of the fact as well that we're getting through the summer period when people are away on holidays and don't particularly pay very close notice to this Assembly. We're getting to a time and period again when people are going to be getting back to their jobs. Students are going to be getting back into the class-room. Men and women are . . . The weather is going to be turning a little cooler; you won't be spending the time outside that you have in the summertime.

You might be catching . . . being updated more in the news, keeping your eye on the news, Mr. Speaker. And I don't believe the government really wants to be sitting here when people will have more and be taking and giving more time and more attention to what takes place in this Assembly, in light of the debate that is taking place.

Not just on the GRIP Bill but, Mr. Speaker, there are many questions that are going to be and must be raised regarding health in Saskatchewan. What is happening to the medicare system in this province? And what is happening to our health care and to hospitals and the promises of a better system, a more sound system, Mr. Speaker?

Many of these questions . . . and many people especially in rural Saskatchewan are wondering what is actually taking place. And not just the NDP supporters, but people right across the province.

Certainly when I talk about NDP support, Mr. Speaker, I look at a letter to the editor back in the August 4 issue of the *Leader-Post*, 1992. And it says: "Government questions before and during . . ." Maybe I should read the whole letter, just so it's clear:

When one seeks to criticize the leadership of a

political party, government or any other organization, one should be activated and motivated from the purest desire to change and improve upon the actions and directions of policies adopted by such leadership. One should not be motivated by a desire for personal aggrandizement or pecuniary achievement.

Before and during the last provincial election, the NDP leadership kept reminding the electorate generally, and the membership in particular, of the philosophies and achievements of Tommy Douglas and his colleagues. There is ample proof that the policies of the present government are diametrically opposed to the philosophies and positive actions of Douglas and his colleagues.

And the letter goes on:

If the present neo-conservative policies were well-thought out and planned, without the knowledge and consent of the party membership in general, then it is my view that the membership has to take a very serious look at the leadership of this party in government and ask: "have you abandoned the basic tenets and economic and social philosophies of the founders of the CCF/NDP in deference to the belief that your NDP government can more efficiently apply Conservative measures than the well-heeled representatives of the Conservative system?"

Fortunately, democracy affords me (and you) a platform to express my apprehensions and views.

It would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that this letter writer is becoming very incensed with the policies and the programs that are being brought forward by a government that would appear this individual worked on behalf of.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have other letters as well that have come from individuals who have indicated their great dissatisfaction. We've had phone calls where people have indicated they have returned their membership card or they've torn up their membership card.

And I remember when we were sitting on that side of the House, as we were leading up to the last provincial election, Mr. Speaker, many members on that side of the House indicating that they were running into people daily who were tearing up their PC membership cards. And we're not saying that people weren't annoyed with the government of the day. But I think, when you look at it today, to find that people across this province are becoming very dissatisfied in only a few short months, I think that speaks very loudly of what is happening to this party.

Mr. Speaker, I think another of the reasons people are being somewhat annoyed and another one of the reasons that the NDP would like to get out of this place is because of articles such as this where it says: The first nine months in office disappointing. And the article goes on to talk about the fact that it's easy to blame someone else, but sooner or later you're going to have to start living up to your actions.

It's easy to put the blame on the former government, or in this case on the GRIP Bill, Mr. Speaker, and the lack of support for the farm programs in this province, the lack of support for their share of . . . or being a part of programs to support and strengthen agriculture and, as we saw today, to strengthen our economic activity and development and create jobs in the province. It's easy to look at someone else and always blame the other person.

And we find that over a period of time, that is exactly what the government has been doing. In fact since we have begun sitting in this legislature, beginning back last fall and now since late April when we first sat in this legislature, every time we come to a point or place where the NDP can't really . . . many NDP ministers have a difficulty in trying to find an answer to the questions placed before them, especially on agriculture and economic development. They either blame the former government under the leadership of the member from Estevan, or they blame the federal government. And it seems I think, Mr. Speaker, that it's time we all looked within ourselves.

People on October 21 voted for what they thought would be a government that would indeed do everything that they had promised. They also voted for them on the basis of, I believe, the Premier today talked about opening the books, and they thought, well yes they'll open the books. But I believe most people in particular across this province also knew, without the fact of the government saying they should open the books or they would open the books, knew that the books were open as the chief commissioner, Mr. Gass indicated. The books were indeed open for the public to see if they were interested.

People also realized that the debt of this province had grown, had grown substantially, Mr. Speaker, and we can . . . I think when people went to the polls back in October they went to the polls looking at electing a government that they felt would make an effort to address the deficit we are facing, but also in addressing the deficit having some compassion on those who are less fortunate.

Certainly they didn't expect a government to turn around and in a matter of a few short months just slash at government programs and services that people in Saskatchewan that, if you will, Mr. Speaker, that Tommy Douglas worked so hard to implement and to bring about, not only in health care but certainly in agriculture as it is a very major part of the economy in this province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we're apprehensive of what the government and what the House Leader is doing. We find it very offensive that the government would even continue to place the blame at somebody else's feet when the blame should be resting right solely at the feet of the Premier of this province and the Finance minister and maybe even . . . who knows? Mr. Speaker, maybe not even all of cabinet are totally aware of the direction, don't even know and understand what the direction is that . . . what direction this party is heading or what direction this party is trying to take the province of Saskatchewan into now, just as I read in the letter that was in the *Leader-Post* in August 4, 1992.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the GRIP legislation before us and again I come back to a number of comments that have been made earlier on . . . and I'm going to go back to some of the debate that took place in April 1990 when we first started talking about bringing forward a GRIP Bill or a farm income revenue insurance program.

The member from Humboldt of the day talked about and accused the government, asked the government if they'd really been consulting. He said you talk about consulting with farm groups, and you're the government that claims to have this great in-touch with rural Saskatchewan because you have all the rural members. Well I've been to my constituency and several other of their constituencies, Mr. Minister, and I know farmers simply will not take this loan. They would sooner cut back and do without. Even though the prospects of moisture look good this year, even though the fact that they could possibly get some return this year by crop, they won't take that because they know that in the end run it's not what they need.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Humboldt was indicating at that time that many people were saying no, they really didn't want an insurance program. And I grant you that. Most of the farm community would just as soon see a price up front. But let's take a look at the agricultural system across this nation. Let's take a look at where the areas in agriculture that are moving ahead, or at least that are stabilized. Every one of them, Mr. Speaker, have some form of stabilization or subsidized program in place that guarantees them a bottom line.

If it's right for the milk industry, if it's right for the poultry industry, even though farmers in Saskatchewan and farmers across this nation are very independent individuals, are entrepreneurial individuals who would like to do it on their own, Mr. Speaker, we all realize that the bottom line must be reached as well.

And so if we look at the GRIP program, Mr. Speaker, when we take a very serious and close look at it, we find that there are people right across this province, men and women and teenagers and boys and girls in the farm sector who need to have a bottom line that they can look at and they can secure for themselves — not to make a lot of money at the expense of the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, but to guarantee that they're able to meet their commitments, so that they aren't coming to the doors of the Minister of Social Services or they aren't coming to the doors of the Minister of Health because they don't have the finances available to pay their bills or even to meet their medical costs or put food on their table, such as a call I've had recently, Mr. Speaker, from a couple who are facing some very severe financial restraints.

And, Mr. Speaker, in rural Saskatchewan you can have a fair number of dollars move through your pocket. You can move a fair bit of grain into the system. You can move livestock into the system and generate a number of dollars in cash flow. But by the time you pay your power bill and your telephone bills, Mr. Speaker, and if you have natural gas, your gas bill and your heating bill and your fuel bills, and your fertilizer and chemical, and try to bring your loans up to date, Mr. Speaker, you could see \$35,000 move through your hands and find out that you don't

have a dollar or cent left in your pocket to put food on the table.

And that is the major problem farmers have been facing for centuries and facing for years in this province, Mr. Speaker, the fact that many thousands of dollars can be generated through farm sales and yet because of the costs of operating and running their farm, they are left with very little for personal use and for looking after their children, for educating their children, for even meeting the health needs of not only themselves but their family members. And, Mr. Speaker, farmers are no different than the labourer or the teacher or the business man. They have many of the same problems.

And, Mr. Speaker, we can look at people many times and that person may look to be healthy, may look to be feeling excellent, may have a pleasant personality. But who knows, that person may also have . . . be facing a health bill or a drug bill of 120 to \$200 a month due to no fault of his own. It's not that he asks for it, or he or she asks for it, Mr. Speaker. And I think of even some of my own family . . . family members, not directly, who are affected with the problem of asthma and the costs of asthmatic drugs, Mr. Speaker.

(1500)

And so, Mr. Speaker, when farm families are faced with that and we see low prices for a product, and even though you move that product to market and it may generate sales of \$5,000, by the time you take off all the expenses there is nothing left. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it was imperative that we work at a program that would at least give farm families a measure of security. And I would suggest if farm families have a measure of security, it creates a measure of security for our small communities, as I indicated earlier.

And, Mr. Speaker, I come back to the consulting process too, and one wonders how much consultation really took place. Did the same form of consultation take place that we saw back in the spring of 1990 and trying to develop the 1991 GRIP program? Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the committee that was put in place by the former government in the summer of 1991 to address the problems with the GRIP program, the '91 program, in coming up with recommendations . . . And in October 1991 that committee was altered a little bit; a couple more members were added to the committee.

And when you sit down and look at their proposals, they had some very sound proposals to bring forward. However, as you review the proposals you wonder how much or how strongly or how sincerely was the Minister of Agriculture and Executive Council in addressing the concerns that were raised and in bringing forward the proposals that were suggested.

And the Minister of Agriculture would suggest that everyone, all of the farm organizations, from SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, from the grain growers, all of these organizations, from the farmers' union, were in support of the changes to the new program, and yet simply because they signed their report for the minister.

But my understanding, Mr. Speaker, as I hear from many of these individuals, is that the events, the end result, and the changes that came about in the end, Mr. Speaker, were totally against and contrary to the recommendations that their committee had made. And many of these individuals are very sad and unhappy that they were asked to put their name to a report, sign a report, which after the fact they find out the realities of the new program missed by a long shot the recommendations from their committee. And, Mr. Speaker, therefore it's no doubt . . . no wonder, that we are into this debate today. It's no wonder that the government has been and continues to use closure to try and push the Bill forward in this Assembly, because of the fact that there is so much opposition across this province.

And the unfortunate part, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was talking to an individual who had talked to a number of people that approached him on the street and asked him: what can you do about this? It was a health problem and a health question. And he said one of the individuals who had talked to him happens to be on a local board and brought up the question: what can we do about our rural hospital because from what we see it looks like it could be one of those hospitals that the government is talking of closing. And so this person said: well why don't you hold a public meeting, organize a public meeting, or get some petitions, call the Minister of Health, or send in some petitions, talk to the opposition and ask them to raise these questions? And the comment was: yes, but I'm on the board, if I speak out about the concerns I have right here, will I have my job or will I continue to be part of this board?

And it appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people out there who are afraid to speak up. And I believe that maybe they're somewhat fearful of speaking up because of the fact that this . . . we're only nine months into a new mandate and we have to live with this government for the next three, three and a half, four years. And I'm appalled that people, if they have major concerns, would feel that they must be quiet rather than take the chance of losing a position they may have.

I think in our democracy, Mr. Speaker, it would be appropriate for people to feel that they could speak out at any time on any question, not just on the GRIP question before us, but on any question, be it health, be it rural development as we saw with our highway system. And we note the uproar that took place when the Minister of Finance announced that there'd be some 1,000 miles of highway allowed to go back to gravel. And that affects the rural communities, rural farm families and, Mr. Speaker, in an indirect way it affects the question of GRIP that we have before us.

Mr. Speaker, as we talk about the GRIP question, as we continue to raise the questions, I also have been interested in sitting here and following the debate. And I've been listening with interest on many occasions to a number of the catcalls that have been coming across the floor. And it would appear to me, over the period of the last number of days and weeks and months, that many of the government members have indicated that they would be more than happy and willing to get into the debate.

In fact, I think as the July 30 article of the *Leader-Post* . . . the headline is "Gov't getting prepared for another GRIP battle". If the government was really getting prepared, I'm sure they would have had many of their members prepared to stand in this Assembly and argue or debate in this Assembly the reasons why we should push the GRIP Bill forward, why we should move it forward and implement it upon the people of Saskatchewan, upon the 60,000 farm families of this province, even though it goes against the basic, fundamental rights of the individual rights and freedoms that we enjoy and goes against the basic, fundamental principles that we all appreciate in this province.

This article says:

The provincial government is getting ready for what could be another marathon battle over GRIP in the legislature.

This time, however, there'll be a difference — no bell-ringing walk-outs from the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we see the media picked up on the fact that the debate on bell-ringing and the ability to stall the legislature to get a message across was unilaterally changed by this government. First of all they brought in a . . . unilaterally brought in changes to the rules. And the normal process, Mr. Speaker, has always been to allow for the government and opposition, all members of this Assembly, to sit down and negotiate through the Rules Committee to come to a basic agreement on rule changes.

However, Mr. Speaker, what we found and what we saw back on July 30, and just prior to that date, Mr. Speaker, the government unilaterally used their majority to change the rules to limit bell-ringing. And as we indicated in the bell-ringing debate, it certainly wasn't our and isn't our intention to continually use bell-ringing as a way to obstruct the working of this Assembly. But bell-ringing was a way of getting a message . . . and making people aware of some of the concerns.

Because it's not always easy to get the message out there, in light of the fact that the criticisms we face over how communications budgets may be spent and the fact, Mr. Speaker, that even this year, MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) gave up 25 per cent. And it doesn't give us the ability to get the information out there with the few dollars we have to try and do a mail-out so that people are aware of what we are facing, of the reasons we're standing in this House and speaking on the GRIP Bill.

And so while the government unilaterally took away bell-ringing, they also attempted to wear down the opposition by, at the same time, extending sitting hours from 24 hours a week to 50 hours a week. And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the debate in this Assembly and certainly I take a look back over the debate in 1989 regarding the debate on the potash Bill . . . and I must remind the Assembly that the debate at that time took place over a period of some 120 hours, I believe phased out over a period of 30 days. It took place . . . and the

debate on the potash Bill was interlinked with government workings and proceedings in this Assembly. And never once was a motion brought forward to extend the hours from 9 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock at night.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for someone watching on TV, they may say well if you were only working 24 hours well no wonder they increased the hours to 50 hours a week. I must also remind people that 24 hours in the legislature doesn't necessarily mean that that's all . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I've been listening for a fair length of time. I do want to remind the member from Moosomin that we are on second reading, second reading. That means we speak about the principle of the Bill. And it may be interesting to know about whether we sit 24 hours or 50 hours or bell-ringing, but on second reading we should keep our speeches on the principle of the Bill.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the principle and the reasons for the debate in this session is regarding the GRIP Bill, and I appreciate your ruling on that. But there were a number of other principles or responses that took place leading up to the debate that is taking place today, and as I've been speaking, I've been trying to link the process that has taken place so that people are aware of what has happened, rather than they being left with the idea that the only reason that we're debating this is because the opposition is totally opposed to it.

And at the same time I think, Mr. Speaker, we all agree that it's appropriate that people be aware of the work that MLAs do on behalf of constituents and in this Assembly in light of the . . . certainly, an area, another area of debate as well.

But I would also indicate that, as I indicated earlier, the original article that I read, the headline was "Gov't getting prepared for another GRIP battle." A day later it indicates the opposition were also getting ready for a GRIP battle. And the article says that the government:

. . . promised to re-introduce its changes to the . . . revenue insurance today (GRIP) or early next week and this time the Tories will have to answer the bell.

And that's where I got into some of the debate on the bell-ringing and the reasons for it and the changes.

It also says:

The Conservatives (or opposition) are furious that the government is moving the bill out of suspension before they found some compromise, as recommended by (the) Speaker . . .

But the government seems prepared to use every weapon in its armoury to force its agenda through the assembly.

And again, Mr. Speaker, and I won't deliberate on that, we see where the government used . . . continually used closure to force its agenda on people.

One of the biggest reasons we continue to debate the GRIP Bill before us, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that while we entered into this debate and when we originally entered into the debate we found that even though we had put forth a number of ideas, a number of suggestions, a number of proposals regarding the GRIP Bill and regarding the GRIP legislation, we find that the NDP continue to argue that they wouldn't change this legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we're speaking today on the legislation and on the Bill before this Assembly, we trust that as we bring . . . the points we bring forward and endeavour to bring forward in light of all the arguments that have been presented, that when we get to committee the government will be willing to consider and accept some of those amendments, Mr. Speaker, to the Bill. And one of the reasons we're arguing about the GRIP Bill is the fact that, as I indicated earlier, it says, and the headline again reads: farmers argue that premiums too high and coverage too low.

And, Mr. Speaker, prior to the lunch break I did go through a scenario of how the 1991 GRIP legislation and insurance program stabilized the farm economy and gave the farm community and farmers themselves a bit of an understanding and ability to stabilize and plan their business and their farming occupations, and the fact that also the present legislation, the present GRIP '92, has certainly taken away farmers' ability to establish their bottom line and to plan for tomorrow.

And, Mr. Speaker, remember back last fall one of the major areas of debate, when we were talking about GRIP and we were talking about the costs, was the provincial government at that time had indicated that if we harmonized the provincial E&H (education and health) tax with the federal GST (goods and services tax), we would have access to millions of dollars in which the provincial government could not only maintain its commitment to health and maintain its commitment to education but would also, Mr. Speaker, be able to maintain its commitment to rural Saskatchewan and to the GRIP revenue insurance program that was brought in.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the debate before us, and the process that has taken place, and as I indicated earlier, the government indicated they wouldn't change GRIP.

Another article in June '92 indicated that: "Lingenfelter defends GRIP revisions". Mr. Speaker, I think we must be mindful of the fact that the process that is taking place, and when we're talking about the GRIP motion before us, as the Government House Leader indicated at that time:

The government has no choice but to unilaterally attempt to rewrite history with its changes to the gross revenue insurance plan, says (the House Leader).

The bells will keep ringing until at least Monday to give farmers fighting a breach of contract suit against the government their day in court, says Opposition leader Grant Devine.

And we all know of the process that took place and the reasons for the bells, to allow the Court of Appeal to hear the case that was brought before it. And the reason we wanted to allow that to happen, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that even the Premier of this province believed the Tories had and the opposition had a good issue, had a sound issue, and that it was appropriate for them to stand up for the principles of democracy.

(1515)

And we just have to take a look back at some of the comments and some made by the Premier and quotes that have come out from a number of the papers. In the *Star-Phoenix*:

While he said he can see the Tories' point, the premier said the government won't withdraw its legislation.

And this point he talked about was:

(You see) I worry about contracts and all of that. I mean one has certain rights. That's where the merit of the PC walk-out is.

And then it continues on, Mr. Speaker, by saying:

The substance of what we did is right. And if it's the substance which is at issue in terms of our fiscal picture and the like, process becomes less important.

Mr. Speaker, that's a point that we must continually raise in this Assembly. The fact of the process and the fact that the government would go against what it fundamentally believes to be right. The fact that individuals have rights and those rights should be upheld and supported in this Legislative Assembly by every member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, including Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, we don't believe it is right that the government should be retroactively changing contracts, or be able to retroactively change legislation and GRIP contracts.

And as the Minister of Agriculture, when he was asked about that continually refused to comment on that. And that comes from . . . he was quoted in the *Star-Phoenix* in April:

Agriculture Minister Berny Wiens was repeatedly asked whether changes to the 1991 GRIP contracts after the March 15 deadlines would create legal problems, say members of the crop insurance advisory committee.

But Wiens told committee members: "We can get around it somehow."

And I believe that's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that a minister of the Crown would — even though he, in his heart of hearts, would realize that he was being asked or his department was being asked to bring forward legislation that would destroy the rights and the ability of individuals — would suggest that we can get around it

somehow.

I don't think you or I or anyone else in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, could get away with that. I don't think the people that elected me to represent them in this Assembly would expect me to ask the justice system to change a contract. Or even if an individual, a constituent comes to me with a problem they've run into, because of maybe an error of judgement they've made, that they would expect — my constituents would expect — me to go to any of the legal channels and ask that they overlook the problem that took place.

I think we all, whether we're in government or whether we're out, must realize that we must honour and live up to contracts and agreements and respect the rights and the privileges of other individuals.

The *Leader-Post* of June 17 said:

"Essentially he (Wiens) . . . didn't seem concerned," said the committee member who asked not to be identified. "He thought we could get around that (legal question) . . . (and) said he would get around it . . .

And I believe as I indicated, Mr. Speaker, that it's very unfortunate that a minister of the Crown would take that kind of thought and would give that kind of thought and would feel that he had the ability simply because he had the legal people around him, or access to the legal individuals in his department who could maybe give him the leverage and the out that was needed to get around the contract. And that's why we continue to stand and debate in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, another reason we stand and debate in this Assembly is maybe because of the fact that many people across this province, not just Conservatives and not just NDPers, but also Liberals and even Reformers, Mr. Speaker, are speaking out on the actions and how this government has moved to work as a government, how it has brought forward its policies and how it has disrupted the lives of individuals.

Mr. Speaker, that was borne out on July, I believe it was July 30, in an article in the *Star-Phoenix*, July 31, says:

On the eve of a political showdown, Premier Roy Romanow swept into North Battleford Thursday to spread the gospel of good GRIP.

But just a few kilometres away, farmers remained oblivious to the message.

"You don't have to have a sharp pencil to see the program isn't as good," said Stewart Mitchell, the owner of a mixed farm just south-west of the Battlefords.

Mr. Speaker, this gentleman, Stewart Mitchell, isn't the only one, only individual, who has been speaking out on the question, on the issue before us. He isn't the only one who has taken exception to the direction that the government is taking regarding the present legislation that they have before this Assembly. And I believe it

behaves Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to take their place in the Assembly and to debate at length and fully the question of GRIP and GRIP contracts and how GRIP contracts were honoured or whether they weren't, how they weren't honoured.

And we have . . . There are all kinds of articles, Mr. Speaker, that support the fact that the Conservative Party and the opposition did do the right thing, did take the right action.

An article in the *Leader-Post*: Just how wrong the NDP government has been in attempting to retroactively change the rules of the old program by the new GRIP Bill. The reasons behind the 18-day bell-ringing with the walk-out and the source of much of the problem this session is something the NDP still doesn't fully appreciate. An unyielding, ham-handed government clearly broke contracts with farmers by not properly notifying them of changes to the program by March 15 deadline. The image problem the NDP has on the GRIP issue has now been compounded by the way it has tried to cover up its mistake through what has been nothing short of political bullying.

And here again we get into the other questions that have superseded and followed and brought us to the place where we're at today, Mr. Speaker, regarding other unilateral changes that have taken place in this Assembly.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the comments made here, no wonder the members opposite would like to get out of this House because certainly I believe it's an image problem. I believe when you look back to the 1989 debate or at any time when . . . Any time a government would attempt to change a program, Mr. Speaker, even though it's not totally liked, there are enough people around that you offend by doing that. And, Mr. Speaker, I also realize that there are many decisions that would be made by myself and by my opposition colleagues, by the government, that are not going to be appreciated by all people. But I think, Mr. Speaker, this GRIP Bill, the changes to the GRIP Bill, have certainly become offensive to many individuals across this province.

And not just the farm community, Mr. Speaker, even people in the business community, people within our small, local communities, Mr. Speaker, people who feel that an individual must . . . their fundamental rights must be protected. And, Mr. Speaker, the reason we continue to debate this is because we also see articles that indicate that the Tories are on the right side and the government made the wrong move.

Mr. Speaker, it's appalling that when we sit here and you begin to wonder how true . . . and you assess the comments that have been made by the media and by people on the street and by people at public meetings, and you begin to wonder, does the Minister of Agriculture really know what he's talking about?

And I listened to my colleague yesterday, the member from Arm River, when he was going through a scenario on the GRIP program, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that it would take away or has really destroyed or undermined the stability for farm families, and the Minister of

Agriculture just kept shaking his head. No, you're wrong.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, there isn't any way that the Minister of Agriculture can sit down, crunch the numbers, and tell me or tell anyone else that his program or the program we're debating in this Assembly is going to be better than the 1991 program. There isn't any way that that is possible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that is unfortunate. And I believe that's why farmers are finding it frustrating trying to deal with the Minister of Agriculture, trying to get the Minister of Agriculture to at least listen to their point and accept the fact. Who knows, maybe the problem isn't totally with the Minister of Agriculture.

Maybe the problem rests even a little further on the front benches with the Minister of Finance and the fact that the Minister of Finance today is trying to cover up all the extra dollars that he has unilaterally written off on the budget and placed in last year's budget, putting it all at the feet, as I indicated earlier, of the former government, and now today trying to take that 1.6 billion additional debt that he threw into last year's deficit and trying to cover it up and trying to build himself or dig himself out of the hole, crawl out of the hole he has dug for himself.

And, Mr. Speaker, in doing that he has left himself with very little room so that if indeed the Minister of Agriculture is sitting around the cabinet table and saying, listen, isn't there something we could do . . . Because I know the debate that took place in our caucus on numerous occasions, a debate where the Minister of Finance would stand up and unilaterally say, no, we cannot; we can't move; we mustn't budge off of our commitment or else we're going to destroy our budget plans.

As caucus members, we'd be there. Because what we were hearing, Mr. Speaker, whether it was with Agriculture, whether it was in Rural Development, whether it was in Health, whatever it was, Mr. Speaker, each and every one of us would raise the question, well can we give a little bit here so that we can be more supportive? Is this a more compassionate way of addressing the problems we face today?

As I suggested, Mr. Speaker, and as I suggested earlier, yes, there's no quick solution to the GRIP debate. And maybe, maybe just maybe, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, if he had a little more support, might be able to get the Minister of Finance to move a little bit to indeed put the support into the agricultural program that is needed, even to back up and to grab a hold of the commitment made by the federal government to inject an extra \$40 million into the 1992 program.

And certainly that \$40 million, with an injection of \$23 million from the province, isn't going to bring the '92 program up to what the '91 level would be, Mr. Speaker. But what it would do, Mr. Speaker, is inject some added funds and support into the areas where farmers most desperately need it, areas where farmers are ploughing their crops down today because they just didn't have the moisture to grow that crop, areas where farmers are going to find that the crop that they thought they had isn't going

to be quite as large as it would have been.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we continue to . . . Oh, Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to some other comments made by farmers too. Talking about the Premier being in North Battleford, I found another article that indicates comments made by farmers:

But farmers in the North Battlefords area are concerned the federal government's irritation over the GRIP changes could jeopardize drought aid for Saskatchewan.

We find the Minister of Agriculture continually arguing in this Assembly that we must go to Ottawa and ask for more funds. And they warn, but farmers are afraid that because the province of Saskatchewan isn't willing to work with and to co-operate with the federal government that it might be even more difficult for the province to even think or consider getting more federal aid from Ottawa.

And they warn the provincial government is courting political disaster by pushing its program through the legislature.

Joe Beckman, the reeve of the Rural Municipality of Battle River, said discontent with the program cuts across party lines.

Beckman, who runs a large mixed farm just west of the Battlefords, said the new program, which calculates yields on an area basis rather than an individual basis, will penalize farmers who grow specialty crops.

And I hear that even in my own area. The individuals who, over the last period of years, have diversified their farming operations are finding that the new program is basically encouraging them more to go back to the older forms of wheat and barley and oats production, rather than diversifying into the oilseeds and the pulse and specialty crops, Mr. Speaker. And it appears that it's not just in my area, but as the article indicates, even into the northern parts of the province.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the Bill that has been presented before this Assembly, there's no doubt that it is going to create a nice little mine for the legal profession in this province and across this nation. And certainly we have a number of lawyers who have indicated that they feel very strongly, and constitutional lawyers that feel very strongly that this Bill has serious implications and certainly is the type of Bill that could be taken further, even taken to the Supreme Court.

(1530)

Mr. Speaker, over the period of the debate, we find that on numerous occasions the Premier has been asked to comment on the GRIP legislation, comment on government actions. And we find that the Premier refuses, continues to refuse to comment on the actions of the government regarding GRIP other than to indicate that even though the Tories have the right to have taken the right course of action, the GRIP Bill will not change.

Mr. Speaker, what else do we find? We find that not only are the government indicating that they won't change the GRIP Bill and the Bill before this legislation . . . before the Assembly, and not only have they resorted to closure, to eliminate or limit debate in this Assembly, but it also appears as well that there may be future GRIP changes which may eliminate agents across this province. And what does that mean, Mr. Speaker?

We just had question period taken up with the question of economic development and trying to create jobs, trying to create employment in this province. And yet, Mr. Speaker, as we found out the other day, a pamphlet has gone out to producers right across this province, asking for their thoughts on the GRIP program, asking for their ideas. And one of the areas that they're asking about is whether or not they would be willing to pay a premium or pay an additional bit of money to help cover the costs of GRIP agents, crop insurance agents across this province. And many of our people argue, well we really don't need them. But I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people out there working to explain a program which has become very complicated.

And maybe that's one of the biggest problems with the GRIP as well, is not only was the old program complicated, but I think when you look at this one even a little more closely, you find that it is more complicated than the old program. And certainly many of the agents I have talked to have indicated that it is becoming more difficult for them to perform their jobs.

But if the government is asking if people are willing to help cover some of the cost, it would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is a roundabout way of getting a response that would indicate that they will do away with the agents, which would mean some 200-and-some jobs lost in rural Saskatchewan jobs. And I must indicate to members of this Assembly, and I think if anyone took the time . . . not jobs like the teaching profession or the health profession with that type of income coming in, but certainly jobs with a lot less. But needless to say, it was still a job that was putting money into people's hands and money into families' hands and giving them the opportunity to continue to live in our small rural communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, we find it offensive that the government would even consider that in light of the fact they continue to tell us that they're looking at ways and means of creating economic activity and spin-off across our province.

We also find that the questionnaire . . . the minister of Cunningham . . . minister, pardon me, the Minister of Rural Development indicated that a new review committee will be convened to review farm incomes and decide on more substantive changes to GRIP. And I find that interesting.

If changes are needed today, then why are we doing such substantive changes through this Bill right now to the old program rather than allowing the program to continue and getting into this fall and getting our heads together with the federal government and through co-operation, through consultation, and by taking all the suggestions

that have been given to us, handed down to us, been made by crop insurance agents, by the committees, the provincial committee and by the federal committee, and sitting down with . . .

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, not just farm groups, not just the directorship of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool or not just the president and vice-presidents of the United Grain Growers or the Western Canadian Wheat Growers or the executive of SARM, Mr. Speaker, but sitting down with common, ordinary, everyday farmers who are out there actually working on the land, and getting their input on GRIP changes, Mr. Speaker. I think that would be a more appropriate forum of getting a better consensus and a better idea of the type of changes that would be needed to strengthen and solidify the gross revenue insurance program, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this morning my colleague from Arm River, when we were speaking on the time allocation motion, presented a proposal. And it's a proposal or suggestion that has also been sent to the Minister of Economic Development and the House Leader by my colleague, the member for Rosthern, and asked the minister to take serious thought . . . look seriously at allowing this Bill to go directly to the courts, or putting it in the courts and asking the courts to give their impressions of the Bill, to rule on the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, we've asked that question on two or three occasions in this legislature. We've asked the question of the Minister of Justice on three occasions. The Minister of Justice continued to refer the question to the Minister of Agriculture. And the reason we went to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, because we feel very strongly that the Minister of Justice would have a better understanding of the legal implications of the changes to the GRIP Bill.

And I believe the proposal that was put forward by my colleague, the member from Arm River, was an appropriate proposal. I believe it was appropriate for the member to ask the Minister of Justice and ask the House Leader to refer this Bill to the courts and allow the courts then to make a decision, to give us an idea of how they felt, to allow them to rule on the Bill.

And if indeed, Mr. Speaker, if indeed the government are as right as they indicate they are, even though the indications we have are they aren't right, but if they are right, Mr. Speaker, the courts will rule in their favour. And at that case it would be far more convenient and far more beneficial for the government, for Executive Council, for the minister to have that ruling in their hands sooner rather than later. It would be a lot more beneficial for the five farmers who are presently in the process of taking the government to court, Mr. Speaker. They would have a better understanding of where they stand today.

And if indeed the government is wrong, then, Mr. Speaker, the courts, as the Minister of Agriculture indicated, will at a future date indicate that they are wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate for us to ask the Justice minister, or ask the Agriculture minister to go to his colleague and sit down

with him, and if the Minister of Agriculture and the Justice minister and the House Leader could agree and would agree, certainly as my colleague indicated this morning, Mr. Speaker, we would be more than willing and we would more than able to move onto other business in this Assembly. We would be more than willing and able to get with a number of the Bills that must be passed in this Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be a very . . . We're asking the House Leader to give very serious thought to what is taking place, give very serious thought to this proposal that we have put before him.

When we look at the . . . I have mentioned on a number of occasions the fact that there are many people who feel that it is inappropriate for the government to retroactively work against individuals, individual rights and freedoms.

I'm going to do another quote, give another quote from the *Star-Phoenix*:

"After signing a contract with farmers on the GRIP safety net, the NDP is changing the rules of the game without providing the required notice. Some farmers see that as a breach of contract and are suing. The government's response is to bring in legislation that will say the government has followed the rules. In effect, Romanow and Agriculture Minister, Berny Wiens are telling farmers 'yes, we broke our contract with you but here's a law that says we didn't.'"

And Bill No. 87 is that law, is that piece of legislation. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Bill may not say specifically that they didn't break the contract, but the Bill says, he's now telling us, that the contract that was signed by some 50,000-plus farmers across this province is now null and void, or has been void from day one, Mr. Speaker. And I find that to be very inappropriate. And I'm sad that the government has taken this direction.

I quote, Mr. Charles, a spokesman for the producers action committee: It's a sad state of affairs when farmers have to sue the government for breach of contract.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people out there who really feel that indeed it is a sad state of affairs that a government would sue the government . . . or that farmers would have to sue their own government for breach of contract when all they're asking is to give them the support they need to stabilize their individual farms, Mr. Speaker.

And then I look at what did the judge say in the appeal:

It would appear that (Saskatchewan Crop Insurance) has put the cart before the horse.

And this is a quote from the *Leader-Post* made by Judge Darla Hunter.

If the Crown and agents of the Crown undertake costly system changes before effecting the necessary . . . changes, they cannot defeat the rights of individuals affected by their conduct on the basis of costs which the Crown, or its agents,

have voluntarily incurred.

Mr. Speaker:

“The issue is also compounded by the fact that the government intends to use its (GRIP) legislation as a defence in court. It will argue it did not break its contract, because the bill says it didn’t. In effect, the government is changing the facts in the case.”

And then we go back to:

“A court affidavit filed earlier in the day from the deputy Agriculture minister, Stuart Kramer suggested the NDP is about to introduce legislation to retroactively force farmers to accept changes to GRIP . . . Kramer’s affidavit — a response to a lawsuit filed against the government in a Melville court room — stated Wiens intends to introduce legislative amendments ‘in which notice of the 1992 changes will be deemed to have been given to producers by March 15, 1992 as required in their individual contracts.’”

And as I indicated, Mr. Speaker, all the information we’ve received indicates very soundly to us that the government was more intent on ramming through and continuing to push their legislation, rather than listening to the desires and wishes of individual producers and individual people across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that is something that we wouldn’t expect of any government in the province of Saskatchewan or even in the Dominion of Canada, to use their power, use their large majority, to force those type of changes.

And why do we say that, Mr. Speaker? Because we believe that farm families must have their day in court. We believe that the individuals who went to court against the government, because they felt very strongly about their contract — we believe as well that they must have their day in court. And as I’ve indicated earlier, we believe the government should give them that opportunity for that day in court.

We believe the government should look very closely at the clause . . . and here again I would suggest that as we get to the clause-by-clause study in committee, we will be making amendments that would at least give the government the opportunity . . . or the government would give the courts the opportunity to address the process that they are involved in and the suit that has been filed against them. It is a shameful and undemocratic misuse of government authority that should not be allowed to go unchallenged.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the government should be brought to task and that’s what the farmers’ Office of the Farmers’ Advocate and the producers action committee indicated as well. Mr. Speaker, they find the . . . very offending that the government would indeed take this action against individual producers in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I believe when we look at the question before us and the debate that we’ve been in for a number of hours at this time, or at least a couple days, and we look

at the fact that we’ve been inviting government members to enter into the debate, and we’ve been asking the Minister of Justice to refer the decision or the Bill to the courts, one also has to be mindful of some of the comments; and I’m sure as we’ve indicated, a number of the rural members and a number of the members on the government side of the House, back-benchers, have been facing a number of questions, or questions have been raised with them as well, regarding the principles of the Bill before the Assembly and the fact that it would challenge the rights of individuals.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader said the government is not considering the referring of the Bill to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal at this juncture. Mr. Mitchell, as the article indicates, has refused to answer the opposition demands directly, but told reporters he has no position on it at all.

(1545)

I would trust that the Minister of Justice, the highest person in the province regarding justice, would indeed take a moment to sit down and assess the real impact of this legislation on the rights of individuals and — indeed, Mr. Speaker, as his counterpart did back in 1989 — refer it directly to the courts because I believe, as we see a number of the NDP back-benchers are, I’m sure, getting comments from their constituents as well and finding out that even though some of the constituents might accept 1992 GRIP, many would just as soon have ’91.

And I quote from an article, August 12, 1992:

In an interview, Evan Carlson (NDP — Melville) said he’s been getting a number of calls from people who preferred the old version of GRIP introduced by the Tories, as well as those who want the new version.

And he indicates it’s about an even split, as I’ve indicated continually in my speech. There are people on both sides of the fence. It depends whether you’ve had rain or whether you haven’t.

Also the member from Redberry indicated there’s some disappointment about the limited coverage of the 1992 GRIP. Mr. Speaker, yes there is, and I believe there will be more disappointment as more and more people become fully aware of what the 1992 GRIP does to them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just bring your attention to a poll that was conducted by, I believe it was the Farmers’ Advocate, if I can find it in all my papers here, Mr. Speaker. And when Mr. Kormos from the Farmers’ Advocate were talking to farmers about the changes, Mr. Speaker, they did a poll and they asked three questions. And the questions were, the Government of Saskatchewan, they were asking people if:

The Government of Saskatchewan has fairly and adequately consulted farmers before approving the changes to the Plan.

And of their poll, Mr. Speaker, 97 per cent said disagreed

and 2 per cent agreed that they had been properly notified. They also asked:

The changes to the Plan are injurious to farmers participating in the Plan by significantly reducing the level of protection while increasing the cost to the farmer of maintaining his or her coverage.

And many producers also agreed that yes, the plan was quite injurious to their operation, Mr. Speaker, in fact 95 per cent of respondents. And the question was given:

A comprehensive review of the Plan through direct and meaningful consultation with farmers is required before implementation of the present or any future changes to the Plan.

Is that true? And that was the understanding many of the farmers had. And again, when the question was placed, Mr. Speaker, 96 per cent agreed that before any major changes were implemented, they would have proper and ample notification and consultation of the changes.

And then they asked if farmers were in favour of restoring the 1991 program. And they said:

I am in favour of restoring the 1991 plan pending a comprehensive review of the plan and any changes to it.

Do you agree or disagree: 95.8 per cent agreed; 4.2 per cent disagreed, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, I also had the privilege of attending a farm rally at the AgriDome. And when the same questions were raised and placed before the floor . . . and many of my colleagues as we observed the number of people who stood for and against . . . I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, the percentages were along the same lines. And on many occasions the members or the individuals standing against the questions, Mr. Speaker . . . we observed a number of NDP back-bench MLAs; they seemed to be about the only very few that stood up against the questions that were raised by the Office of the Farmers' Advocate.

Mr. Speaker, we also see that this GRIP program has created another problem for the present government. And because of this, the government is trying to find ways of working their way out of the program or working their way around the program. Mr. Speaker, we see on July 21, 1992, a letter went out to producers across this province. And I just want to quote a bit out of the letter, a letter from the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Food. And it starts out by saying this:

Income problems continue to cause tremendous hardship for Saskatchewan farm families.

And I'll repeat that:

Income problems continue to cause tremendous hardship for Saskatchewan farm families. Your Premier and government are sensitive to these problems and want to ensure that the federal government in Ottawa understands just how

serious the situation is in rural Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to indicate that, yes, there are serious income problems. There are serious income problems because of one thing, Mr. Speaker, and that is the fact that the provincial government has substantively changed the 1991 GRIP program as I've been outlining for the Assembly today and the fact that the changes continually turn and destroy the revenue insurance program and the bottom line and the guarantee that farmers had under the 1991 program.

And as we've noted on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, we find that this letter does what the government has been doing all along. It asks people to write the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, letting him know of the difficulties we face in rural Saskatchewan and asking him to go to his cabinet and give approval for a substantial cash injection to the people of Saskatchewan or to the farm families of Saskatchewan.

The problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is . . . there again, we may get a cash injection. If the federal government were to come up with a major cash injection of funds into the province of Saskatchewan, what would it do? Would it help those people who don't have a crop this year? Mr. Speaker, no it wouldn't. It would not, for the simple reason that if you're going to put a cash injection into the province of Saskatchewan and if indeed the federal government were to come up with \$500 million for this province, the pay-out would be based on the fact that the price of grain is maybe . . . I believe it's in that neighbourhood of just over \$3 for number one hard prairie red spring wheat. And they would possibly look and say okay, we'll bump that by another 10 or 20 or 30 cents, and it'll go out to all producers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, if it's made on the basis of crop production, then there again, if it's made on the basis of the fact that the prices are too low, there again the producer who has had their crop destroyed because of lack of rain and because of the drought or hail or frost, Mr. Speaker, that producer wouldn't get much of a pay-out.

Or, Mr. Speaker, if the federal government would decide to make it on the basis of an acreage pay-out of maybe \$10 an acre, that payment would go to everyone, as we've seen before. There again, Mr. Speaker, that is not a fair way of putting money into rural Saskatchewan and trying to stabilize the farm economy.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I feel it would be more appropriate to design an appropriate crop insurance and revenue insurance program that lays out the bottom line so that individuals know exactly where they stand. And I just want to make note of the bottom of this letter, and it was photocopied and sent back to us. Mr. Speaker, it says . . . the comment is this, Mr. Speaker: Berny, maybe you should have kept the old GRIP format and we wouldn't need to be begging from the federal government. Just because you're too cheap to pay up doesn't mean farmers should do your dirty work and write to the federal government. Do your job.

Many people across this province have that same viewpoint, Mr. Speaker, because just to take and ask the

federal government for an acreage payment or for a payment based on prices would not do one thing for the individual who faced drought or hail or frost.

And you wonder why we stand in this Assembly and continue to debate the Bill before us. What are other people saying about the Bill? I'm just going to quote a number of comments made by people around this province regarding the GRIP legislation, regarding the changes.

I don't think the government should be able to easily change something they set up like that . . . I don't support a government that makes wholesale changes to programs people have put their life into.

That's from a gentleman in the Saskatoon area in the *Leader-Post* of June of 1992.

Or this quote, another quote from the *Leader-Post*:

I think they (farmers) had a pretty good deal going and then Mr. Romanow turns around and tries to wreck it . . . I think Devine had every right to walk out.

And, Mr. Speaker, as well another article from a gentleman from Canora:

Yes, I do (and talking about the walk-out and talking about the walk-out on GRIP) support the walk-out. The main reason is I believe last year when they (the government) initiated the program, they guaranteed us they would not change the program unless they gave us due time.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people around us, many people around this province who continually tell us, continue to tell us that we did the right thing. They continue to tell us that we must stand in this legislature, and we must continue to inform people about the changes that are taking place so that indeed people can react.

And hopefully in the end, people and the Executive Council and ministers and the Minister of Agriculture will decide that when we come to committee they will accept and introduce a number of the amendments that we propose to bring forward, that they will have a listening ear, that they will have a consultative ear, that they will be very understanding of the situation that is arising. And certainly I believe the Minister of Finance would want to be understanding and somewhat compassionate, as you find whenever the farm community is making a dollar, the farm community is paying some taxes, and the taxes are coming into the coffers of . . . so that the Minister of Finance has more money with which to balance his budget. And I think that would be more appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, what about an individual from Moose Jaw in the *Leader-Post*. His comment was:

Yes I agree with them (the PCs). Somebody's got to stop the government, otherwise they'd pass laws and do whatever they want to do.

Or another comment from an individual from Moose Jaw:

They (the NDP government) changed the program without doing it by the rules. I signed a contract for four years, and they changed the contract. If I wanted to change the contract, I couldn't. (Only the government can.)

And those are a number of the concerns that are being raised out there, Mr. Speaker, concerns that have been put down in writing, concerns that have been in the media. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have had people from all walks of life in and outside our constituencies raise these same concerns with us. And not just on the area of agriculture, but in other areas and other dealings that the government is dealing with. And we could get into the debate on optometric and chiropractic services, but I realize that's for another day, Mr. Speaker. The same problem arises there as arises with the changes to the GRIP program that we face today.

Mr. Speaker, I think one comment and quote that is appropriate in putting before the Assembly as well is the fact that over the years people in Saskatchewan not only believed and supported the individual rights of people, but they also believed in doing business very simply. And when you said something and when you shook your hands on it, that handshake was like signing a contract. That comment, Mr. Speaker, a farmer who was visiting with us, farmer Boyd Charles said, farmers do business on a handshake, on a word of mouth. Your word better be your bond, and this action the government is taking now, to make a lie a law, is against everything that we believe in.

Mr. Speaker, farmers over the years have always lived on the basis of honouring contracts, of honouring their commitment. And that contract may have just been a verbal agreement, but they never moved or swayed from that agreement. If they said they made a commitment to you, Mr. Speaker, they stood by it.

And I know many people in our area. And what I also find, Mr. Speaker, is that many people, many farmers, many individuals, even business men . . . And I must indicate just recently while I was on my way home I stopped by at a local business to pick up some items. And as I was going through the till, the cashier indicated to me and said, the next time your wife is in, tell her just to stop by because I accidentally overcharged her for some produce she picked up and I'm more than willing to replace that produce.

And I thought, well, boy you don't often hear that. You don't often hear someone offering to repay for something that they did, not knowingly did it, and it wasn't . . . they didn't intend to do it. But because they made a mistake, they were willing to make up for that mistake.

And I believe that is excellent, and it's positive to see in our society that people are . . . there are still people out there with a conscience, still people out there who are willing to honour their commitment to individuals.

(1600)

And certainly I think over the years we've seen farmers are more than willing to stand and to live up to their commitment — to their commitments to their community and to the people they deal with.

We can argue and say the NDP has got to give in. That is the government's only viable choice, the option to save face. But it would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that the government is not intent on giving in. But I trust that through the debate that has taken place and I trust that through the comments and the debate that has taken place in caucus and the number of suggestions that have been made by caucus members again, Mr. Speaker, that the government, that the Minister of Agriculture, will indeed listen and accept the amendments and the suggestions that have been placed forward by the opposition and by farm groups and leaders and individuals across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from one more individual regarding . . . And this is just a very recent quote. This is from Bernard Kirwan, president of SARM, in the *Leader-Post*, July 29:

The 1991 version of GRIP would have given solid, bottom-line protection to farmers and that's what attracted them last year.

But the Saskatchewan 1992 version ended that backing . . . "It rewards you when you have a crop, but it doesn't protect you when you don't have a crop," (Bernard Kirwan) said.

Mr. Speaker, we're also aware of the fact that people would like to have that bottom line. They'd like to have that guarantee. They'd like to know that they are protected and that the bottom line is there for them to make that business-type decision, so they know how to set up and build their business and run their farms.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked about working and co-operating and working along with governments.

Mr. Speaker, I would like at this time to ask, pursuant to rule no. 55.1, I hereby request that proceedings on Bill No. 87, An Act respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation, be suspended for three sitting days, allowing for the House to get on to normal business.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. At the request of the official opposition, under rule 55.1, proceedings on Bill No. 87, An Act respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation, are hereby suspended for three sitting days.

I might point out to the members that the suspension takes effect immediately and continues until the same hour three sitting days later.

Bill No. 66

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 66 — An Act to amend The Industrial Development**

Act be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 66, The Industrial Development Amendment Act, I believe we can ask all of the questions with respect to this Bill in committee and we'd have no problem allowing this Bill to move forward into committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 78

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 78 — An Act to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 79

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski that **Bill No. 79 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Pension Plan offered people in Saskatchewan, offered them the opportunity to participate in a pension that they'd ordinarily not have that opportunity. It was an excellent plan, Mr. Speaker. I think testimony to that is such that 55,000 people in Saskatchewan enjoyed the benefits of belonging to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

Mr. Speaker, 82 — I believe it is — per cent of the people involved in the Saskatchewan Pension Plan were women. And approximately in that same number, 80-some per cent of the people involved in it had incomes of less than \$16,000. Obviously a program that is excellently targeted to people most in need of a pension plan in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan absolutely couldn't believe a government that would take a pension plan away from home-makers, small-business owners, people most in need of a pension plan, Mr. Speaker. And yet in the budget of April 27, that's exactly what the Finance minister of this province did.

Mr. Speaker, through public pressure — tremendous public pressure — pressure from the opposition, pressure from all over Saskatchewan, including government back-bench MLAs, the pension plan was brought back in skeletal form, Mr. Speaker. They took out, and they remain out, the two most important features of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan — the matching government contribution as well as the minimum guaranteed pension, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, those two aspects of the plan were what attracted people to the plan in the first place. In this day and age, everyone, I believe — except perhaps the

government members — believes that a pension plan is something that is extremely important and should be carried on at all costs.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of questions with respect to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. We believe we can ask them in committee and we'd ask now that this Bill move forward to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 83

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 83 — An Act respecting Pension Benefits** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a fairly comprehensive Act dealing with pensions and pension benefits throughout Saskatchewan. And I believe that there needs to be some time. And I'm hoping that the government has taken the time to consult with the pension industry, with the insurance industry that is dealing with this Act because there are some parts in here that I think everyone should be aware of, that it gives the government, the superintendent of pensions, the right to enter, to search, and to seize without a warrant, similar to what is in the environment Bill.

Now we can have some understanding as to why it's important to have this in an environment Bill, but we find it rather strange that it be involved in a pension Bill. Now I'm sure that none of the pension industry have anything to hide that couldn't be investigated. But it's still rather strange, Mr. Speaker, that such a thing be included in the pension Act.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to let this go on to committee, but I think the insurance industry, the pension industry should be aware of some of the provisions of this Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

(1615)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Expenditure Energy and Mines Vote 23

The Chair: — Would the minister please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the opposition members for their indulgence while we waited for the officials to come. It's a long ways and we're a little out of breath, but we made it and we're ready to go.

The officials that I have with me right now — and there's one more to come, and I'll introduce her when she gets here — is Bruce Wilson right beside me here. Bruce is the

executive director of the petroleum and natural gas division. Directly behind me is Lynn Jacobson who is the director of personnel and administration. Beside Lynn is Phil Reeves. Phil is the director of the mines branch, and I'll introduce the other officials as they come in.

Item 1

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I appreciate the speed in which you got your people here. We understand that. For today, Mr. Minister, we'll probably just stay on some of the routine kind of questions if it's all right with you, and then we will get into the major concerns a little later.

First of all, I would like to start with your own staff, sir. Could you give me a list of all the persons working in the minister's office, or otherwise, who report directly to you, each of their titles, their salaries, job descriptions, qualifications, and employment history including their last place of employment?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I have the list here and I'll just pass it over if the page would take it over there, please.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask have any of them been reclassified since joining the government?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is no.

Mr. Britton: — Would you then, Mr. Minister, provide . . . covering all persons terminated or vacant positions eliminated?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, again I have the list with me here and I would pass it over there, please.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the opposition, we just had another one of my staff come in. Jane Forster is over here now, and she's the director of metallic minerals division.

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, could I ask for a list of all persons fired, retired, or otherwise terminated in the department since November 1, 1991, including the nature of termination and whether with cause or without cause, where applicable.

A separate list also, Mr. Minister, of positions eliminated, including the names of incumbents, where applicable.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the list I just sent over, I think includes that list as well. I think you'll find them after the first page. I think you'll find the answers to the questions that you've sent over some time ago for that second question. I think all the names and the positions are all listed on that document I just sent over.

(1630)

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will continue on with some general questions and we'll check later on. Then again, I would suggest . . . Is there also a list then, Mr. Minister, for each position in both categories that I

referred to of that?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Britton: — Then could I then have the name of the supervisor, the immediate superior?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I think you'll also find that in that information I sent over. I think it's all in that section.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's moving along quite nicely. Could I have a job description for each position?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I think it's also attached on the document I sent over.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will . . . We don't seem to find the supervisor in the list, but we can come back to that in another day.

Then, Mr. Minister, then could you please provide a complete compensation details including salary, expenses, allowances, special payments, severance pay and so on?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the document I sent over, I've just got the copy of it here right now. On the second page — at least in my copy — you will have the supervisors. I think you were asking for those earlier. If you've got the same order I have, the supervisors are there and the salaries are on the first page, monthly salary for each of the people that you're asking about. And in the case of the out-of-scope people, the salary range is given there.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, I will reserve judgement until I have had a check. And I appreciate the speed in which we're going along here. I see that you've come prepared and I appreciate that.

Could then you provide me with the length of time employed, including the date the person first started to work for the department?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Again, Mr. Chairman, on the first page of the package I sent over is the date that these people were hired and also the date that the job was abolished. And in both cases it's . . . one is two years, one is three years.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman. Could you then provide the employment record, including place of last employment and the most recent incumbent?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the records that I've sent over have the history of employment since they came to the department. We do not have with me today the record of employment prior to them coming to the department.

But we also have . . . the supervisors and the job descriptions I think are attached to the document that I sent over. It's about the second and third last page I

believe you'll find the job descriptions and the responsibilities of the individual.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could I then . . . would you then commit yourself to providing that information at a later date?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Yes, we will.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Then could you provide me with the employment qualifications, including education, of the most recent incumbent?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, before I answer the question I'd like to introduce another one of my officials that just came in. The person that just came in is Malcolm Wilson. He's the assistant director of the Energy department.

In answer to your question, Mr. Chairman, the answer is that these were casual positions, and they were vacant. There was no incumbent on those positions. They're casual positions that you see on the first page there.

Mr. Britton: — Then could you provide me, Mr. Minister, where contracts exist, true copies of these contracts, and again, the most recent incumbent?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, we're not quite clear on the question here, whether he wants employment contracts or non-employment contracts. We will be able to provide them, but we need to know which ones he's specifically asking for.

Mr. Britton: — Well, Mr. Minister, what I need to know is, where contracts exist, I need to know the true copies of those contracts and the most recent incumbent. By the way, sir, it is employment contract. I think that's the question you asked.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — I may have more information here than the member's asking for, but my department's been so diligent in getting the answers to all these questions that we will probably overwhelm you with paper here if we keep on much longer. I have only one copy, but we can get you another copy if you desire another copy of this contract. And I have with me the 1991-92 personal services contracts and those are history obviously. I also have with me the 1992-93 current contracts.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman — I guess I'm backwards there; it should be Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister — I do appreciate that we're getting along really good here and we'll get out of these routine kind of things and get into the meat of the matter. And I really do appreciate your co-operation. Could you then provide me the physical location of the person's place of employment, where the most recent incumbents actually did their work?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, if you're asking about those that were terminated, I think their location of employment is given on the front page there — the clerk typist II and the clerk II — and the ones on the personal service contracts I believe are also on the sheet that I tabled with the Chairperson. I think they're all on there;

their location . . . probably three or four different locations.

Mr. Britton: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, maybe I didn't phrase the question quite right. What I'd like to have is the physical location of the person's place of employment. And I don't think Regina is quite what I want.

And also, where the most recent incumbents actually did their work. It's kind of a two-part question there, sir.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — The actual physical location for the Regina office is the TD (Toronto Dominion) Bank Building. I don't know the exact address of that but I can . . . 1914 Hamilton Street. And we have the top floors of that building. And in Creighton it's the Creighton office, and I'm not sure if Creighton's big enough to have street addresses.

Mr. Britton: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I think you're on a little dangerous ground there, because that's out in Mr. Muirhead's country and I don't think he'll want you to downplay Creighton.

Anyway, could you provide me the information, Mr. Minister: if a replacement was hired, the name and the same details that we requested for the above for the new employee.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the answer is that we have not filled those positions. We have not hired replacements. These positions are vacant and are going to be left vacant because of budgetary reasons, so there's no replacement has been hired.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, if the position was eliminated, why was this position eliminated as opposed to some other position? And what was the process and the resulting rationale for getting rid of this employee or this position? Could we have that.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is that, as I said, no replacements were hired. And the particular permanent positions were eliminated because they were deemed to be most expendable in terms of department functions and because it involved the necessity of terminating the employment of an individual. So it was just deemed that this particular position was expendable in the department at that particular time.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I noticed you're using the word deemed. It seems like a favourite word, keeps running through the government policies. And I thank you for the answer.

Could you provide me if the incumbent had been hired since November 1, 1991, the name and the same details requested above for the immediately preceding incumbent?

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, we have not replaced any of those positions. Those positions are

vacant at the current time, the ones that you're referring to. They're empty.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I was looking at . . . glancing at some of the reports you sent over. Could you tell me in the question of David Degenstein, senior ministerial assistant, could you tell me who he worked for in the seven years of government experience, '75 to '82?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, Dave Degenstein worked in the Department of Highways. I believe that was his most recent position. He was a ministerial assistant, I think towards the end of his career, to Bob Long, the former minister of Highways back in '81-82.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, am I to assume from the answer that the seven years was with Highways under . . . the Department of Highways in the two years prior as a ministerial assistant to the hon. Bob Long?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I can't give the exact locations that he worked, but I would not firmly commit that he worked for Highways all this time. But he worked within the government departments and for a short period of time he was a ministerial assistant to a minister.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, could you then provide us with that information at a later date? Are you nodding affirmative? Thank you.

Then, Mr. Minister, could you provide a list of all the positions created since November 1, 1991?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, no new positions have been created in the department since November 1, 1991.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I want to go back. When I said later date, I should maybe say, before the estimates are finished. A later date could be a long time. Could I have the commitment that the information that I'm asking will be given to me before we finish the estimates?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — We certainly can. I can get this information over to you fairly shortly.

Mr. Britton: — And I understand from your last answer that there were no new positions created since November 1, 1991. You're nodding in the affirmative?

Then I will drop down then to . . . All right. Mr. Minister, could you then provide me with a list of all the reclassifications in the department since November 1, 1991, including the names of all the affected employees?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I'll table a list of the names with the Chair.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It would seem, as we're going along, that you may have had a copy of these questions that I'm answering . . . or that I'm asking. Could I ask you then to give me your assurance that you will provide the answers to all of these questions later in

the estimates, and then we can probably get into some of the meat of the matter.

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for the question. We did have a list of questions that you've sent over at an earlier time. It must be several weeks ago by now. And the department has prepared answers to all those questions. If you want them read into the record, we can have them read into the record. If you would just like to have the answers, we could table them and then you can have them after that.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I appreciate that. I think that we can go into the reading of them into the records at a later date. I appreciate . . .

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, we'll undertake to get them to you in a short while.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, the Associate Minister of Finance today suggested that the Bi-Provincial upgrader at Lloydminster was a good deal for Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, would you agree with that assessment?

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Chairman, that's a fairly broad-ranging question and I guess I could answer that in two different ways. There are probably parts of it that were a very good deal and parts of it that may not have been a very good deal. So if the member would be a little more specific, I could probably give him specific answers.

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think the statements of the Associate Minister of Finance today were pretty clear. He felt that the people of Saskatchewan today through your government had put together an arrangement, an agreement, that was good for Saskatchewan people, good for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and good for investment in Saskatchewan, and good for everything and anything, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister. But, Mr. Minister, there were a whole lot of things that are wrong with that — his assessment.

Mr. Minister, it's our understanding that there will not be one nickel of investment returned to Saskatchewan until all other players in the agreement — Alberta people, the people from Husky, the Government of Alberta, and the federal government — are paid out. Not one cent of return on investment to Saskatchewan until everyone else is paid out, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Minister, I don't think that's good enough. And I suspect the people of Saskatchewan agree with me and don't think it's good enough.

And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, it's another obligation and another contract broken by this government which has a history, a history of breaking promises and a history of breaking contracts and obligations right since the moment they formed government. Right since that very moment, Mr. Speaker.

Within days, within days of taking over as government, they cancel outright the AECL agreement with AECL. They cancelled that agreement. It, Mr. Minister, had the potential for millions and millions of dollars of investment

in this province and thousands and thousands of jobs.

And, Mr. Minister, you folks just sat back and said, no, no, we don't want that in Saskatchewan. We don't have the ability to look after and manage that type of thing in Saskatchewan. We don't need that kind of thing in Saskatchewan. No to progress, as my colleagues says.

That's what you've said to the people of Saskatchewan. And it's no wonder, Mr. Minister, that the business community is upset with your government. Absolutely no wonder they're upset with you. And the reason why the Premier was summoned to a meeting in Saskatoon with business leaders is because they're upset with you, sir. It's because they don't see any initiatives that will move this province forward, Mr. Minister. They don't see any things like AECL happening.

What they do see from you, sir, is a government that has no indication of where they're going, has shown no indication, has no economic plan for this province, particularly with respect to energy development, but in a whole host of other areas as well.

This upgrader deal, as I said, provides Saskatchewan with not one nickel of return investment now. It essentially puts a garnishee on the treasury of Saskatchewan by all of the other governments associated with Husky Oil, Mr. Minister.

Contracts broken — you've weaseled out of another one here. And we see that again today, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman. We see that again. A government that simply cannot be trusted or their word cannot be trusted, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, is it little wonder after these types of things, these types of broken promises, and broken contracts, broken obligations, that there isn't business wanting to come into Saskatchewan? The Finance minister in his budget said 700 companies waiting at the doorstep, wanting to come into Saskatchewan.

And yet we haven't seen a single one. And it's no wonder, Mr. Minister, with the kinds of things that your government is doing — breaking contracts every time you turn around.

The AECL agreement called for a penalty of \$2 million if you broke that contract. One only has to wonder whether you paid that. Was that paid out? The taxpayers of Saskatchewan would like to know that, I'm sure. Or did you break that obligation as well? Broke that obligation as well, I suspect.

Other provincial governments will never want to do business with you people, if that's the way you're going to conduct yourselves. The federal government, it's no wonder, doesn't want to have anything to do with you either, Mr. Minister. It's no wonder they don't want to have anything to do with you when the conduct that you people have shown since you become elected . . . let alone business interests — let alone business interests in North America, Mr. Minister.

Little wonder they don't want to come here. You see that

kind of thing going on day after day, month after month, ever since you've taken office. You've broken contracts with your own employees, you've broken contracts with AECL, you've broken contracts with farmers, you've broken contracts in a number of areas. And yet, Mr. Minister, the associate minister stands up and says, in glowing terms, that this is a great deal for Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Minister, we don't agree with that assessment for one moment. We don't agree with it for one moment and neither do the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, the Associate Minister of Finance says projects of this nature are often long-term investments and we're not even sure there would be a return to Saskatchewan people. Well he absolutely and you absolutely guaranteed that with this type of an agreement. We won't see a return on investment in Saskatchewan as a result of your actions, as a result of the actions that you've taken with respect to the upgrader, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, your government is fast becoming the laughing-stock of North America — fast becoming the laughing-stock of North America. Everything from spandex to a government that won't honour contracts, to your economic development strategy — or lack of.

And I would say lack of, sir, because we don't see any indication of a strategy. The only strategy that you seem to have is if the previous administration had anything to do with it at all, it's got to go. That's all the strategy that you have. It has to go. If it has a Tory hand that has touched it, Saskatchewan simply can't have it as far as the NDP administration is concerned — Saska Pasta, AECL, Piper, the upgrader, all kinds of things, Mr. Minister.

And yet again, as I say, the associate minister of Finance stands up and says, this is one of the success stories that I'd like to tell you about today, to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. We successfully weaseled out of a contract today. That's what we did. We successfully weaseled out of a contract and we successfully negotiated a project that will give us not 1 cent of a return on investment.

That is a wonderful success story. The people and the unemployed in this province will be just jumping for joy this evening when they listen to the news, I'm sure, that that's what your government has been able to do today, sir.

The Chair: — Order. It being 5 o'clock, the committee will recess until 7 o'clock p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.