

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

welcoming them to this House.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Thursday next ask the government the following questions:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission's purchase of a survey from Fox Consulting of Reno, Nevada: (1) what was the total amount paid for the services provided by Fox Consulting; (2) how much of that amount was to provide for travel, lodging, communications, and entertainment expenses for the consultant, Ms. Candace Fox; (3) was this contract awarded following an open tender; (4) was Fox Consulting instructed to consult with people directly or indirectly affected by casino gambling, including licensed bingo charities, aboriginal peoples, the horse-racing industry, and exhibition associations; and (5) with whom did the Fox firm consult and at what length during the course of its survey into the feasibility of casino gaming?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce through you to the House a number of representatives who are attending a meeting of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Development Corporations. There are more than four in the gallery opposite, but I recognize four — Bob Tullis and Doug Barker from the Coteau Hills RDC (rural development corporation) in my own constituency, and Reuben Wiens and Audrey Tenant from the Moose Mountain area. Reuben is also a friend from another movie. We used to sing in Greystone Singers together a hundred years ago, and I welcome them to the Legislature. I ask you to welcome them with me.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend greetings to the people from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Development Corporations. As the hon. member has pointed out, there are a few in the galleries now but there will be more coming in later, and in case we don't get a chance to welcome them then I hope that the members will greet them outside and offer them the hospitality of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery there's also representatives from the Gateway RDC at Moosomin, Lyle Severson, the economic development officer, and Harry Kessler is the chairman; and Pipestone RDC with Terry Shackleton and Jane Laich, and certainly welcome to Reuben and Audrey Tenant as well. I'd like the members to join me in

ORAL QUESTIONS

Plea Bargaining and Early Release Program

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier and it deals with a number of concerns that Saskatchewan, and not only Saskatchewan residents, but I'm sure residents across Canada have regarding the judicial system. And I feel that possibly in Saskatchewan, in particular, there is a lot of concern and disenchantment with the justice system. On the one hand, Mr. Speaker, we have the government refusing to even conduct a review of the Milgaard case where there is a serious question about a man's innocence, and on the other hand we have prosecutors cutting deals for serious criminal offenders.

Mr. Premier, will you order an immediate public inquiry into the entire plea bargaining process?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no, but I want to enlarge on that answer and provide a bit of a base for it.

I believe that the member's concern with respect to plea bargaining has not to do with the Milgaard case but probably has to do with the Dove case. And in the circumstances of that case it was not so much a plea bargain as a question of an offer by the accused persons to plead guilty to manslaughter.

The problem that the Crown had is that it was the opinion of our senior prosecutors that we would not be able to prove the crime of murder. And there was a great danger of the persons who were accused to simply walk away from it, being dismissed on the murder charge at the preliminary hearing. So it wasn't so much a question of plea bargaining as it was a question of accepting an offer to plead guilty to manslaughter.

I think my experience in the last 16 months, Mr. Speaker, tells me that there would be no need for any kind of an inquiry in this province with respect to the practice of plea bargaining.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister of Justice, certainly I want to thank the minister for his response but I also want to bring to his attention that people still are not all that familiar with the process. And the feeling out there, Mr. Minister . . . and certainly is not just in my constituency and not just members of the Dove family, but there are many people angered over the process. And whether you call it bargaining or plea bargaining, almost the entire province of Saskatchewan is questioning the integrity of the administration of justice, sir.

I just want to quote from Judge Les Bewley who quit the B.C. (British Columbia) bench in disgust after being asked to approve a plea bargain process. And he said:

Plea bargaining is a venerable disease of the criminal court system brought about by the shadowy coupling between the defence counsel and the Crown attorney.

And there are many other legal professionals who can attune to that.

Mr. Premier, and Mr. Minister, given this wide body of judicial and legal condemnation of the bargaining process, do you not agree that simply to preserve the integrity of the system, a full public inquiry is needed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I know that we tread here upon very controversial ground, and I know that there is a great deal of unrest in the community fired by some cases that are controversial. And certainly the Dove situation was one of those.

I think that we have done the right thing, and I have explained the circumstances to the hon. member and again to this House just a few moments ago. And I think that was appropriate.

The actual practice of plea bargaining as we see it on television doesn't occur very often in practice. Typically in a criminal case . . .

An Hon. Member: — Too often.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — No, not too often, as the member says from his seat. Typically in a criminal case when you have a plea of guilty or when an accused person has been found guilty, you will have different submissions made to the judge where the prosecutor will ask for a sentence within a certain range and the defence will ask for a lower sentence within another range, and then it's up to the court to decide whether to accept one or the other or something in between.

Now that's how the vast majority of criminal cases are handled, and the judiciary generally, I think does a good job. From time to time those decisions become controversial but I think overall the hon. member would agree that generally the judiciary are doing a good job. And Crown counsel . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and again to the minister. And I appreciate the minister's comments but certainly many people in rural Saskatchewan and certainly across Canada are not that familiar. In fact as I talk to people I find that many people feel that the best possible route of bringing, defining, or answering the question is the fact of even a court appearance so the public knows exactly what's going on.

But another question begs to come forward, Mr. Minister. The federal government has on record the position of the government, and the Minister of Justice has continued to

support the early release of convicted criminals. And given the appalling crimes that we have seen and that have been committed against many people by criminals out on parole and early release, will the minister inform Ottawa that this province has changed its position and that we are firmly opposed to early release of individuals convicted of serious, violent crimes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well I'm certainly prepared to consider that, Mr. Speaker, because in the administration of our own early release program we weed out the people who are violent, who have a record of being violent, or who we judge are likely to be violent. The only ones who qualify for our early release programs are people who won't pose a threat to the public, the people who are incarcerated for property-related crimes or failure to pay fines or that sort of thing. So I'm quite prepared to consider the member's request that we record that in a letter to the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again to the minister. Mr. Minister, a moment ago you made a comment about the fact that you didn't think a public inquiry into the plea bargaining process was necessary. But I would think, Mr. Minister, that certainly it would be something that should be at least out in the public, and that there should be individuals asked to address the whole process of plea bargaining.

And I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, if you would at least consider appointing a group of elected officials to sit down and review the process, the plea bargaining process, and bring their submission to this House. Would you do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not certain that I understand the member's request fully, but I'm prepared to consider it. And perhaps we can discuss it privately and just see what it is that he wants. So I'll check with him later.

Mr. Toth: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe when we were discussing the issue surrounding the Dove case back in the spring, the minister at the time had asked Justice to review, to conduct a review. And he stated that he did so with his officials and that he was satisfied that everything was fine.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Justice believes in the principle that justice must be open, accountable. Therefore it would seem to me that this review, if indeed conducted, was not open, and that there should be a public inquiry and a public view.

Given the secret nature of the minister's own review, and given the minister's unwillingness to have a public inquiry, and given the Premier's refusal to allow a committee of this House to conduct a review, will the Premier at the very least have the Department of Justice conduct a full and complete study of the issues and simply table it in this House? Will you do that, please, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well I've tried to tell the member that I have inquired in the context of the Dove case what went on in that case, and in a general sense, what plea bargaining is about in this province; is there plea bargaining that goes on.

I reported to the minister just a few minutes ago . . . or to the member a few minutes ago that it wasn't a common practice in Saskatchewan, doesn't happen very often. In the vast majority of cases the matter is determined by a judge. So we just simply don't have that much to inquire into.

I have also made an offer to the town of Whitewood, and the member knows this full well, that my deputy minister and the director of public prosecutions are quite prepared to go down to Whitewood, meet with the town council, meet with Mrs. Dove, perhaps even meet with a larger community if we can make appropriate arrangements, and discuss the circumstances behind the Dove case so that at least in his constituency there'll be some comfort with respect to how that particular case was handled. And if I may say so, I think that is the issue and not some wider inquiry into a practice that really doesn't go on very often.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister. One other question that begs to be asked, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, in 1989 the Law Reform Commission of Canada recommended that no plea bargain be entered into without first consulting the victims. And certainly Mrs. Dove brought this to my attention, that they were led to believe that they would be consulted by the Crown as to the process and the proceedings as they took place. However, they read in the media about the final decision. I'm wondering if the Department of Justice indeed did take the time to consult the Dove family before they entered into this process with the convicted killers.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of that but I'll take notice and get back to the member.

Unemployment

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. This month's statistical review was released today and it indicates that since you've taken power in October of 1991 the Saskatchewan economy has lost 22,000 jobs — 22,000 fewer jobs and the highest unemployment rate in two years is quite a commentary on rebuilding Saskatchewan together.

What are you prepared to do for the people your policies have forced onto the unemployment rolls?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the member from Greystone, because employment is a very, very important issue for the Government of Saskatchewan as she well knows. We have worked hard and long with the business people in the province to develop an economic development strategy. We had over 200 public meetings, private meetings, public and private meetings with business and working people, to come up with a strategy to deal with the economy that obviously includes jobs.

I have to say that while the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan is not as low as we would like it to be, obviously, a large part of the unemployment came in the first quarter, the first half of 1992. The numbers you quote, I don't have the exact numbers about what you're referring to, but I know that 7,000 jobs were lost in agriculture early in 1992 and many would say it was directly related at the same time as the \$500 million for farmers did not come for seeding last year. And many fewer farmers hired up agricultural workers to work on the farms early in 1992.

Now I say to you very clearly that this is in fact a high priority for our government. Obviously the job is not completed nor are we close to being completed with job creation. This will be an ongoing process. And I ask you again for the projects that you promised, on a weekly basis. If you would get those to us, that would help us a great deal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade. Sir, I will be delighted to give you one per week if this Assembly allows me any opportunity to say such.

You say that economic development and jobs are your highest priority. You talked about a loss of jobs in agriculture. You didn't talk about the 3,000 jobs lost in manufacturing or the 4,000 in trade. And your own Premier has indicated that taxes are the silent killer of jobs. Saskatchewan had heavy job losses thanks to \$340 million in tax increases last year; a spree of increases in utility rates, licence fees, and insurance charges.

With new taxes and more charges on the way, I ask you: how many more jobs do you anticipate being lost and how many more people will have to need social assistance before you're done as you say, quote, charting our course to financial freedom, with more taxes and bad decisions?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the member opposite that obviously with a \$15 billion debt we need to look at ways of starting not only to pay down the debt, but first of all reduce the amount that the deficit is in any given fiscal year. You understand that. You know there's only a certain number of ways to do that in a province of a million people. Obviously looking at tax reform and tax changes is one of them. I would be interested in knowing what you would do as a positive alternative to the deficit problem. I'll wait for your reply to that.

When it comes to employment statistics though, we would be remiss if we didn't comment on those provinces where we have Liberal governments and look at the record of unemployment in those areas to see how the Liberals are making out.

Obviously the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan in 1992 was the lowest in Canada. We all know that. But let's look at it in other provinces like Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland. And I just want to quote

for you that in Quebec the unemployment rate in 1992 was 12.8 per cent; in Prince Edward Island, 17.7 per cent; in Newfoundland, 20.2 per cent; and in Saskatchewan 8.2. Now if you're saying we want to go to Liberal policy, I think you're sadly mistaken.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — I think we should have an election today and run Frank McKenna, and/or myself, and I'm sure that the people of the province would be delighted if you would do such. CN (Canadian National Railway Company) announced yesterday that it will cut some 3,000 jobs in Canada this year. Fifteen of those jobs will be lost and will affect families in the community of Melville.

Co-operators Data Services recently announced it will cut 80 jobs at its Regina office. I'd like you to stand before us and tell us whether or not you will admit that your plan to rebuild the economy of this province through higher taxes has been a dismal failure, and cost 22,000 jobs with more losses yet to come.

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the hon. member raised the question in respect to the massive cuts of employment in respect of the CN. And I want to say to you here that our government has been acting on behalf of that. The Premier has written to the president of the CNR. He has written to the Premier . . . Prime Minister of Canada. He has asked that there be consultation in respect to any cuts. And we are acting on behalf of them.

The only reply that we got, Mr. Speaker, when we asked for consultations in respect to the impact, from the Federal government, was to unilaterally cut the payments under the western grain transportation to the farmers of Canada, further downloading on the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps it has something to do with Saskatchewan having the very highest taxation, as far as rails are concerned, in the entire country.

Mr. Minister, we now have the highest unemployment rate in two years.

Even worse is the fate of our young people. For those aged between 20 and 24, the jobless rate is over 20 per cent in our province. That's up four points from last year and twice the provincial average of 10 per cent. In eight weeks there are going to be many, many of our young people out looking for jobs when our universities close.

What are you going to do, and your government, to give these people some sense of dignity and allow them some future in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member opposite that obviously employment is a

high priority, and I think our record shows that. And I listed out the other day the number, the large number of projects that have been undertaken in the province. I say again that that obviously is not a complete list. But I say to you, Madam Member, that there are many, many options that the business community in this province is looking at to enhance employment and to build a better economy.

One of them isn't this always dour and negative attitude that I hear from the Liberal Party that everything is bad, everything is negative. And I really would ask you that your comments made to the *Star-Phoenix* . . . and I want to quote from June 5, 1992, where you said outside of the House: Haverstock said Lingenfelter's reaction shows the government has no current economic development. She's promising to bring at least one project a week to the attention of the government which will have real economic potential.

Now having made that comment, having made that comment and in the spirit of cooperation, I really would ask you — you should have a list of about 52 projects now — if you would bring them to the Assembly or give them to us to help us with the economic renewal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Jurisdiction on Gambling

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice, and it deals with the issue of gambling and casinos in our province and in particular the Bear Claw Casino.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that no one is criticizing the White Bear community for taking the initiative to try and develop their economy, but we have a situation where a question of jurisdiction is being put to a test — a test that so far your government has failed to take.

Can the Minister of Justice tell this Assembly if he has received any opinions from his department about the jurisdiction of the . . . and the capacity of the Indian reserve to have the casino on their reserve?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — The view of the Department of Justice, Mr. Speaker, is that the Criminal Code applies to the operation of casinos and that the province has obligations to administer the Criminal Code. And we approach the subject on the basis that that administration includes all of Saskatchewan, including Indian reserves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since there is in your mind a view that the jurisdiction is a responsibility of the province, I want to ask you why you have not followed through with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) involving themselves in doing the very same things that they do in my community on the Indian reserve? Why haven't you done that, sir?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I don't think it's a question, Mr. Speaker, of what I have done or haven't done. The RCMP

are following the situation closely, as is the government. We had four days of very intensive discussions last week, trying to find a way for the band at White Bear to have a facility that would fall within the framework of the existing law and policy. Those discussions were adjourned on Thursday until this week, without being able to find that solution.

The RCMP announced without any direction from me — I mean I don't tell the RCMP how to do their business — announced that in light of the fact that discussions were ongoing, they would not be conducting any investigation on the weekend. That's as I understood media reports.

We're back in discussions today with the band and with representatives of the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations). We're hopeful that we will be able to work out arrangements whereby White Bear will be able to operate entirely within the legal and policy framework.

Mr. Martens: — Are you discussing something that should be discussed in the court? Are you discussing and negotiating, as the Minister of Justice, a matter that is, in view of your earlier observation, a criminal matter under the Criminal Code? Are you discussing that with the Indian reserve? And if that is what's going on, I think the court should be determining that. And I believe that you are in error if you are doing that negotiation, sir.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well I appreciate that the hon. member is trying to give me advice on how I should administer the criminal law of Saskatchewan.

What we're trying to do, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Member, is to avoid a situation where any crime is being committed. The Indian band is asserting that they have jurisdiction to do that. We assert that they do not have jurisdiction to run a casino. That is a question which really can only be determined in the courts. Ultimately this question will be determined in the courts, one way or another, some place or other — if not in Saskatchewan then somewhere else.

What we're trying to work out though, is a way in which the band can achieve at least some of its ambitions within the framework of the Criminal Code and within the policy with respect to gaming that is applicable in this province. That's all we're doing, Mr. Member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Since in your mind there is no jurisdictional problem but in the mind of others there is, would it not be in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan and also the Department of Justice that you would refer this matter to the Court of Appeal for some decision and ask the court to make the decision rather than the Department of Justice to make the decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've just said, this question of jurisdiction really can only be determined by the courts. And certainly the option of referring this whole situation to the Court of Appeal is one that we suggested and it's been discussed with the White Bear Band and with the FSIN during the last few days of

discussion.

If it went to the Court of Appeal, the White Bear Band or FSIN or both, would have to be parties to that reference in order to put before the Court of Appeal the Indian claim for jurisdiction. So that leads you to a situation where if you're going to make that sort of reference in connection with this case it would be wise to make it with the agreement of the White Bear Indian Band and/or the FSIN. We haven't yet reached that, although it is still on the table and still being discussed between us.

But the member is quite right. It is a question of jurisdiction. We can take a position on it as has the Indian band, but ultimately it is only the courts that can decide.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Minister, are you sure that they have to be required to also assist for your right to provide a decision by the Court of Appeal, or is it your decision only? And that's the question I raise here. Should you be doing that to the Court of Appeal?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — There's no question, Mr. Speaker, that the government can make the reference to the Court of Appeal. No question about that at all.

But the issue to be decided really has to do with the assertion of jurisdiction by this particular first nation, and for that reference to work and to produce a credible result it requires their participation. So we've tried to persuade them that this would be the appropriate way to go, and we're still discussing that with them.

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

Ms. Haverstock: — To request leave to introduce guests, sir.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to you, and through you to all members of this Assembly, five individuals seated in your gallery from around our province, representing the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Development Corporations which is a non-partisan group that works toward the social and economic well-being of rural Saskatchewan.

Would the members please welcome Chairman Louis Hredecki from Meath Park, Vice-Chairman Evan Simpson from Ruthilda, Director Paul Chemkora from Hyas, Director Stan Gording from Rockglen, and Director Pat Hanke from Beechy.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — To introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the government and as minister in charge of Rural Development, I too would like to welcome these gentlemen to the legislature. We hope you have an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Does the member want to introduce guests?

Leave granted.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would be remiss as the critic for Rural Development if we didn't also echo the words of the previous two speakers and welcome these fine gentlemen to our Assembly. The one on the far end, I have known his son for many years, having worked with him in counselling and assistance. And we certainly do welcome you all, and join with me in letting them know how much we appreciate their coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

CN Cut-backs

Hon. Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in response to the announcement by CN for massive cuts of jobs and services nationally, I want to indicate to the members and to the House the following action taken by the Government of Saskatchewan.

A letter will be immediately forwarded to the federal Minister of Transport, the Hon. Jean Corbeil, outlining this government's wish for full consultation upon the possible and probable impact of these unilateral decisions upon jobs and rail services to Saskatchewan. Also a letter will be immediately sent to Paul Tellier, president of the CN Rail, requesting a meeting with the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development to discuss these same issues with the railway.

The Saskatchewan government is concerned of course with the massive loss of jobs, some 91 immediately in Saskatchewan, and also the effect it may have on the level of service provided to the province.

But also our concern goes beyond the immediate effect of these cuts on jobs and rail services, as important as they are. This government is also concerned about the long-term impact of these decisions on the increased use of our roads and highways that will result from the withdrawal of services, the impact on the environment, and the very real economic consequences to the communities most directly affected.

We are hopeful that consultation, which we have been asking for, will begin. Since last fall when the Premier of Saskatchewan wrote to the president and the chief executive officer and president of CN, and the Prime Minister, expressing concern over the issue, this government has sought to ensure that a comprehensive assessment of rail include comprehensive consultation

with the provinces to maintain effective rail transportation services and jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to respond from our point of view on the ministerial statement just read by the hon. member. Here again, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that we see the government trying to blame throw their way out of a problem that they are mainly responsible for themselves, trying to throw the blame to some other level of government or someone else when they know full well that one of the biggest problems that we have encountered in this province with rail transportation being competitive has to do with the high taxation that is being charged to these railroads that makes them uncompetitive to all of the other provinces in this country.

The rail system has determined some months ago to ask for some relief in this area, saying that they could no longer be competitive with the trucking industry, and that they would have to in fact reduce their services if they didn't get some relief.

Now it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that if the Minister of Transportation was serious about saving jobs, he would have entered into some consultation and some negotiations with the people from the railroad companies at the time when they told him some months ago that in fact they were going to have to reduce the numbers of people if they could not be competitive and that this taxation problem really existed.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret that we find that we are losing jobs in our province and I sincerely hope that the minister will do some consulting, truly and honest consulting, and meeting with the needs that will in fact make us competitive in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 — An Act respecting the Conduct of Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of the Executive Council, respecting Conflicts of Interest and to enact Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the Conduct of Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of the Executive Council, respecting Conflicts of Interest and to enact Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this relates to question no. 1 put by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. I would ask that it be converted to motion for

return (debatable).

The Speaker: — Motion for return (debatable).

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

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — With leave, for the introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a member of the High Hopes Rural Development Corporation, which is my home, and a member of the executive of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Development Corporations, Evan Simpson, in your gallery.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Stanger, seconded by Mr. Renaud.

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand proudly as the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden to enter into the debate on the Speech from the Throne delivered last Thursday by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

My first words must be words of congratulations, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to the mover and the seconder of the motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne. Congratulations to my fine friends and colleagues, the members from Cut Knife-Lloydminster and Kelsey-Tisdale. It is an honour to be able to move and second the Speech from the Throne and I commend the members on their eloquence.

Mr. Speaker, I like the metaphor of a journey used in the throne speech. It has a noble history. Chaucer had his pilgrims leaving worldly London for the city of God as represented by Canterbury. Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* undertook a journey and pioneers journeyed from everywhere to get to Saskatchewan.

A journey is indeed what our life is. As we all know, a journey together, a journey that includes all members of our society, is better than a solitary journey. The throne speech outlines a journey for Saskatchewan people. My life has been dedicated to preparing the youngest members of our society for that journey, and therefore I wholeheartedly endorse the government's children first: community action program initiative.

All teachers would acknowledge that there are many circumstances inside and outside the schools that can affect the way children learn and develop. Poor health

and nutrition, family violence, neglect, and substance abuse can all devastate the life of the young. I have seen, Mr. Speaker, the effects of all these on children in my care, and any effort to mitigate these terrible realities in our children's lives must be welcomed and encouraged.

The member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster talked about inclusion, and this program is a perfect example. Nearly 20 communities are now involved in working together, using their schools as a base to effectively deliver a broad range of services to meet their children's needs. This is wonderful, Mr. Speaker. It is easier to meet the educational needs of children if their other needs are met as well. The wellness model goes to school.

But before I talk about formal education, I want to say a few words about education and knowledge in a wider and broader sense. We need to know — and I think we do know — that sound financial management of any institution, whether it be family, business, or government, is absolutely necessary for confidence and hope. Runaway debt has to be controlled.

Most people in Saskatchewan now know the fiscal reality facing us. Indeed the marvellous response to the Saskatchewan savings bonds last year shows how well they appreciated the need for us to help ourselves gain financial stability.

And the government too in many ways — like curbing ministerial travel, cutting MLAs' (Member of the Legislative Assembly) communication allowances and cabinet ministers' salaries, and reducing the number of boards and commissions — has helped Saskatchewan become the only province to cut its annual operating expenditures.

Saskatchewan people do indeed know that living within our means is an important priority, as is our environment, Mr. Speaker.

As a member of the Standing Committee of the legislature on the Environment, I have learned some things which go to the heart of effective government. Two I would like to emphasize. First, there is a wide variety of opinion in the province on the need for legislation to protect the environment. Some people do not yet know the extent to which our environment has been damaged. Implied in that variety of opinion then is the need for many to acknowledge the fragility of the state of our air, our soil, and water, and how careful we must all be in maintaining their purity.

Secondly, on the committee we have been heartened by the response to our hearings throughout the province. People really do appreciate having the opportunity to express their opinions, however varied, on the Charter of Environmental Rights and Responsibilities. Consulting on this proposed legislation, as on health, agriculture, economic development, among many others, is in keeping with this government's dedication to openness and accountability.

Another thing people I think need to know, must know to journey through life, is how to take care of themselves. And, Mr. Speaker, I am solidly in favour and support of

the Saskatchewan vision for health, the wellness model. The more we know of the causes of many illnesses, cancer being typical, the more we realize that lifestyle choices can be crucial in avoiding or at least minimizing health risks.

(1445)

Smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease, but even unwise eating and lack of exercise play a significant role in a person's well-being. Our people in Saskatchewan, most people everywhere, need every encouragement to eat well, exercise, and maintain a positive outlook on life, so that their recourse to health services for illnesses caused mainly by lifestyle choices is reduced.

Despite much good work done by many good people, there is still much ignorance of, or indifference to, the need to minimize health risks and live wisely. Saskatchewan people working together, communities and health professionals, must indeed be given every support in the planning, delivery, and governing of our health services. And education promoting healthy attitudes and lifestyles could do wonders for more people than as yet perhaps has been realized.

Mr. Speaker, some of the mail I have been receiving of late reminds me of another need for education in Saskatchewan. And I refer to the proposed amendment to the Human Rights Code. Extending basic human rights to gay people, rights of secure employment and a roof over their head, seems just civilized and Christian to me. And I would say that anyone who denies such rights to any law-abiding member of our community is not enlightened, open-minded, or educated in basic human charity. I am dismayed that there are people in our province who would deny gay people, with a vehemence bordering on hatred, what seven other provinces and the federal government have either granted or are about to grant them.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I attended the baptism of an infant. At the heart of this ceremony was a series of vows the parents and godparents took on behalf of the child. The vows are in the form of questions to each of which the parents answer: I will, with God's help. The last question was: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being? Mr. Speaker, if that vow is followed, this child has a good chance of growing into a strong, dignified, morally productive member of society. If, on the other hand, that child grows up to follow the dictates of those who teach narrow-mindedness, intolerance, and hatred, then we will have lost another soul to darkness.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say just a few words about agriculture. Many of the people in my constituency are dependent upon agriculture and it is a very important concern with this government.

No one would deny that our farmers and rural communities are in crisis. Their farm income this year could well be the lowest since 1970. In response to this situation we must continue to stand with our farm communities and insist that the federal government fulfil its promise to deliver a third line of defence.

We have also formed a Farm Support Review Committee whose responsibility it will be to focus on development of a long-term safety net program for farmers.

An exciting new initiative is the consultation paper "Forging Partnerships in Agriculture". The purpose of this document, and I quote:

... is to encourage discussion of the challenges and opportunities relating to Saskatchewan's agriculture and food industry.

The member from Kelsey-Tisdale spoke about this paper in his address, and we look forward throughout the coming months to hearing the results of these discussions which will help us work toward security for farmers and all those who are involved in the agriculture and food industry.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to return to education — education in its formal, more limited sense. As I mentioned earlier, I strongly endorse the children first: community action program. I well know from my own experience that the more interaction there is between schools and the communities they serve, the better educated and prepared for life our children become. I like the idea that lifelong learning should be the goal of a properly integrated school system. Saskatchewan schools have long been considered among the best in Canada, and this government is committed to their continued excellence.

Thus, having a Saskatchewan Education Council oversee the direction the education system takes must help ensure this continuing improvement. Accountability and cooperation in education, as in all government activity, are excellent concepts to live by.

On a personal note, I'd like to end by saying that one of the reasons I entered public life was to restore hope and faith to people cynical about politicians and the political process. I believe, Mr. Speaker, in cooperation and bringing people together, working together.

The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, with its emphasis on cooperation and accountability, should help Saskatchewan people see the difficulties and challenges we face. But it should assure them that this government is determined to make the right decisions on its journal of renewal — the right decisions for the good of us all, Mr. Speaker.

I proudly support this Speech from the Throne. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sir. It's been really fascinating to sit in this Chamber and listen to three successive throne speeches by this still very new government and to watch history being made. To watch the way our cabinet wrestled with the pig's mess that was left by the previous administration. To watch the joy of the opposition at the problems that they left us — veritably crowing at the thought that we could not solve

them. To see that delight give way to doubt last year when they realized that we had every intention of solving those problems.

That doubt we shall see turn to anger and despair during this session as they see us surmount difficulty after difficulty in succeeding weeks of this session. They'll be even more glum next year when they see the building blocks that I described last year fit nicely into place in the edifice that we are so carefully crafting in time for the election of 1996 — not far away. But we're going to get there.

It won't be a rococo contraption like those multi-tiered wedding cakes that are so popular, whose icing sugar conceals a block of inedible wood. The cake that we produce will be a solid and nourishing cake like those that our mothers and our grandmothers made for us so many years ago.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — Unassuming and practical, the kind that we come back for day after day, time after time, for more and more slices — the type that never gets stale and we never get sick of.

As a lad at a Boy Scout jamboree, Lord Rowallan, who was then the Chief Scout of the world, gave us a motto which went: the difficult we do at once; the impossible takes a little longer. That motto, sir, has remained with me for over 40 years and has sustained me through many tight corners and difficult situations.

I see that the present government is putting that motto into practice every day in the tradition of our forebears, both on this side of the Atlantic and on the other.

Even the choir that sang for us from the government gallery — I think from the Balfour Collegiate School there — seemed to pick up the same theme, as they sang "All Our Trials Soon Be Over". That spiritual, sir, was wrong in one respect. It is certainly late but, my brother, it is not too late. And we are going to prove that very shortly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — In my area of the province and in neighbouring constituencies, because it covers rather a large area, Saskatchewan Water and the federal Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Association are cooperating to develop what we call the Wood River Utility Board, in order to pipe water from Thomson Lake to over 600 farms, and about the same number of hook-ups to residents in small towns and villages in the area.

We are chronically short of good water, sir. And by this means we should be able to increase our herds of beef cattle and hogs, and so stimulate our economy and take advantage of the demand for more meat in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba. This will create jobs for us and bring some more life into our communities.

The total cost will be somewhere between 10 and \$11 million, a part of which will come from the federal sources, and we are hoping that we can get some from

provincial sources as well. And I share this with you, sir, simply to demonstrate that this is an example of what we can do with a minimum amount of money and a maximum amount of cooperation.

Granted, on a far larger scale there's the new unimproved AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) agreement. There can be no doubt, sir, that nuclear power is a valuable source of energy. But there are problems — problems of safety, problems of cost, and many problems with disposal of the waste material. The only way that we can solve these problems, sir, is by research.

And I see no reason why that research should not be carried out in this province — the province that surely must benefit from the successful production of safe and cheap nuclear power. We are, after all, a major source of the uranium. But we cannot afford to get ourselves into the mess that Ontario Hydro got with a \$3 billion plant that ultimately cost over \$14 billion. A debt with a deficit like that, sir, would sink this province out of sight, and I think that the government has the right idea.

I'm certainly opposed to our beautiful forest being destroyed by half the world's nuclear waste. I took the opportunity to go up to Rabbit Lake with Cameco and look around their sites. And apart from the obvious scars that the actual mines themselves form and which will be obliterated by contract once the mines are closed down . . . I'd hate to see those beautiful forests there and those lovely lakes destroyed by nuclear waste from Hong Kong and outer Mongolia and anywhere else.

I repeat, before we go any further down the road to nuclear power, we need foolproof safety of the operation; we need low costs and absolute safety of disposal. Our province and our future demand no less.

There is an ongoing problem with agriculture, as we all know, and we certainly need the new initiative of the Farm Support Review Committee. GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) is obviously dead. Alberta had a shortfall in 1991 which was supposed to be the great year for GRIP. And now despite the fact that it had no changes in 1992, it's going to have another \$300 million of loss. Manitoba, I understand, is having problems with it and wants to get out. And I believe there's rumours that the federal government itself wants to make changes in GRIP.

We were right last year when we said that there were problems with GRIP and they ought to be changed, and everybody else was wrong, and we're proving it over and over again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — As to renewing health care, sir, along the lines of the wellness model, the Minister of Health is to be congratulated for her enormous energy. I've seen her criss-crossing the province attending countless and interminable meetings with stakeholders and the general public, not only in the cities but also in any small town that invites her. She has total grasp of the situation and is enthusiastic and inexhaustible in pursuit of her goals, and I'm sure that she will command the overwhelming support of the medical profession and the nurses in our

area.

But we shall have to be careful not to so circumscribe the freedom to practise medicine of our rural physicians that we lose the most capable and hard-working doctors of the province. These are the ones that work without the huge technology. These are the ones that work using what I was taught to use — the brain, the ears, the eyes, the hand, and the heart.

(1500)

We'll have to work hard to keep these 35 per cent of the doctors who serve 65 per cent of the population. It is unfortunate that 65 per cent of the doctors are in Saskatoon and Regina serving merely 35 per cent of the population. But I suspect that they're the ones that don't have the courage and the tenacity to practise real medicine. That's my own opinion. Otherwise we shall have no meaningful health care in rural areas at all. The present South African doctor-of-the-month club is not only unsatisfactory and insufficient, but it can be very dangerous, sir.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of discussion of late of the apparent excess of MLAs in this House, particularly that there are too many rural MLAs, that they should be drastically reduced in number. Again, my own personal opinion, sir, is that there's not enough of anything in rural Saskatchewan, whether it be education, post offices, or health care. And reducing rural services of any kind simply compounds our problems.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I don't have a thousand voters or a thousand residents in one multi-story condominium that I can visit simply by using the elevator no matter what the weather. The population density of Saskatchewan is four people to the square mile. If I want to visit a thousand people in my area I have to travel 250 square miles. And I'm not the only one. My riding covers 4,500 square miles and it's not the largest one in the province, as you know.

Under the latest boundary revision that was not used but would have changed my constituency from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to Wood Mountain, that would have added a further 2,000 square miles to my constituency. The extra travel that that would have involved was enormous. And that was without reducing the number of ridings.

The increase in area that would result by reducing the number of rural ridings by the magic number of eight would be enormous. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, sir, if there is to be a reshuffling of ridings, and it can come to reduction in the number of seats, I would like to take this opportunity to suggest to you and to all the members of this House, on both sides, that any new formula be based not just on population alone, but also take into account the factor of the area covered. Otherwise the rural MLAs will simply not be able to perform the duties that are expected from them out in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, sir, our small communities are having great problems at maintaining themselves. This is nothing new, and I've repeated it before and I'll continue to do so because this is my job coming from a rural constituency.

With the federal government offloading on health care,

on education and social services onto provincial governments across the nation — not just ours — where we, in turn, are having to offload onto small towns and RMs (rural municipalities), and they are having to increase the taxes that are already overloading our small towns, now on top of this the federal government is welshing on the Crow rate agreement. As a result, the streets and other public amenities of our small towns are noticeably deteriorating — our roads are breaking up; our sewers are leaking all over the place; it's getting worse and it's going to increase.

Sir, Saskatchewan is a province of small towns scattered over half of our land mass. If you look on a map you will see that our populated area is twice that of Manitoba. And Winnipeg, the biggest single city in Manitoba, has a population that's greater than that of Regina and Saskatoon combined. Nor does Alberta, with half its population in the twin cities of Calgary and Edmonton, have the same problem that we have here.

Farming and ranching are the backbone of Saskatchewan and are likely to remain so in the foreseeable future, despite our oil production, despite our potash, and despite our uranium and timber. Nevertheless, many of our hamlets and villages are no longer viable entities. There is just no way to resuscitate them.

Government recognizes this and the population themselves recognize this. Studies have been done but no action has been taken so far. It is time that we set up a rural services committee whose task it would be to plan for the future of rural Saskatchewan.

If we do not wish all our population to drift into the 10 cities, we must say so. If we don't mind the province becoming derelict because of inner tension, then again let us say so and people will know what we're up against.

What I am suggesting, sir, is a wellness model for small towns. Not only do we have to decide what health services and facilities should be in certain towns, we need to decide which towns should have schools, government buildings, and post offices. And yes, sir, I did say post offices and I know full well that Canada Post is a federal jurisdiction. In fact it was my involvement in helping the campaigns to preserve our post office in Gravelbourg and the one in Wood Mountain and our partial success in Shamrock that jogged my mental wheels into motion on this issue.

As I accept that within reason Canada Post has to rationalize its services, and as I accept that health care has to be rationalized, these are simply ad hoc rationalizations. They are isolated, with no federal-provincial coordination. The announcement by CN yesterday is another example of that. And although the opposition may make great noises about the fact of our high taxes on diesel fuel, how is it, sir, that Alberta, which has low taxes on diesel fuel to the railways, has also lost jobs? And what's going on in Quebec and down East where they're losing another 1,100 people? It's not just Saskatchewan, it's the whole country that's being hit by a federal government that doesn't give a damn.

We have no real plan; there is no real plan. And it's not

connected to the larger world of Saskatchewan and Canada. To do these jobs properly we need a coordinated plan, not just a blind swing of a mailed fist in the dark. That just does damage. The same goes for a hockey stick, as I've got plenty of experience of.

If we will take inventory of our small towns in a comprehensive manner, sir, we should be able to say perhaps: above this size we will support a community; below that size, or perhaps off on a limb somewhere, we just cannot support you. At least our people will know what to expect, where they're going, what's going to happen.

I'm not suggesting that we bulldoze these places to the ground. All I'm suggesting is that we leave them alone, but let them know that in future if they decide they need a new hockey rink that we will not finance one. If they need a new curling rink or bowling alley, they will have to get together with smaller towns in the area and decide that one will be built to accommodate them all in a size large enough that the province is able to sustain over the long term. There's really no reason why we couldn't have recreation districts in the same way that we have school districts, sir. It would be very convenient if they were coterminous with school districts or even our new health districts, but it is not necessary.

Perhaps this is the time, sir, to introduce a county system. I really don't see any ideological impediment to this on our side of the House. Possibly opposition have; I don't know. I've never thought that way. We've no objection at our end. We've no objection to health districts or school districts. I don't see why we couldn't have counties. Possibly this is something that we should look into.

My rural colleagues on both sides of the House must surely have noted that there are hamlets occupied virtually 100 per cent by elderly widows whose only property is the house their husbands left them. They have no services and are virtually trapped. Their houses, however good they may be, however well maintained they may be, are virtually unsaleable. If they could sell them, the money they would get would not allow them to buy a house in say Gravelbourg, Assiniboia, Nipawin, wherever.

I would like to put into effect a pilot project where we transported those houses at no charge to a viable town in the neighbourhood where they could get the services they need. When we consider the future costs saved in not having to repair or replace telephone, power, gas, water, and sewer infrastructure to a whole townsite, I think we could at one stroke provide services to more people and reduce our liabilities.

I've brought this up before, sir, and I'll bring it up again, but I'm convinced that some such wellness model for rural communities is essential to encourage our local population and restore in them confidence in the future of Saskatchewan's rural way of life.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I did like the reference to "next year country" in the throne speech. It is an optimistic phrase. And my wife and I, after staggering without a rudder half way around the world, found the secure anchorage in

rural Saskatchewan where we found a very supportive and encouraging neighbourhood to the extent that we plan to retire in Saskatchewan, if we ever get around to it. And I would like to suggest that we inscribe "next year country" on our car licence plates and make it the provincial motto. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased once again to participate in a debate on the government's plan for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should say the government's lack of a plan for Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, I will deal with that shortly.

Mr. Speaker, my impression of a throne speech is supposed to give encouragement, hope. This throne speech gives none of that.

But before I go into my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the constituency of Wilkie. Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Wilkie is a diverse constituency. We have farming, we have a strong base in livestock, we have oil, we have a little bit of industry, and we have all the ethnic groups and all the churches that you usually find in rural Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that today I believe I represent them all and I feel comfortable with them, and I'm sure they feel comfortable with me as their representative, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is saying some things that I think I have to address, not only because the Premier said them, Mr. Speaker, but because it seems that some of his back-benchers also seem to have the same view.

Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about what could be almost called misinterpretation, misrepresentation, saying things like, the total debt of the province occurred in the last nine years. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. And you, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure, as well as many of the front benches on that side, know that.

What I would like to do today, Mr. Speaker, is talk to some of the back-benchers, particularly the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster. Yes, I would ask you to listen. And also the member from Tisdale. I would like you to listen, and listen with an open mind. Because I will . . . and I will go quite slowly and I will show you. And I don't hold that against the back-benchers, because I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, when you find that the Premier and the Deputy Premier not only fooled some of our people, he fooled all of his own people with that massive debt that he's talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I will probably take a little while to do this because I want to do it in such a manner that even those in the back benches will understand what I am saying.

(1515)

Well, Mr. Speaker, the broad, primary focus of the legislation will be on four broad areas. The massive and destructive tax grab; the unrelenting dishonesty of this government; the total unfairness of the government's actions — particularly its calculated decision to destroy

the faith and hope of the people of Saskatchewan in their own future. Gloom and doom. Mr. Speaker, the total unfairness of the government's actions; and of course, Mr. Speaker, the hurtful choices the government is making every day.

These are the themes of a government completely lost, completely without ideas, and completely bankrupt of initiative. Totally incompetent, Mr. Speaker.

Let me start, Mr. Speaker, by addressing the government's fascination with tax increases. The member from Riversdale said, I had no choice. He says taxes must go up because of this terrible deficit that I was left.

Mr. Speaker, let's examine that deficit collectively and let's get rid of the political distortions. Mr. Speaker, I will show you and those who have the integrity to listen, the magic pen of the Finance minister and the Premier. He said taxes must go up because of this terrible deficit I was left. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at it.

The member from Riversdale makes much ado about a letter he received from the former minister of Finance which assured him the government of the day had the deficit on track at \$265 million. That was the target.

Well, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we hear the boys chirping from the other side. I would just ask you to listen, get out your pencil, and go through this exercise.

Then that member expressed shock and outrage that the deficit he brought forward was much larger than \$265 million, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sorry to say that some of the media accepted that too. But this Premier needs to take responsibility for his own action, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to show you where he was misleading the people of this province. The deficit of the previous government was targeted at \$265 million based on the policies of the previous government. This NDP (New Democratic Party) leader turned all those policies upside down. The first NDP deficit was announced at \$858 million — their first budget. Mr. Speaker, you'll find that in the Speech from the Throne in December of 1991.

So let's do a little basic arithmetic. Even those back-benchers, I think, can follow this through. The NDP first cancelled harmonization. In doing so they gave up 180 million in the first year — could have gone to 200 million if the economy had turned around and the spending had gone up. So if you add, Mr. Speaker, 265 plus 180 — it's not difficult, it's not difficult math, you just add it up — add those two together and you get a deficit of \$445 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, take the 445 million and add a dividend from the Crown corporations of \$250 million. Now don't let the Leader of the NDP tell you there was no money for a dividend, Mr. Speaker, because there was. And those in the back benches maybe don't know that, but there was. All you have to do, all you have to do if you want to know, is to look at his own annual reports for those Crown corporations in 1991 and you will see that there was a minimum of \$590 million stashed away in the Crown corporations and retained earnings. The money

was there. We now know with certainty that there were sufficient funds available to pay the required dividend to the treasury. So let's just add 445 million and 250 million. What have we got? It comes to 695 million, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's continue, let's continue. Stay with me on this for a little while. To continue, if we look at the NDP Finance minister's own budget of 1991, we find that he reports \$122 million that was lost due to economic changes. All right, we'll buy that. What this means is that more people left the province, businesses and farmers went bankrupt and so on, resulting in increased cost for government and reduced revenues. Fair ball. Fair ball, Mr. Speaker.

These kinds of changes cost the government \$122 million. In the letter to the NDP leader, the Premier now, it was also indicated that there was an oversubscription in GRIP in 1991 that would cost an additional \$58 million. The former government was publicly and seriously committed to making up for these changes through other spending cuts and that was why it reported the deficit on track at \$265 million.

But let's ignore the \$58 million for GRIP and just count the NDP's own number. The NDP's own number's amusing — 122 million, and add that to the subtotal; 695 million plus 122 million — \$817 million. Now the difference between 817 million and 858 million comes to \$41 million. We're almost there. We're almost there, at the deficit the ingenuitive Finance minister and the Premier got to in their calculations with their magic pen, Mr. Speaker. Now we can account for that \$41 million in transfer transition costs alone. Very easily done.

Now if you just add up the money paid to the lawyers at Olive Waller to hunt out people to fire, the hundreds of thousand dollars spent on the Gass Commission, the money spent on phoney corporate headquarters in places like Carragana, Saskatchewan, and the fleet of hacks and flacks brought in from Ontario by this government, and you'll get 40 million quite easy.

But we don't even have to look at that, Mr. Speaker. We don't have to look at the detailed spending of the NDP leader to find the necessary 40 million. We can leave that out. We just have to go to the \$85 million left in the Liquor Board that year and we have covered off the entire deficit jump the NDP foisted on the province and the people after they took power. Quite easy. Quite easy to come in with a big deficit when you use this ingenuitive type of accounting, Mr. Speaker, with a magic pencil.

But I give the minister and the Premier credit — they not only fooled their people, Mr. Speaker, they fooled some of ours. And the vast majority of people in Saskatchewan resent that. They resent that, Mr. Speaker, and I think you'll pay the price.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's go on. Let's not forget the trail of write-offs and the creative increases in the deficit. Let's take a look at those. For example, the government back-billed over \$25 million in future expenditures on municipal capital projects to get the deficit numbers out. They back-billed \$25 million. And I know the back-benchers don't know that because you're not

exposed to that kind of ministerial material. And they didn't tell you and they won't tell you. Why should they? Because you can go out and you can get on your feet and in all good conscience try to tell the people of Saskatchewan that you believe in your government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that was one we could find quite easy. No problem with that one.

They took another \$25 million that was to be spent over four years and they billed the whole thing in 1991. Isn't that creative? Very creative. I wouldn't want one of them to be my accountant, Mr. Speaker, because the income tax people would take a dim view of some of that stuff.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of this, just a quick assessment of some pretty straightforward math — straightforward math. Nothing creative at all about what I'm doing. We can account for the entirety of the NDP's first major deficit. It did not have to be \$865 million. It did not have to be.

I'd like to introduce you to the creative pencil that the Finance minister used, Mr. Speaker. It goes like this. It's got three kind of ink: it's got the black ink for the truth; the red ink for the lies; and the green ink to mix up everything so you can't recognize the truth when you see it. And I see one of the members shaking his head. I ask you, sir, check what I'm talking about. You cannot dispute these figures. They're there. They're absolutely credible. And I don't hold you . . . I don't blame you for it because you were never given the information and you didn't go and search it out.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what is even more unacceptable is that after announcing a deficit of \$865 million in December of 1991, the NDP government went through all kinds of twists and turns and loop the loops to announce that their May '92 budget, that they had managed to reduce the deficit to \$517 million. Wonderful, wonderful. Whoopsy do and how do you do. Well, golly gee. The Finance minister's magic pencil. Great, great creative budgeting.

Then they took their funny figures, Mr. Speaker, and put on a smile and got the silliness down from near 900 million to 500 million. Well that's still not in the ballpark. We've still got somewhere to go. But it shows how easy and comfortably these people will manipulate the numbers — with a magic pencil.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the deficit was right back on track to the 265 million that was targeted by the former government. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite and some of the media will look at these figures. Prove me wrong, if you will. I'm prepared. I'm prepared. This NDP government is far more interested, Mr. Speaker, in its political agenda than it is in the sound management of the province and the protection of its people.

So let's take another step forward then, into the next NDP deficit. Let's examine how they exploded the debt in the 1992 budget that they presented — exploded it. In assessing this trail of deception, I insist, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the NDP, the Premier now, and his Finance minister acknowledge the report of his own hand-picked

investigator, Don Gass, where he spent something like \$400,000 on.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to insist that the media and in the government who give great credence to their recommendations for write-offs and set-asides and so on, give equal credence to a very important assessment by the same Don Gass hired by those people. They hired him. They paid him. And they gave his report. I insist that they stand by his report.

And I quote that gentleman. Speaking to CK television on February 18, 1991, Mr. Gass said, and I'm quoting him, sir: the Tories made no attempt to hide the province's debt financial standing; in fact the books were open all the time to credit agencies or anyone else interested.

The books were open all the time. Your own agent, paid by you. That is the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, of the NDP Premier. His own hand-picked review commission dominated by NDP hacks, I must say. The books were open all along. So I insist, sir, that they give credence to their own commission.

I don't think we should allow this NDP Premier and the past Finance minister to hide under the cover of claiming total ignorance. They cannot claim ignorance. And I don't think we should allow this Premier to pretend the books were closed and that's why he is mounting this enormous tax on our families, our farms, and our businesses. It's a myth, Mr. Speaker, and it should be challenged, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Pringle: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

(1530)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pringle: — I wish to thank the hon. member from Wilkie. I appreciate that.

In the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, my mother and father and my aunt from Carnduff, Saskatchewan in the Souris-Cannington constituency, and my grandma from Regina and my Aunt Kay from Regina. And I'll be popping up to see them in a minute. I'd ask that all members welcome them to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the books were open all the time; there was nothing to hide. As reported by your own

commission — Don Gass — nothing hidden.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it comes down to choices. The now Premier says he had no choices. I disagree, Mr. Speaker. It did come down to choices. He had a choice and it's that simple.

Well let us review, Mr. Speaker, some of the choices that this government did have. They chose to write off almost a billion dollars worth of schools and hospitals. Poof! They're gone, just like that.

But I invite all of the back-benchers, all of the members, to go out and take a look and see if their local school or local hospital is gone. The buildings are all there. It has not taken flight and disappeared. No. But they wrote off a billion dollars. They wrote a billion dollars of schools and hospitals, this creative accounting that the ex-Finance minister, the now Deputy Premier engaged himself in. These buildings are still there, and they are still providing a value to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

To do that, to do what the NDP government has done, Mr. Speaker, would be the same thing as a family with a mortgage on their home declaring bankruptcy because they do not have the \$80,000 that the mortgage consists of. That's the same thing. Now the member from Tisdale-Kelsey, I ask him to think about that. He's in the real estate business. Is that what you do? The mortgage is paid off a month at a time. Very creative, very misleading when you won't tell your people what you're doing just to create the image of a bigger deficit and a bigger debt — very, very, very misleading.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier tries to explain it away by saying that the schools and hospitals provide no revenue to the government. What nonsense; what total nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, how much revenue does the average house generate? I don't know. Maybe the NDP back-benchers have got their house paid for and don't pay any mortgage and don't have to worry about it. I tell you this, the average person in this province looked at the fact that his house was not producing revenue, if he did that and therefore the family was bankrupt, well that's about as ridiculous as it can get. The only people that could pull a farce like this off is the Finance minister with his magic pencil, and not tell the folks what he's doing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there goes a billion dollars onto the debt of the province just with a magic pencil. Write off the hospitals and the schools. You've got another billion dollar deficit that you can blame the Tories for.

Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of the debt, isn't it about time that the media and the public could come to expect this government to decide on at least just one number? Let's decide on one number, one or the other, decide whether they want to be honest about it or make political hay, but at least let's pick a number. Let's at least try to be honest with the public, the people of Saskatchewan.

When talking to the financial institutions and investors, the NDP pegged the debt at 14 billion. But when reading budget speeches or trying to frighten the people, that number is 15 or 16 billion. We heard the figure of 15

billion again today in the House, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well they've got to be a number. Do they bounce around like this every time a different member gets up, you've got a different number? Tell us what the number is.

I think, Mr. Speaker, they should try to be more responsible. Indeed I think they have to be more responsible.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's have a look at this situation as well. Let's take another look, Mr. Speaker. Let's take the last budget of the previous administration and look at page 133. There you will see stated the gross debt of the province for 1992. It's stated as \$13.3 billion. That was the gross.

Now let's take the NDP's first real budget tabled on May of 1992 and look at page number 61. There you will see the gross debt of the province for 1992 listed by the NDP themselves as 13.8 billion. Well there's a half a billion there.

Now we can quickly establish where they picked up the extra 500 million. Very creative — very, very creative. They wrote off \$716 million in schools and hospitals — a purely paper transaction but one that blows up the deficit number. Very, very creative. I'm not so sure that it's honest. Very, very creative. They can blame it on the Tories, blame it on the Tories.

I hear their Minister of Justice saying: hear, hear. Mr. Minister of Justice, how do you look at yourself in the mirror when stuff like this goes on? How do you do that? How can you do that after the things you've done in this House? How can you look at yourself?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's take another look at what they did. In the Crown sector they wrote off another \$900 million worth of investments. They wrote it off. Did you back-benchers know all that? Of course you didn't. You never knew because you never knew where to look. But I'll show you where to look if you're interested.

Now here's the curiosity. Here the curiosity . . . how they managed the book work to make almost 2 billion in write-offs work out to only a half a billion increase in the gross debt. They wrote off 2 billion and yet they only increased the total debt by a half a billion. Interesting. Very, very creative. Again the magic pencil, the magic pencil.

Well here's how they did it. They did it and he'll tell you how. I make the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they made a conscious choice to expand the debt as much as possible, expand the debt, blame it on the Tories. And again the Premier cannot take refuge in the Gass Commission because that commission recommended all kinds of things that the NDP government has not initiated and has since rejected.

For example, Mr. Speaker, the member for Riversdale is refusing to include the unfunded pension liabilities built up when he was deputy premier in the 1970s, refusing to even acknowledge those.

The member from Prince Albert was on a radio show a few days ago and admitted to three and a half billion dollars but he said, we never denied it. We never denied it was there, we just didn't tell you it was there. That's supposed to be acceptable? That's open and honest? I find that hard to accept, Mr. Speaker. I find it very hard for a premier and a deputy premier to stoop this low.

These unfunded liabilities would add several billions to the province's debt but he doesn't want to include them because he knows the responsibility for that debt cannot be fudged off on the Tories or anyone else. He knows that that was his. So we keep the books closed, Mr. Member for Riversdale. Open and honest, but you keep the books closed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP has come to stand for novel deficit principles or nasty debt propaganda. The new word for the NDP — nasty debt propaganda.

Let me give you one more clear example how this government is fudging the books. The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants handbook makes it very clear under what conditions loan guarantees should be included as part of a debt. Very clear. They explain it very clearly.

Loan guarantees may become contingent liabilities to be reported in the debt only when you are persuaded that the business being guaranteed will go bankrupt. That's the only legitimate reason you can include loan guarantees into your debt. Well I refer you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to section 3290 of the CICA (Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants) handbook which deals with loan guarantees and the conditions for including these guarantees — very clear. That's the only legitimate reason you have for doing that.

In layman's terms, what it says is that you have to be very convinced that it is unlikely . . . it is very likely, pardon me, you will be called upon to honour the guarantee. In other words, the business is going bankrupt. You have to be convinced it's going to do that.

So according to this government's pronouncements and it's predicting the imminent demise of Saskferco fertilizer plant — that's going, going bankrupt — because it includes a loan guarantee; it includes that in the debt. I don't know any place anywhere where anyone has said that Saskferco isn't doing quite well, thank you. On the other hand, they say it's going bankrupt so they can include the debt, and then they turn around and give it in the throne speech in another as part of the light at the end of the tunnel for Saskatchewan. Very creative.

So let's take another step. According to this government's . . . The NDP are predicting the failure of Crown Life and the Co-op upgrader. They included that in the debt. They included that. How many of you back-benchers know that? I don't think any of you do because your Finance people won't tell you that. They didn't tell you how they got that debt. Why would they? Because they can't use you then as a cat's paw then out on the streets and the coffee shops, in this House.

Mr. Speaker, they are predicting the failure of Millar

Western Pulp. They're predicting the failure of Millar Western Pulp. Have any of you heard that Millar Western's going down? I haven't. But they included that in the debt.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, you read the *Economic Review* of the Minister of Finance and you find they list these very businesses as the only thing keeping our economy going. Very creative. On one hand you say they're going bankrupt so we can include them in the debt. And then you turn around and tell the people: well, well, pretty good, we've got these things going for us; they're working fine, thank you. I wonder how many of the back-benchers ever looked at that. Did you yourself, sir? Creative, very creative.

(1545)

Now we are supposed to accept that and not look at it? We're supposed to accept what the Deputy Premier and the Premier tells us is gospel? No thank you. No thank you, sir.

Then, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. Let's be clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The deficit is an NDP deficit. The deficit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an NDP deficit, pure and simple. You can take these, anyone can take these figures and you can find out where I got them and you can prove to yourself you've been misled, the same as a lot of people in Saskatchewan, by your Premier and your Finance minister.

Again I say the deficit, Mr. Speaker, is the NDP deficit. It could and should today be \$265 million. But it's not because of the choices that this government took. Now I do acknowledge that debt was incurred under our government, the previous government. We did incur debt. And I acknowledge we operated deficit budgets. Terrible. Because we had a choice and we took them. Now let me ask you, sir, where's the surprise? Where would the surprise be in me saying that we had a deficit?

How could anyone talk about a deficit that was acquired through the last decade? — 10 years. Take 10 years. And if anyone here believes Saskatchewan existed in a vacuum and was isolated from the events of the world, they themselves, I suggest, were living in a vacuum. We cannot divorce ourselves from the economic pressures that was coming from worldwide economic downturn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government made choices. Our government made choices that were hard choices, but they were choices. The previous government made choices, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the most fundamental choice it made was to go to any lengths possible to preserve the families, the farms, the businesses, and the way of life of this province.

I say to the critics, including those on the government side, at least be honest about the choices that we faced and that we now face. For it is not true for the Premier of this province to sit in his chair and say he had no choices. He did have a choice. We had a choice; we took that choice.

The Premier, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, when he says

he had no choice, it's not true. It's a cop-out, a convenient way to avoid responsibility and another way to spill more Tory blood. That's fine, that's fair, but be honest about it.

Mr. Speaker, there are many choices and they are difficult choices indeed. It was difficult for us and it's difficult for you. But that's why people seek to govern, to make those choices. If they were sincere and said, we can do it better, fine, we accept that. But what we don't accept is that you misled the people to get in power and then not make the choices that is necessary to do better.

The choices of the previous government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were to build and protect this province in the face of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We came off the best 10 years this province ever had to the worst 10 years we've had in 50 years. What a dramatic turn.

And that's what I asked you to be fair and honest in your assessment. We said, people have worked a lifetime to own their own homes, and now circumstances completely beyond their control are threatening to rip those homes away. We were taking on 22 per cent interest rates when the member from Riversdale is on record as saying there was nothing he could do. He was the deputy premier and told people the government didn't care; didn't have the resources in the rich 1970s to help these people at 22 per cent interest. The best years of the province but he had no help for them.

He had the resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to buy potash mines, uranium mines, and oil wells, but he did not have a dime to help the families. We made the choice to bring interest rates on mortgages down to 13 per cent. How many homes . . . no one knows how many homes that was saved with that piece of legislation. Cost them money. We made the choice that the province, the people as a whole, could take that debt better than the individual families trying to make a living and maintain their home.

And I assert that the man did not care and that he don't care now. He's got a political agenda; he's on an agenda that he will not deviate from, no matter who it hurts. He is a consummate politician, Mr. Speaker, and I'm afraid that is all that he is. That's all he is.

The previous administration did care. We did have a heart. We took the choices and we spent the money. We decided it was easier for the government to bear the debt than for families. And we spend hundreds of millions of dollars protecting homes in this province. The record is there.

But you would think from the campaign of the members opposite that all the deficit was spent on farmers. Nothing could be further from the truth. They totally overlooked the billions over the decade that went into building and protecting urban Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they succeeded in deceiving the people, which has brought us to this government and to this point in time. And the people are not going to forget that. They're not going to forgive you for that. This government is set on destruction and despair.

Yes, we did, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We spent money on

agriculture, and yes it was a great deal of money and yes it contributed mightily to the deficit. But I don't say we had no choice. We had a choice; we took that choice. I will not disown the responsibility, as this Premier so desperately tries to do for himself.

I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we made the choice to use every means at our disposal to get the farm economy through these terrible and hurtful times, and we spent the taxpayers' money to do it. We admit to that, but we said that we had a choice, we took the choice.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we insisted on continuing to build and diversify in the face of these enormous fiscal challenges. We did not shut the province down nor did we use the magic pen to deceive the people. The people of the province knew every day the money that they owed — every dollar. It was out there.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we built a fertilizer plant. We built a paper mill and an entire natural gas industry, two upgraders, a bacon plant, turbine factories, and diversified agriculture. And it cost a lot of money. It cost a lot of money, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But these are the very things that are keeping the economy alive today, and your government says so; they admit to that. If we had not done all of these things, it is true that we would have a much reduced debt, no question about it, but we would also have a much reduced population. And there are some estimates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that run as high as 600,000 people we might have lost if we had not invested in Saskatchewan. We would have almost nothing left outside the major cities. And the cities would shrink as a result, and you can make no mistake about that.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask you, even if you believe, as some genuinely do believe, that we should have allowed the massive depopulation and the downsizing of the entire province, even if you believe that, do you believe a different government would have had a lower deficit? I challenge you, Mr. Speaker, to look at every jurisdiction in North America, every jurisdiction. And I can challenge you to find one that does not have a major deficit and a dramatic fiscal challenge. None exists.

The Liberals in Ontario ran up a big deficit. The NDP in Ontario took over and made the deficit grow like magic. And it's still growing, growing quite seriously — 10 or more billion dollars a year. The Socreds, the Liberals, the NDP, the Democrats, the Republicans — all administrations experienced serious deficits in the 1980s.

The difference is that here in Saskatchewan we worked through the droughts and price wars and recession and high interest rates. We worked through them and at the same time we built. We built in this province. We did not shut the door and turn the key.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not go through the list of industry and business and accomplishments that are on the record. They're there. If you want to take the time, you'll find them, all things that happen in conjunction with economic crisis and a deficit. No question about it.

But let's make one more comparison, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let's make another comparison of the misleading and almost dishonest method the Premier and his Deputy Premier when he was Finance minister foisted on the people of Saskatchewan. Let's compare the debt that the previous administration incurred with the debt it inherited from the now Premier. Let's compare that.

The leader, the Premier now, takes great joy in talking about the debt he left. So let's take him up in his effort. Let's take him on. The budget of the now Premier in 1982 projected a surplus of 208 million. That was his projection. Well when the PCs took over, the Tories took over, they found that instead of \$208 million surplus in the Consolidated Fund, they found a deficit of \$200 million in the Consolidated Fund.

An Hon. Member: — . . . you had to sign for that then.

Mr. Britton: — We had to. Now, for a \$408 million miscalculation. That was a \$408 million miscalculation in the previous government's last budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was over 800 million in debt in the form of interest-free advances to Crown corporations — 800 million. That's exactly the kind of thing this government is now writing off and adding to the debt figures and blaming it on the Tories to make it look like the Tories done it all. Great creative accounting. But don't tell anybody; don't even tell your own back-benchers because if they knew some of this stuff they wouldn't be happy campers, I don't believe.

There was an additional hundred million dollars in advances to the Crowns that did in fact attract interest. There was a further 130 million reported as interest-free advances to departments similar to the advances made to SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) that are now being called debt. You made them advances. You did it. Now you're calling it debt and blaming it on the Tories. Very creative. Very creative.

(1600)

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was \$3 billion of debt, actually held by the Crowns themselves; \$3 billion in the Crowns hidden, hidden in the Crowns, never reported to the public. So let's take and get your pencil out and we'll add this all up. We have a 408 plus 800 plus 100 plus 130 plus 3 billion. Figure that out. We have 408 million plus 800 million plus 100 million plus 130 million plus \$3 billion. Total it up. That's \$4.4 billion in 1982 dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want you to note that I am not including the \$5 billion in underfunded liabilities that the member for Riversdale left us with. We're not even talking about the \$5 billion of underfunded pensions. I'm only including the amounts that fall into the same categories the NDP is now using. Very interesting. All belongs to the Tories — the bad Tories.

Now let's take another look at that. If we take that 4.4 billion in 1982 dollars and translate that into 1992 dollars, it becomes something over \$8 billion — \$8 billion.

So let's subtract 8 billion from the 14 billion the NDP say

exists today and you find that the PC (Progressive Conservative) administration added \$6 billion to the debt — \$6 billion. You added 8, my friend; we added 6.

Now let's take a look at what we got for your 8 billion and our 6 billion. Let's take a look at that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well I seem to strike a nerve every once in a while, Mr. Speaker. I believe that some of the back-benchers are getting pretty nervous. They don't know about it; you don't look at this. You won't even take and open your eyes to look at the truth. You won't look at the truth. Socialistic creative accounting — great and wonderful.

Well the member from Gravelbourg can chirp from his seat. He's got a good job; he's got a guaranteed income for as long as he wants to live and practise. Great.

But we're talking about the people, my friend, that you saddled with an \$8 billion debt and you're trying to put it onto us. It is not there. Check her out; check her out. I'll show you. Sounds like you don't like it. You don't like what you're hearing. You don't like what you're hearing because it's the truth. It's the truth.

Let's go on. Let's go on with this. We're not done yet. We're not done yet. In other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP administration of the '70s left more debt coming out of the biggest boom in history than the PC administration left coming out of one of the worst and greatest crises in Saskatchewan's history. The worst. They went from the best to the worst.

And here's our record, here's our record. We spent \$6 billion; you spent 8. You were \$8 billion in the hole; we're 6 billion in the worst years. Now let's see what we got. Let's see what we got for your 8 billion and what we got for our 6 billion. Let's be fair. Let's be fair about this. Let's take a look . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know you don't like it.

Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that I have not . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not even included the massive debts the PC administration had to eat from the NDP deals, the NDP deals that were left for us that we had to eat.

I'm not ashamed of the \$6 billion that we spent, Mr. Speaker. I mention why — because we had a choice and we took those choices.

Mr. Speaker, let's just take a look at land bank. Let's take a look at land bank, if you want to talk about the deals that you left us with. You went out and bought land at \$600 an acre and what's it worth when we took over? About 3, about \$300. When the recession hit that land was lucky, lucky to be worth \$300 an acre. That was your deal. We had to eat that. We ate that. We had to eat those losses, hundreds of millions of dollars of write-offs just in the land bank. Just in the land bank, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

And we can ask, what did you get? What did you get for your \$8 billion that you left on the backs of the people of Saskatchewan? Well maybe I can help you. Maybe I can help you. We got some of the worst deals in history — deals that sowed the seeds of much of our misery in the 1990s.

Independent analysis by Arthur Andersen & Co., privately commissioned and independently conducted, that study concluded that the NDP's nationalization of the potash industry cost the province at least \$1 billion in dead losses. Dead losses, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, you want to question that man? But this is what he said and I think he is right. But you will not . . . you won't open your eyes, you won't open your mind, because your leader tells you different. Bury your head in the sand.

Let me say something else. The NDP's obsession with buying rather than building left us with a shut-in oil industry. They left here. They wouldn't stay here. They left us by the hundreds. And the mines and wells and factories that produced losses, that's what you left us with. You left us with mines and mills and factories . . . One of your big projects left us with \$90,000-a-day loss — per day, every day. That's what we took over from your wise and wonderful friends over there.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and these are not included. These are not included in the analysis of the debt that I just presented to you. I didn't include these. But an honest assessment recognizes those losses and recognizes that they are the responsibility of the man who now sits in the Premier's chair. If you give us an honest assessment, you'll find that, and you'll have to admit that he left us with a \$8 billion debt besides the rest of it.

Now let's take another look. What did you get for our \$6 billion that we spent of your money? The debt that we created — what did you get for that? Okay, was that fair? Well I told you what we got for your 8 billion. Is it fair for you to listen to what I tell you about what we got for our \$6 billion debt? That's fair.

I'll tell you what we got. We got a new Wascana Rehabilitation Centre; we got a new agricultural college; we got revitalized hospitals and schools, an infrastructure worth fully, easily \$6 billion. No question that it was worth \$6 billion. We got a fertilizer plant; we got a bacon plant; we got a cable factory; we got a fine paper mill. And remember when I talk about a fine paper mill, it's a fine paper mill, but it also makes fine paper. The only one in Canada.

We got a pulp plant. We got a pulp plant; we got two heavy oil upgraders; we got a completely digital telephone system and we ended party lines. People have got individual lines, paid for out of the \$6 billion debt. We got a natural gas distribution that's throughout the province and we now have a thriving natural gas industry. That's what we got. That's what we got out of the \$6 billion that we overspent compared to what you got out of the \$8 billion that you overspent. We got Crown Life. We got new uranium mines. We got a turbine factory and a thriving high-tech industry. We got that, all of that.

No, here's some more out of our \$6 billion debt. We got two new hydroelectric power plants; we got a major water management project; and we got a great expansion of irrigation — all. We also got 52 rural service centres. We got decentralization of offices to Moose Jaw, Melville, Kamsack, and Kindersley. We got a very good

deal many, many times the \$6 billion. Okay. We got six of them.

And on top of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we continue to pay the interest. We're paying the interest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the \$8 billion debt that you left. Yes, we paid that. And we saw the economy grow at the best of times . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. All you got to do is come and look it up. Go and look it up. You'll find it. You'll find it. You're just afraid to look it up. It's the truth and you can't stand the truth. You won't listen to the truth.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also managed to save thousands of homes and farms. We didn't save them all. We couldn't save them all. But we really tried; we really tried hard. We cared, Mr. Speaker, and we tried.

So when you talk about the deficit, that's fair. But let's be fair, be objective, and mark the apples with the apples and the oranges with the oranges, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has distorted and deceived and manipulated so that the people will feel defeated, and they can proceed on an agenda of destruction and despair. Divide, conquer — it's true socialist thinking. Divide them, destroy them, drive them into despair, and then you conquer them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they continue to make these excuses, distort the truth, and to justify. Why do they do that? To justify the massive tax grabs and the unjustified choices that they're making, that's why they're doing it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this, that the way to obtain recovery in this province is not to drive people into this complete state of despair, hopelessness, that the NDP has embarked upon. I tell you that this government has choices and it knows it. This government can reduce the deficit and create a plan to take down the debt gradually, responsibly, and without panic. It will not be done by increasing taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it will not be done by abandoning farmers, and it will not be done by shutting down half the communities of Saskatchewan.

It can be and it must be done by thoughtful, well-targeted spending cuts. It can and must be done by structurally changing the way we fund and deliver certain programs and policies. And we have no quarrel with that. It can and must be done by building a partnership with the people, not by mounting an attack upon them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in my heart I feel a fear of the people of this province. The sense of caring has utterly deserted the members opposite; they do not care. They show no sign of caring; they show no sign of compassion — no sign of compassion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are instead obsessed with their political agenda, the prime element of which consists of blaming the previous administration and hoping that despair will carry them to yet another conquest. I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a government elected on deception and feeding on despair. It is a government with no plan other than blame and avoidance — blame the other guy. If you can't blame the Tories in Saskatchewan,

blame the Tories in Ottawa.

Yes, everybody's out of step but my Johnny. Everybody else is out of step but you. You're the only one that's in step. Yes, yes.

An Hon. Member: — What did the voters say?

Mr. Britton: — What do the voters say? Well I'll tell you what the voters are saying; you know what the voters are saying. What are the voters saying? Well, well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest to you that this government was elected on deception. And that is where the hurt is. The people of the province can tell you very clearly that that is the worst deception that has ever been portrayed in the province of Saskatchewan. They have shirked their responsibility and they have given up on the families of this province. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely believe that if they're not stopped there will be precious little to build on.

(1615)

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, any member of this Assembly with a shred of hope left, with a single strain of faith in the future of our people, any member who believes that we have a right to a future, must vote against this throne speech. I do believe in the people, Mr. Speaker. I have faith in our people.

But I have to say, I have to say this. This is the weakest throne speech that I have had the misfortune in having to debate. A throne speech is supposed to encourage people. This does not encourage people.

Mr. Speaker, this one-term government that we have has sown the seeds of its own destruction, in my opinion. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting this throne speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my privilege to rise today and speak in response to the Speech from the Throne. And I wish to acknowledge the excellent speeches of my colleagues, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster and the member from Kelsey-Tisdale.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — I also want to apologize to my mom, who had to sit and wait through the hon. member from Wilkie, to hear my speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm focusing my comments today on the process of change and restructuring. I'm also going to spend some time talking about choices.

I met with a constituent today who wanted to discuss mental health services. And if I may loosely quote her, she said: we just spent nine years dealing with a government that was unwilling to deal with these issues, and now that we have a government that is interested and concerned about these problems, we have no money. However

there is still many things we can do. And I think she's right.

While we have to be aware of financial limitations, we have to pull together to talk about the things we can do and to talk about how we can support each other in this process.

As we are increasingly confronted by the impacts of restructuring, we have to examine critically what the global and national restructuring means to the provinces of Canada and the impacts this restructuring has had on the province of Saskatchewan which resulted in the choices that were made and presented in the throne speech.

First I want to briefly revisit how we got to this point. People who have more history in the political process have told me that Tory governments create debt. Conservative members who are able to manage their own affairs seem to go wild when they get elected and get their hand in the public cookie jar. When the jar is empty and the grocery bills need to be paid, they take no responsibility and they threaten to move elsewhere.

And I want to say that denial ain't merely a river in Egypt. It would be very refreshing if even once the opposition would acknowledge their responsibility for the situation the province is in — a government that spent 6 per cent a year more than they earned in revenue, resulting in the need to borrow that 6 per cent a year.

The \$15 billion debt will take so long to pay off that our children's grandchildren will have to pay this debt. Which one of us in this room would borrow money that our children's grandchildren would still have to be paying back? I'll refer the opposition, particularly the member from Wilkie, to read *The Globe and Mail* article that particularly addresses their legacy of debt.

I feel compelled to remind the public of how the previous government mismanaged and wasted our resources, thereby critically limiting our choices. And in the context of limited choices, I want to outline the role the federal government plays in the process. Oh just a second here. I'm just going to have to grab a note. I apologize, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The federal government plays two particularly critical roles in our lives.

An Hon. Member: — The only one listening is your mother.

Ms. Crofford: — On the one hand . . . I doubt that. On the one hand it sets the policies for universal programs in Canada and holds the strings on such critical financial instruments as equalization payments and established programs financing. And on the other hand, they sit at the negotiating table for all international agreements and set financial policy for Canada. This would be a lot of power in the hands of a wise and caring government, but it's been far too much power in the hands of an arrogant and self-serving government that owes its allegiance primarily to multinational corporations and major financial institutions.

As a member of the Saskatchewan provincial government caucus, I've become painfully aware of the extent to which many progressive actions are effectively blocked by structural changes introduced by the federal Tories. These federal policies have created a wall, a wall that the Tories have not constructed alone. Liberal governments have added their bricks to the wall with measures such as Trudeau's removal of the inheritance tax.

In Saskatchewan we've experienced a serious revenue loss in three federally related areas. A total of 50 million was lost in transfer payments under EPF, the established program financing, and a Statistics Canada study attributes these reductions not to increased social spending but to reduced taxes on wealth over the past 10 years — tax policies of Tories.

We've lost 30 to 40 million in sales and income tax revenues partly attributable to declining economies but also related to the GST (goods and services tax) and increasingly unfair tax structures that are all set at the federal level. Saskatchewan has little ability to replace these revenues on our smaller tax base.

Our farmers will experience nothing but further pain as the North American Free Trade Agreement continues to undermine mechanisms such as the Canadian Wheat Board and as the federal government tries to push through changes in the Crow benefit, again related to free trade regulations and interpretations. The structure of equalization payments has created a welfare trap for poor provinces where economic growth is not rewarded but instead clawed back.

We've seen changes to fundamental programs such as family allowance, pensions, and student loans, that for all essential purposes have destroyed the notion of universality. And the latest changes to unemployment insurance have me wondering if Mulroney should be denied his severance package, seeing as he voluntarily resigned.

Even our Crown corporations such as SaskTel are under attack with changes introduced by the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) to foster so-called competition. And a recent last straw has been the federal drug patent legislation, all of which undermined our prescription drug plan and dramatically increased drug costs in Canada.

There's no chance that these conditions will improve substantially until governments are truly the representatives of the public and do not owe their allegiance to multinationals and the banks. By definition, this cannot be Liberal or Tory governments.

The provinces of Canada and Canadians are not immune from the pressures of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. Leaked government documents reveal that the IMF — you listen up — has already played a role in Canadian fiscal and monetary policy. Moving from structural adjustment programs to free trade has been the next logical step in rewriting the rules of the global economy.

Under free trade the influence of national governments

and other democratic institutions are considerably reduced. I want to bring to your attention just for a moment an article that was recently in the *Leader-Post*. It says: a dollar likely to face an uncertain future. And this is an article where the financial analysts and the people who run the stock markets are trying to convince us that unless we vote for Kim Campbell that they'll withdraw their support from Canada. This is a form of economic terrorism that is just unacceptable for people whose role is to look after markets. The role of governments is to look after the public interest, not the private interest. They have their own mechanisms for that.

Moving from structural adjustment programs to free trade is rewriting the rules of the global economy. Transnational corporations have now become the driving economic force and they are democratically responsible to no one.

At times in the history of Canada this influence has been more benign, but during the past 10 years under the heavy hand of Tories there's been an intentional shift of power and privilege to the wealthy and to multinational corporations, which has accompanied the systematic undermining of our democratic institutions and brought us to the sad state that we're in, as well as the attack on Canadian cultural institutions.

I just wanted to make those points because this has been a very conscious restructuring that's taken place . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, that was from *The Globe and Mail*, the *Leader-Post*, and other radical documents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we don't want that kind of restructuring, then what kind do we want? What kind does our government support? And how will that affect the choices that we make? Our government believes that restructuring would increase fairness amongst citizens and equalize opportunities. And I want to give you a few examples.

A recent press release talked about meeting the needs of school children, which is part of the child action plan. In an effort to meet more than just the educational needs of school children, a government-wide initiative has been launched to explore new ways of delivering services to school age children and their families. The program is called children first: coordinating community action.

Under this program, it's designed around the realization that schools and teachers are being called upon to meet more than just educational needs of our children. Many children have difficulty in learning due to health and nutrition, family violence, neglect, substance abuse, and illiteracy.

An integrated approach to delivering service will allow for better coordination of facilities in community services. And an important part here as well, no new money has been provided. The government is committed to realigning services to best meet the needs of children and their family. And educational needs will be best met if the children's other needs are met as well, as an example of making choices even within the fiscal reality.

The throne speech mentions other parts of the new child

action plan. As a member of the coalition against racism, I requested some information from the Minister of Education on what we're able to do to ensure harmonious racial relations in the future of our province. I was very pleased with the minister's response and I'll share it later with the hon. members.

The Saskatchewan Indian and Metis Affairs Secretariat as a key element in their mandate is to coordinate a government strategy around a joint proactive approach to addressing racism, discrimination, and prejudice through cross-cultural management and education. And some practical things that are happening in terms of staffing, we're hiring more Indian and Metis people in recognition of the fact that they are under-represented in our workforce. The department also plans to deliver cross-cultural training to its entire staff.

The department has obtained an exemption from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. It'll permit school divisions who are involved in specific programs such as community schools, Indian and Metis education development, and the Joe Duquette High School to target hiring aboriginal people. And as well, the department is prepared to assist schools in developing education equity plans.

Saskatchewan Education recognizes its responsibility to teach children about bias and to promote anti-racist education. Very pleased with this answer. It was a little more detailed but I'll be passing it along to the people in the community who are concerned to make sure that we are a harmonious society.

In the previous budget we started the process of equalizing income benefits and responsibilities. For example, a 15 per cent high income surtax was placed on those who can afford to pay more and take more responsibility for our programs in Saskatchewan. Benefits were increased for those on assistance and persons on minimum wage.

This throne speech indicates an increasing targeting of our resources to children and families. This is also the first throne speech in a long time that has had a substantial recognition for the needs of the North. Mr. Speaker, as the throne speech says, these initiatives strengthen the framework for change by improving fairness, health, and safety in our communities.

As I start to wind down, I want to discuss whose responsibility it is to proceed with restructuring and to create the changes needed. I remember a phrase I saw at the beginning of a training film a few years ago. It said, if we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we've always gotten. It's a little bit hard to digest but I think it has some deep meaning. I know that it would be deeper than some of our hon. members in the opposition but we'll talk it over after.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — My experience comes primarily from my years in non-profit organizations. The old way of funding community organizations was for federal and provincial governments to provide grants. Very often the

federal grants were start-up grants. And these grants recognized a legitimate need for services, often providing three years of seed money to become self-supporting. In all cases the programs fell back on provincial and municipal governments and often created unsustainable burdens on their treasuries.

(1630)

I also found that programs often were not integrated and tended to duplicate managerial and administrative effort. Well I believe those days are over. Groups such as the Regina coalition of human service agencies are asking to work closely in cooperation with government to integrate social policy planning and program strategy for Saskatchewan.

The government embraces this offer and will be working with the coalition and other social and health care groups to restructure service delivery in Saskatchewan. We believe, as they do, that a partnership in planning will better enable governments and communities to coordinate, access, and utilize available resources to support social well-being.

This is the kind of restructuring we support — restructuring based on collaboration and cooperation; a way for government and communities to work together to deal with human resource problems in the context of current fiscal realities.

I want to close by discussing where some of the responsibilities lie for increasing costs in government. I'm going to talk about a program that is near and dear to all of us in Canada — our health programs.

In the area of the drug plan our costs have been increasing by 8 per cent a year. Why has that been? Four per cent has been due to cost shifts and 4 per cent due to changing therapies.

I want to give you an example. Recently a member of my family became a diabetic, and I'm going to do a little show and tell here. This is a little plastic strip that diabetics have to use to test whether they're well or not. When you're a new diabetic you use sometimes six of these a day. I think once you become a more stabilized diabetic, you might use maybe six to ten a week. It depends on your situation. But these little strips, little plastic strip, are \$1 each.

Now I ask myself, when we're looking at whose responsibility it is to deal with the fact that these strips are \$1 each, you can say that government should pay the full cost of that. But on the other hand, governments cannot allow themselves to be gouged by drug companies who cannot produce a little plastic strip for under a dollar a piece. I think it's time that people in Canada questioned why our drugs are so expensive, and why people have to pay for something that is obviously used on a massive quantity basis and thereby should be subject to some cost discount.

And I also ask, whose responsibility is it? Do these companies only have a responsibility to make profits off of health care, or do they have, in the case of some of

these critical diseases, some responsibility to sell some of their products at cost?

So I just put that before you in this legislature, and before the citizens, that we can't always turn our attention to government on these things, because government doesn't manufacture these things, they buy them from somebody else who does.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I just want to remind the member — I'm sure she's not aware of it, but no matter how insignificant the exhibit may be, you may not bring in an exhibit in this House while you are speaking and use it in your speeches. So I just remind members of that.

Ms. Crofford: — I wasn't aware of that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Now I want to talk a little bit about the role of the federal government, which is a different kind of show and tell. Bill C-91 alone is going to add 5 million to the drug bill in Saskatchewan, and this is for no extra service and no improvement in service. It'll also create a problem because there's an average of 50 per cent difference in the cost of generic drugs and brand-name drugs. So when we examine who is responsible and discuss what can be done, we need to look at the role of the federal government in creating the structural pressures that are afflicting governments across Canada and limiting the choices available to provinces like Saskatchewan with a traditionally small population and tax base.

When the previous government left office, they left many friends with fat pockets in a province filled with unmet needs. And when our government leaves office it will be after vastly improving the fairness, health, and safety for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the throne speech, we will be making the right choices and will not give the opposition any satisfaction for having left us with this mess. Instead we will rejoice in what we can accomplish by working together. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand proudly as well, as the member from Meadow Lake, to enter the debate on the Speech from the Throne, delivered on February 25 by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Sylvia Fedoruk.

I want to compliment the mover of the throne speech, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, on the fine job that she did; and also too, to the seconder, the member from Kelsey-Tisdale, on the very fine job that he did.

To the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, who made the comments about the two of the last three individuals who moved the throne speech being female, I came across this little quote by Charlotte Whitton that I thought you might enjoy. I read this quote with apologies to any of my male colleagues here today who might take offence to this: whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily this is not

difficult.

Well, Mr. Speaker, both of the previous female movers of the throne speech did every bit as well as the lone male. I know because I was the lone male. I also know the tremendous honour it was for me to be asked by the Premier to move the throne speech.

I certainly want to compliment you too, Mr. Speaker. I believe you showed real courage and leadership in the last session, and I admire that. Rumours have it that you showed leadership on the tennis court as well. To this point, Mr. Speaker, I'll place my confidence in the former rather than the latter.

I have every confidence that yourself, Mr. Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker will continue to provide fairness and leadership in this session. So good luck and best wishes to both of you.

The throne speech, Mr. Speaker, sets out the tone for the upcoming session. Last year we set a new direction for Saskatchewan — a new direction both economically and socially. I believe this year's throne speech reaffirms that new direction. It continues to charter a course to some hope of financial freedom. The throne speech continues to outline our government's plans for the much-needed renewal of Saskatchewan's economy which is already taking place.

Our government believes, Mr. Speaker, that the most urgent challenges in rebuilding Saskatchewan is to put our financial house in order. We cannot run a government in a manner that is inconsistent with the way the average family would run their own affairs, Mr. Speaker.

Our government is prepared to make the hard political choices today. I think people will respect a government that's open and honest and willing to tackle our problems. Our government has delivered on its promise of open and honest government and is working hard to eliminate the waste and mismanagement at all levels of government. The people of Saskatchewan deserve nothing less, Mr. Speaker, from the government committed to earning the public's respect each and every day.

If Saskatchewan continues to run a high deficit, Mr. Speaker, our children's future will be in jeopardy. The deficit simply must be reduced for our province to have a healthy economy. Better services and opportunities in the future are needed as well. With Saskatchewan's debt load the highest of any province in Canada, we simply, Mr. Speaker, have to act now to reduce the deficit or we risk financial disaster.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this brings me to a point I've wanted to raise for some time. The members opposite always say, quit talking about the deficit; get on with solving the problem. This reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of the years I worked in the credit union. When someone across the desk from me was in dire financial shape, they wanted to talk about everything, Mr. Speaker, except what the problem was. They would talk about the weather, their children, their children's children, the chickens, and the

fishing trips they were just on, but they wouldn't want to talk about what really needed to be talked about, their financial problems.

To the members opposite I say, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, gentlemen, but it takes time . . . but it's time we started to deal with the fiscal reality we are in. We have to start dealing with the problem that exists. No longer can we bury our heads in the sand. The time for action is now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Unfortunately every single decision we make has to be based on whether or not we can even get the money to do what we want to do. Our decisions are no longer based solely on what may be good for the province or the people of Saskatchewan. Thanks to the many years of irresponsible spending, this government is now faced with the tough decisions that have to be made.

I came across a quote, Mr. Speaker, by Dale Carnegie that I thought very appropriate here, Mr. Speaker. In the face of much criticism, Mr. Carnegie says: any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain, and most do.

Within a short time our government will present a budget that will demonstrate our continued commitment to control government spending. This is evidenced by Nesbitt Thomson's report which says: Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada that has made substantial progress in getting their financial house in order. My compliments, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier and his cabinet for having the courage to make these tough decisions in the face of enormous pressure from individuals who would have us carry on with uncontrolled spending.

My compliments, Mr. Speaker, to the good people of the Meadow Lake constituency who understand what needs to be done. I don't know how many times I've heard people tell me, Mr. Speaker. What they say is: I don't like what you're doing, but I know that it needs to be done.

While there is an urgent need for financial restraint, we also understand the need for fairness and compassion. There are many people, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency who do very well, but there also many, Mr. Speaker, who are very vulnerable and need the protection this government is prepared to give them. Our government is committed to its continued attack on poverty and other social problems that plague our province. I applaud the Minister of Social Services for her efforts in that respect. Again, Mr. Speaker, I have many constituents who need that protection and help.

Another important step toward revitalizing Saskatchewan is our job-creation strategy. I believe the throne speech clearly lays out our agenda. I quote:

There is no more important dimension to . . . (our) future than the creation of jobs, and no more important location for those jobs than Saskatchewan's smaller communities.

With that in mind, we are committed to the continuation of our *Partnership for Renewal* strategy.

And two things I'm excited about, Mr. Speaker. First is to initiate regional economic development authorities. In Meadow Lake we have a strong chamber of commerce and a very healthy economic development committee who think that development and coordination of services is long overdue.

Secondly, the development of new tourism partnerships is something that has exciting opportunities for my constituency. As you will know, Mr. Speaker, our area relies heavily on tourism dollars. And in a community that has some of the nicest scenery in the world, any support for tourism is welcome news.

For too long Saskatchewan's economic development has been dependent on megaprojects. We must and are returning to a common-sense strategy that is driven by a mix of the public, private, and small-business sectors.

Much also needs to be done to ensure long-term stability of our agricultural producers. In light of the crisis our farmers are in and in light of the crisis the Alberta and Manitoba governments now find their gross revenue insurance plans, I believe this government has vision. The agricultural problems must be solved with assistance from Ottawa. It is with that in mind that we have put out the paper "Forging Partnerships in Agriculture" that sets forth our proposals to achieve a commercially viable, self-sufficient, and sustainable agricultural industry. The new Farm Support Review Committee will help Saskatchewan develop new safety nets. With representation from producers across Saskatchewan, I believe that we are on the right road.

It is apparent by the reaction from the other provinces that they too are finally realizing the stark reality that a very limited number of taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, can no longer fund what should be nationally funded.

I also at this time, Mr. Speaker, want to applaud the banks and especially my old colleagues in the credit union system for having the vision in their support of the new six-year leaseback program. I think at a time when farmers are having so much difficulty and hurting the way they are, it makes good common sense for these financial institutions to join in and help us. In the end we will all benefit from this cooperation.

Another area of the throne speech I want to touch on very briefly is that of education. Our government is committed, Mr. Speaker, to building a high-quality educational system that responds to the province's social and economic needs. It is with these many needs in mind that the Minister of Education announced a government-wide initiative to explore new ways of delivering services in order to better meet the needs of school-age children and their families.

This initiative, called children first: coordinating community action, will help schools and other agencies work together to provide various services which meet the basic needs of students and their families. I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, that the school division of Meadow Lake is one of the pilot sites in this initiative.

(1645)

I have long believed that educators in our area are some of the best, and the fact that Meadow Lake has been selected as a pilot site, Mr. Speaker, proves it. Under Children First, projects based on locally identified needs are jointly developed by the community with a number of partners, including government departments, non-government organizations, and school divisions.

Within health care, Mr. Speaker, I think it is no accident that the new administration in the United States is looking to Canada's health care system as they consider major health reform. I think this is a real tribute to Canada and especially to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, where medicare was pioneered.

We are moving forward, Mr. Speaker, toward a reformed health care system with emphasis on community involvement and control. We are introducing legislation to encourage the creation of new health districts. We continue to promote the coordination and integration of health services within our communities.

To the many people involved in this process in the constituency of Meadow Lake and those involved on the health planning district committees, I want to give my greatest compliments. They are working very hard on a task that needs to be done. No more bucks spent on useless mortar and debt, but finally, Mr. Speaker, some vision and planning.

Another key to creating a new era of hope and optimism in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is to restore the public's trust in the political system and politicians. I am pleased and honoured to be a part of a government that has returned to honest, open, and accountable government.

The Financial Management Review Commission made numerous recommendations that would give the public a better accounting of where and how government spends its money. Every single recommendation has been dealt with to one degree or another, Mr. Speaker, every single one. That's something that I'm proud of. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, there is no doubt that the role of the Provincial Auditor has been strengthened as well, Mr. Speaker.

As recently as just a few hours ago, Mr. Speaker, our government introduced a Bill respecting the conduct of members of the Legislative Assembly and members of the Executive Council. We said we would do it and we did it. In a time when the public is very cynical and mistrusting of its elected officials, I believe this is very timely. I am sure that all members, including those members opposite, Mr. Speaker, do their best. We can and should continue to improve our accountability to the public.

I was amazed, Mr. Speaker, to find that within a few short weeks of being elected, I had somehow gone from a reasonably well-respected person in our community to a lying, cheating, no-good so-and-so. Well I don't know about the rest of the good members here, Mr. Speaker, but if that, indeed, is the public's perception of what happens to ordinary people when we get elected, it needs to change.

I applaud the Minister of Justice for the introduction of this Bill and encourage all members to work towards continued improvements in this area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Finally I want to say a few words, Mr. Speaker, about Saskatchewan's aboriginal communities and some of the initiatives our government have taken, and how they apply to my Indian and Metis friends from Meadow Lake.

Saskatchewan continues to take a lead with respect to treaty land entitlements. There will be, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, some real changes taking place in the constituency of Meadow Lake when all the negotiations relating to land entitlement are complete.

I want to commend the affected reserves, chiefs of council, and council members themselves, Mr. Speaker, for their understanding in wanting to satisfy any and all third-party interests.

I was just one short week ago, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon where the president of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, Gerald Morin, the Hon. Joe Clark on behalf of the federal government, and our Minister of Justice on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan, signed a tripartite agreement that sets out the basic framework for how the Metis community will begin to control their own destinies. It will promote the right of the Metis people of Saskatchewan to self-determination and self-reliance.

I'm not sure who said it, Mr. Speaker, but I think it was Marie Curie who said that one never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done. It is with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, that our most valuable asset, the people of Saskatchewan, take on with us, the Government of Saskatchewan, what remains yet to be done.

Saskatchewan people are resourceful, energetic, and hard working. They have proven in the past, Mr. Speaker, that working through a real sense of community we can secure a bright and prosperous future. Together on this journey of renewal we will unlock opportunity and create a future where all Saskatchewan people can be proud. It is on all of this, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan will judge us. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, it being near 5 o'clock, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 44 of *Hansard* No. 3A Monday, March 1, 1993, 2 p.m., right-hand column paragraph 5, the name Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter should read Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

[NOTE: The online version has been corrected.]