

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Swenson, chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presents the second report of the committee which is hereby tabled and filed as sessional paper no. 21.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by the member for Regina Victoria:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts now be concurred in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wish to say a few words on the report which has just been tabled in the legislature. This . . .

The Speaker: — I'm informed that the member can only speak by leave of the Assembly. Does the member have leave?

Leave granted.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the particular report which has been tabled with the legislature resulted from a motion put forward on January 10, 1992 and it was a request to the special . . . to the Provincial Auditor to look at some areas that were special and unique to public accountability in the province. The committee held a total of nine meetings, I believe, on this particular area. There were a number of witnesses called before it.

I think that the recommendations that have been put forward in the report by the Public Accounts Committee of this legislature are ones that all members should apprise themselves of. I think that there are some suggestions there that certainly go a long way down the road to improving public access and public accountability to many aspects of government.

Some of those areas were vague. Some of those areas were very ill-defined. And particularly when you get into the Crown corporations sector, there were certain areas where no one could properly discern maybe what the proper procedures were.

And I would just like to thank the members of the committee for all of the hard work that they've put into in going through this process, and I think that we as a legislature and as a province have gained by making this report and making it available to the legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to beg leave of the

Assembly to make some comments with respect to the report on behalf of the government members of the Public Accounts Committee.

The process was, in our view, Mr. Speaker, a very positive exercise for the reasons stated by the Leader of the Opposition. Several practices have been reported and the motion made by the member from Regina Victoria last January allowed the Provincial Auditor to investigate those practices, allowed the committee to address them in a public forum, but I think most importantly, allowed the committee to formulate some recommendations to attempt to ensure that some of the practices and perhaps grey areas the Leader of the Opposition referred to could be rectified so that any abuses would not be repeated in the future.

The amount of material the committee went through, Mr. Speaker, was really quite voluminous. And I think the whole process involved a lot of work not just by members of the committee but also by the civil servants and heads of the departments and agencies of the Crown.

And we were very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that we were able to arrive at, and I think all parties represented on the committee agreed upon, a series of I think very positive recommendations. And the most gratifying aspect of this, I think, Mr. Speaker, has been that the auditor was able to make recommendations, the committee was able to make recommendations, but more importantly, the government is acting on those recommendations.

And I was very pleased to see in the *Leader-Post* of December 14, 1992, Kevin O'Connor making the following statement. He said:

Cynics might suggest you'd have to wait a while to collect 10 good ideas from the Saskatchewan legislature.

But in recent weeks MLAs on the legislature's public accounts committee have been discussing a number of worthy proposals designed to make politicians and government organizations more accountable for the taxpayers' dollars they spend.

And I think that's a very fair comment, Mr. Speaker. And I was very pleased, and I think all members of the committee from all parties were gratified to read the progress report from Executive Council, January 1993, dealing with the recommendations of the committee and the actions the government is taking. And we commend the government for that and I would refer all members to the report. I think it deals with the situation in a very fair and objective manner.

Thank you very much for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give

notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the conflict of interest policy of the government: is any relative of the Minister of Justice employed by the government or any of its agencies or Crown corporations; acting as an agent of a third party doing business with the government or any of its agencies or Crown corporations; or directly supplying any goods or services to the government or any of its agencies or Crown corporations?

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the conflict of interest policy of the government: is any relative of the Minister of Community Services (a) employed by the government or any of its agencies or Crown corporations; (b) acting as an agent for a third party doing business with the government or any of its agencies or Crown corporations; or (c) directly supplying any goods or services to the government or any of its agencies or Crown corporations?

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

Regarding the expansion of the cabinet and move of the protocol office, the office of constitutional affairs, and the Intergovernmental Affairs office from the Legislative Building: (1) what was the total expense of moving these offices from the Legislative Building to their current location elsewhere in Regina; (2) were these offices moved to accommodate the extra office space required by the expanded cabinet; (3) what is the cost of rent for these three organizations in their present location; and (4) how does that vary from the previous cost of renting space within the Legislative Building?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you in your gallery this afternoon 25 students from Connaught School. It's the school that my son graduated from, and I know that it has a very good reputation and is well respected in the community for having good involvement in the community and providing a good service to the students.

The students are accompanied today by Melanie Little, their teacher; and Roger Anderson, their chaperon. So I want you to join me in welcoming them to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — With new members it is difficult to keep track of the names, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I want to welcome the students from

Connaught School. While I have no direct connection with that school now, the school was in my constituency for some 15 years and both my children went to Connaught School. It is, as the current member for the area said, an excellent example of how a community school should work.

I also when I'm on my feet want to ask all members to join with me in welcoming Mr. MacLeod and Mr. Ottenson, who represent the building trades, to this legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity also to introduce some special guests in the opposition gallery, a group of 10 distinguished ladies. And members from this side of the House revere these ladies actually, because they are the eyes and the ears and the extension of us as MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly).

And I think that all MLAs in this building will extend to these secretaries, these constituency secretaries, a warm welcome because we all appreciate the work that these people do for us in our offices and to make MLAs generally look pretty good. It's these hard-working, front-line people that do so much work for us. And I would ask all members of the Assembly at this time to welcome these 10 ladies into our midst this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Review of Gaming Commission

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you will know that . . . to the Minister responsible for the Gaming Commission. I want to ask you a question, Madam Minister. You will know that representatives of hundreds of Regina charities are feeling violated by the actions of the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission and you also know that we have seen criminal charges recently laid against one of the commission regulators.

This is obviously a very sincere vote of non-confidence in the operations of the commission by people representing thousands of volunteers in our province. In light of the serious problems in the Gaming Commission, are you prepared to conduct a public review of the operations of this commission and its treatment of charities running bingos in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you for that question. Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that we have had an individual who is being investigated because of wrongdoing, and that matter is with the police and in the courts. So I don't want to comment on that.

But I will make this comment. Recently I hired a former chief superintendent of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) to join the Gaming Commission. My purpose in hiring that individual was very clear. That was to ensure that there was adequate security in all aspects of

gaming; that there was no criminal overtones to any aspect of gaming in this province. And so I can make that commitment.

With respect to the bingos, there have been some difficulties in moving to a new and better association model, and we are working with the bingos to straighten out that situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, surely you're not questioning the honesty and integrity of the thousands of men and women who, frankly, have lost faith and confidence in the Gaming Commission. Charities, bingo hall operators, Saskatchewan Indians, and most of the other groups regulated by the Gaming Commission, do not trust it to deal with them in good faith.

Are you telling us that all these people are wrong, or will you agree that a public review is the only way you have left to restore some sense of fairness, non-partisanship, and credibility to the Gaming Commission?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, if I could go back in time. In 1990 when the members opposite were in government there was a key legal decision which said that the way that bingos were organized across Canada had to be changed. Now we moved to make those changes, to move to what has been called an association model. The key to the changes is that the charity should be in the driver's seat in the long term and the main beneficiaries of bingo.

Now in the process of moving to that dramatic change there have been some difficulties. And as I say, the commission is sitting down with the bingos and other charities to work through these difficulties. But it is a legal requirement that we change the structure of organization of bingos and charities' roles in them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, your observation about the charities being involved is a stretch that I won't go into at this point, but it's a stretch of the imagination that you've been meeting with the charities.

It is no wonder this government has gone through four chief executive officers and three chairmen of the Gaming Commission since November of 1991. This government won't listen to these people, just as they wouldn't listen to health workers, farmers, business people, or anyone else.

Are you aware that the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission has allowed new bingo hall licences in the Regina market-place over the past 30 to 60 days? And does the minister realize that the approvals were given against the advice of the vast majority of Regina charities? Why were these given? As the market is saturated and new halls simply hurt the efforts of charities raising the funds for their charities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, the request for the new halls came from charities themselves, just as the main movers requesting the commission to act against bingos violating regulation come from charities. This is a dispute amongst charities themselves.

But the key point and the one that I want to emphasize is that the Gaming Commission in its regulation of bingos and charities is a quasi-judicial body with which I do not interfere. They make their decisions in a non-political, non-partisan way.

Now I have suggested to them that what they need to do is sit down with the charities and iron out some of the differences.

But unlike the previous administration, where the minister did interfere in the operations of the commission, I am not interfering personally in the independence of that commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, the government's own study done by Fox Consulting said that there was too much saturation of the gaming market-place already and yet this government is handing out new licences both in Moose Jaw and in Regina. The industry, including charities and operators, was happy with the former government's self-imposed moratorium on licences. Is this moratorium still in place or has it been cancelled? The minister can't have it both ways. There can't be a self-imposed moratorium except for your friends.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, if I could refer to the history of that moratorium, that's the action which I was mentioning previously. The minister, in my view, totally exceeded — the previous minister under your administration — totally exceeded his authority when he imposed upon the commission a moratorium.

The commission is an independent, quasi-judicial body. What they did in Regina, what they did in Moose Jaw is they sat down, they listened to both sides — charities that said they wanted no more bingos, charities that said they did want more bingos — and they independently decided to license the appropriate facilities. It has to be independent of politics. It has to be independent of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I just want to remind the Leader of the Opposition, on every question today so far he's interrupted. There was no interruption when the member asked their question, and I expect them also not to interrupt.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, the government's record of breaking contracts with citizens of this province has now become legendary and has marked our province's government as an untrustworthy partner. In spite of this, the government seems intent on

helping their friends.

Does the minister know who the new hall operators are who received approval to operate halls in a market where charities believed a moratorium on new halls existed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my point again. I take no involvement in the decisions of the Gaming Commission with respect to who is licensed and why they are licensed. The only advice I give them is with respect to the diplomacy with which they handle the bingos and the charities. Those decisions are made by this body as an independent, quasi-judicial body. I have had no involvement and no interference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, since you acknowledge that you have had no interference, would you tell me, is the minister prepared to admit that the former NDP (New Democratic Party) cabinet minister, Reg Gross, is associated with the group who, surprisingly, recently received this approval?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of who is involved in that particular group.

If I could state my point once again, because it is an essential point. The applications that come before the Gaming Commission are reviewed by the members of that commission totally independent of the minister. All the minister can do is give them advice about how they might handle the diplomacy of the way they deal with these individuals. I have no capacity to tell them who to licence and who not to licence and I do not think it appropriate that I have that power.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, this government's theory seems to be that the end justifies the means. The rules according to the NDP government can be changed without consultation as it relates to the charities, as it relates to the associations, on an as-needed basis. And it seems that the government is now practising that what one of its members preached — the system is more important than the individual. Is it not true, Madam Minister, that the terms and conditions proposed by this government were developed without any consultation with any of the charity associations or the hall operators? Isn't that true, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, it was a legal decision going back to 1990 that necessitated the change to an association model. The association model has many advantages in that in the long term it is the charities that are to be the main beneficiary of it. The Gaming Commission developed the rules and regulations consistent with the law. What I have advised the Gaming Commission is that they should spend more time working with the charities. That's the only advice that I have given them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, charities have tried to communicate with this government but no one will listen. They have written, they have lobbied, and now they have no choice but to expose what is surely an effort by this government to destroy this vital means for volunteers to help their community.

Madam Minister, the new rules you are imposing are designed to put these people out of business. Madam Minister, is it not true that by permitting politically motivated licences that help over-saturate the market, and by directly changing the terms of the landlord agreements — some of which have five-year commitments — that you know you will be putting the financial viability of these operations at risk?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Again, Mr. Speaker, my point is a simple one. If you look at the statute, the Gaming Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial body which makes its own decisions relative to who should be licensed. The Criminal Code sets out the framework under which they operate. All that I can do is talk about the diplomacy with which they handle the various groups. And I have suggested to them that although they may be right in the way they are applying the regulations, they need to sit down with the charities and ensure the charities understand what is occurring.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, you talk about consulting and being open and yet here's where they have a problem. In their attempts to learn anything at all about the government's plan to regulate the gaming industry, charities have learned that the government has a two-year plan that the NDP refuse to share with those it directly affects.

Instead, they have been forced to do this: they have been forced to use the freedom of information Act to try and obtain that information, Madam Minister. What has the government got to hide, Madam Minister? Why don't you open your books? Why don't you open and be open and accountable? Give them the plan that they have for the two years and let the charities decide whether they agree with you or not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, we have had an unprecedented level of consultation with respect to gaming in this province. The end of your regime, the beginning of ours, there was extensive consultation with the bingos about the movement to the association model.

Just recently a five-person interdepartmental committee went around the province consulting with various groups about the development of gaming policy. They were open to any individual or group who had a submission to make. And I will make available to the member the list of groups consulted because it is extensive. So when it

comes to consultation, we have a very proud record here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, will you tell this Assembly that they have not asked for in the freedom of information Act, that they have access to that information on your plans for the future for the charities in this province? Tell me that. Have they not asked for that in that area?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the freedom of information request. It may very well, if it exists, have gone to the Gaming Commission and not come to my attention.

What I am saying is that the access to information has been unprecedented. Groups may not have liked the end result of the policy, but there was wide consultation. They had their opportunity to speak and to have input, and the chair of the Gaming Commission has assured me that she is going to continue to dialogue with these groups on an ongoing basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, everything we've been told here today does nothing to ensure the thousands and thousands of volunteers and the contributors of these employment opportunities for various people in the charities and in the associations — the churches and the sports and culture groups — that this government does not have an ulterior motive.

You haven't convinced us and you haven't convinced them that you don't have an ulterior motive. The ends cannot justify the means in this case, and the ends aren't even justified, Madam Minister.

Will you not admit that your government has only one goal in mind. Won't you admit that you want the charities and the bingo hall operators out of the way so that you can implement your ideological plan and step in and run this business?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not even sure that I could begin to answer that question because it's almost unintelligible.

If I could reiterate the point that I made. The charities are a vital part . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I want to warn the members again, there's just too much interruption when the minister is answering her question.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — If I could reiterate my point. The charities are a vital component of the delivery of services in this province. I understand that. The charities are regulated. The bingos are regulated by the Gaming Commission which is an independent body which operates under the framework of the Criminal Code. Beyond that I can say nothing. As minister I have not been involved; this is a non-political process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, charities don't want you to run their business because they know you'll increase your percentage of the revenues beyond the hundred per cent increase you have already imposed at their expense. Bingo hall operators know you will cut them out of this business completely.

Will you not now, Madam Minister, give us a categorical assurance that you will leave this vital source of revenue to our charities unscathed; tell us you won't subject these people to the same cure you imposed on farmers, namely to fix the contracts so they could go broke.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Yes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Will you then, Madam Minister, provide, under the terms and conditions under the freedom of information Act, the two-year plan that you have intended to implement in the province of Saskatchewan and the gaming side. Will you provide that to the associations and the charities in this province? Will you provide that to them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to provide information on our gaming strategy because it's something I'm very proud of. We are the only province in Canada that has managed to make way for Indian and Metis people to realize their desire to participate in gaming in this province — the only province in Canada.

We are in the forefront of monitoring the social costs involved in gaming. We have a strategy which is a long-term strategy and I would be pleased to unveil it to anyone who's interested.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Justice. I want to ask you this question, Mr. Minister. We have no choice, given all the nonsense and inability of this minister to respond appropriately to the associations and the charities, and the confusion we have heard here today, but to direct our appeal to you. Mr. Minister, given that thousands of volunteers have lost confidence in the Gaming Commission because it cannot seem to treat them fairly without political interference and in a fashion that is beyond any doubt in terms of conflict of interest, will you not today at least agree to review the need for a review by the public of the Gaming Commission and its responses? And will you give us a commitment that you will do it soon?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to look up the legislation, to go through

it, to look at what the powers of the Gaming Commission are. And what you'll find is that the Gaming Commission is independent; it has quasi-judicial powers; it makes these decisions independent of the minister and of politics.

Now you may not understand that because the minister under your administration did interfere in the Gaming Commission. But this is something that this administration is not going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Purchase of Computer Equipment

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an order in council dated February 16, 1993, revealed that the government has spent \$8.5 million on computer software and hardware and that money went to a firm in Florida. My question is for the Minister of SaskPower. Was this computer purchase tendered in Saskatchewan, and will he provide details of that purchase?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to tell this House and all its members that SaskPower has a Buy Saskatchewan program and policy. And I am proud to say that today 82 per cent of all purchases from SaskPower are made in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in the case of the computer equipment the member raises, that equipment is simply only available, only available from the state of Florida.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the previous government was the one that established the Buy Saskatchewan program in SaskPower. That's who established it, sir. And during the term of office of the last government, the rate of purchases in SaskPower was 90 per cent, not 82 per cent as he likes to point out now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, \$8.5 million of Saskatchewan taxpayer money went to a company in Florida for purchase of equipment, something that was not tendered in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, would you provide us with details — details — of that computer purchase?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy, more than happy to provide the member and all members details of that transaction. I repeat again: this particular computer equipment and software is only available in the United States, through the state of Florida. It is essential. It is essential to our power distribution grid here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We had no alternative but in this case to tender in the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will be more than happy to provide to that member or to all members the detail.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the province of Saskatchewan today the computer software industry is in a severe downturn, and the minister stands in this House and tells us that the computer software companies of Saskatchewan were not even asked about the computer tendering program — not even asked, Mr. Speaker. They're paying high, excessive taxes in this province and you don't even consult with them.

Mr. Minister, we would ask you that you table the documents surrounding this computer purchase as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat again, I am more than willing and will do at the earliest opportunity to provide this member and all members the detail of this particular computer purchase, not simply software, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I may add just to conclude, we did not go to anybody called Mr. Guy Montpetit for our computer supplies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, is this an example of your policy of Buy Saskatchewan? Is this your example of economic development in Saskatchewan? When it comes time for a large computer purchase you trot on down to Florida without even consulting with the computer companies in Saskatchewan. Is this an example of your development, economic development strategy, in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat again to the member, to all members, that SaskPower is very proud of its commitment to buy in this province. As one of the MLAs from Moose Jaw, I note that through SaskPower's increasing commitment to secure its supplies from Saskatchewan suppliers, we have been able to announce an expansion of the Phillips Cable plant in Moose Jaw with new jobs and new construction. That is a result of this corporation's commitment to purchase in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question also is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. And I'm wondering if the minister could inform the House today if this was part of his recent trip to the island of Cuba and Mexico and other points in the Caribbean, if this particular contract was something that was talked about on that trip.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the member asks a question that is very difficult to follow the logic of.

But I want to say that the issue of computer software that was referred to, obviously as the minister has stated, was purchased where it could be purchased because it wasn't available in Saskatchewan.

I want to say that in the area of procurement, in SaskPower you pick a strange corporation to attack, when their procurement is 82 per cent, I'm sure the highest of any company in Saskatchewan that is purchased here in the province.

I'm not sure what point you're making, but the clear fact is that wherever possible, this corporation has broken down big projects, has made it available. They've helped with buyer training for Saskatchewan suppliers. And that's why they've achieved one of the highest levels of any corporation that purchase in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 2 — An Act to recognize Jean-Louis Légaré / proposera la première lecture du projet de loi relative à reconnaissance de Jean-Louis Légaré

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that a Bill to recognize Jean-Louis Légaré be now introduced and read for the first time.

Pursuant to rule 49-2, I'd like to give a brief explanation on the object of this Bill. This Bill is to recognize Jean-Louis Légaré for his heroic and compassionate efforts with respect to Chief Sitting Bull and his people. He supplied food, shelter, and hunting supplies for 5,000 exhausted and hungry people in what is now the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 3 — An Act respecting Health Districts

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that An Act respecting Health Districts be now introduced and read the first time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it would relate to question no. 2 put by the member from Saskatoon Greystone, I would like to table that answer. And further, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to questions 3 to 74 put by members, I would ask that they be converted to motions for return (debatable).

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Answer to item no. 2 has been tabled and the rest are converted to motions for return (debatable).

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.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is once again a pleasure for me to rise and speak on a throne speech in this Assembly. I was just . . . It's my 15th year and I believe it's the 17th or 18th throne speech because we have had, in the past, more than one throne speech in one year.

And I'd like to take this time, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate our new Leader of the Progressive Conservatives, the member from Thunder Creek.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — And also the assistant leader, the member from Morse. I congratulate them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — And why it's also a pleasure for me to speak in this here throne speech because I know that it's only going to be about two more and we'll be on that side of the House because this is for sure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, when I spoke a year ago on the throne speech, one year ago, I pretty well figured it'd be nine years, eight years, before we would be back. But now, without a doubt, this is a one-term government. Without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, without a doubt. No government could get away with what they've got away and ever, ever be returned to power.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go back too far, but we're going to talk about a few . . . just for a few minutes, on broken promises. This is quite important. Before the election, they made so many promises. And let's talk about the utilities for one. Very important. They promised very clearly. The Premier went throughout this province and said: we'll either be holding, holding utilities, or lowering. What did they do?

No new taxes, that was a promise. And affect everybody. They've raised taxes, increased phone rates — affects everybody. They raised them. Increased power rates twice in one year, Mr. Speaker. Is this keeping the promise? Increased natural gas rates twice in one year — affects every individual in this province. Increased SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) vehicle insurance second year in a row — affects everybody that

drives a vehicle in the province of Saskatchewan.

This is strictly broken promises. Every one I'm saying here is a broken promise. Fifteen per cent increase in PST (provincial sales tax). Try to go out and fool the people with their taking off the 7 per cent and add on 8. I mean, what a carryings-on. People aren't going for this, Mr. Speaker. This government is in serious trouble and people are not going to forget.

An increase on fuel tax — affects everybody. An increase of 1 per cent in corporation income tax; an increase of 1 per cent in the corporation capital tax surcharge rate; increase of 25 per cent in the corporation capital tax rate; impose user fee for the chiropractor services.

(1445)

Associate Minister of Finance has hinted at imposing selective harmonization for some items. Mr. Speaker, it's coming; harmonization is coming. It's coming. At election time, what did we hear? Harmonization — it's going to be the death and ruination of Saskatchewan. We knew we were right. All Canadians knew we were right. But they just don't seem to want to accept change when there's all the NDPs out there saying how bad it is. Now they're starting to come across knowing that there has to be harmonization.

All these broken promises — what's their excuse, Mr. Speaker? What is their excuse? They say the excuse is the Tories left us big debts. Isn't that their excuse, Mr. Speaker? The Tory debt?

More broken promises: they said they'd stand behind rural Saskatchewan. The wellness model — it'll probably translate into rural hospital closures and consolidation of health regions, local boards relieved of their duties, and new boards were appointed by the Minister of Health. They were not elected. Why is this happening, Mr. Speaker?

When the Minister of Health, when we closed the session here last fall, says: oh, there's going to be local autonomy; they'll pick their own members. But I see as the boards are coming forth . . . Who are they? Who are these people? They're all NDP appointees. Appointed, so they know that it's just a liaison between the government to these board members.

They eliminated the Saskatchewan Pension Plan — just a big joke. And then they put it back in again and thought they'd fool people. You didn't fool one person out there.

You cancelled rural natural gas distribution program and that was serious. I've got a neighbour that already had his money down. Under the Tory government, he had paid. Paid his money, had his receipt, and it froze up in the fall and didn't get it dug. You go by his farm, everybody that drives up No. 11, it's the Risk and Hope farm. He only had to go a few feet for \$2,600. Now they want \$25,000, these people, to give Risk and Hope farm . . .

You people, at the regular time you drive up No. 11 highway and look at the Risk and Hope farm, think of that man being taken for 25,000 — \$25,000, and he has a

receipt paid in full for \$2,600 from the Tories, to put in natural gas and only to go a short distance. And I could tell you, Mr. Speaker, that anybody in that household . . . and I know some of their relatives have voted NDP in the past but never again — never again. They're out campaigning against you. Never, never again.

You reduced municipal revenue sharing, reducing number of rural municipalities. Department leak stated that government intending to further reduce funding to RM (rural municipality). Well is that helping farmers, Mr. Speaker? Is this government trying to help farmers? They're not trying to help any farmers. They're trying to hinder, I believe. I do believe they're trying to hinder.

Because they know that if they can just hold on, as the member from Estevan said the other day, if they could just hold on to a few of these here urban seats, and you'll find out in the next distribution there won't be an Arm River; it'll be, likely it'll be Moose Jaw North. It just won't be there.

But I'll tell you I'll be there. I'm getting so . . . I was going to quit, but I'm getting so upset with government, I'm going to run again. I've had enough of this. I don't have to quit at 61 years of age. I don't have to quit, but I was going to. But what you people are doing to my good people in Saskatchewan that I represent and you represent, has never happened before since 1905, since the beginning of this here good province of Saskatchewan.

It has never happened. Bills you're bringing forth, Bills you're thinking about bringing forth that you hint about, it's never happened and we have to fight. The people that believe in this province, believe in the people, have to fight for a cause.

So how long I stay in politics has nothing to do with it. Whether I'm an MLA or just a citizen in the province of Saskatchewan, I am going to be fighting for the rights of the people of this province because this government is fighting for their rights, the government's rights and not the people's rights.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to resume speaking from my seat, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, they also plan to redraw the electoral boundaries to reduce the number of constituencies — most likely the rural constituencies. Now it's just not common sense what I understand their thinking. They're thinking that we have to have less seats in rural Saskatchewan and more in the urban. Well that's not correct.

Let's take a look at Calgary. An MLA in Calgary, the city of Calgary, will represent 40 or 50,000 constituents. But you get out in the cattle country and the sheep country, they're only four and five. You tell me why I should represent the people from Chamberlain to Saskatoon, which is a long ways. The largest seat in the province of Saskatchewan, other than the two northern. I got the largest square miles and it's an awkward seat.

And now what you're going to do . . . I can just see what's going to happen because Arm River has never been an NDP seat — only twice since 1905. And we've got it so tied up for the Tories that you'll never get it again. The only way you're going to get the seat of Arm River is to eliminate it. That's the only way you'll ever win Arm River is to eliminate the seat. I've already heard Moose Jaw North or Saskatoon South is going to be Arm River.

This government, Mr. Speaker, also cancelled Fair Share. They are going to regret that some day because rural Saskatchewan . . . The people out there that voted for this government that says Fair Share Saskatchewan wasn't fair, well now they're saying, boy, I'll go any place for a job.

Because what do we hear in the throne speech? The Premier says, he says, we're going to have to get rid of a lot of civil servants. Oh, not you people standing out here holding the union flags. We don't mean you, we mean the people above you, the out-of-scope people. Well I'll tell you, those out-of-scope people were standing up here in 1991 against Fair Share Saskatchewan. Oh, don't move me to Melfort, don't move me to Kinistino, don't move me to Hudson Bay. But I'll tell you, they'd move any place in Saskatchewan because you're going to fire them. That's what you're going to do.

You're a heartless bunch of people. You sit here and you promise you're going to create jobs, and you're eliminating them. You've hit everything you can on a farmer. You increased the pasture rental fees last year. Breeder fees are up 31 per cent. Everything up, up, up. Cancelled all cash advance programs. Capped fuel rebate for farmers and brought back purple gas.

Mr. Speaker, do these people over here think they're smart? When people are so happy out there, the farmers, not to have to — and all the fuel dealers — to contend with purple gas, and these guys bring it back? They're not.

But I really shouldn't be sitting here condemning all these things because you're just about liable to correct some of these things the last year to try to get elected again. We should let you turkeys just go. We should just be sitting here.

But that wouldn't be a proper opposition. When I was sworn in here in 1978 as a member of this here Assembly I was sworn to look after the King's money. And so help me, and I'll tell you, we did a good job. And we're going to get to the three and a half billion dollars in a hurry here.

Mr. Speaker, laugh as they may, but they better not laugh in about 10 minutes here.

They capped the fuel rebate for farmers and brought back . . . They don't understand, Mr. Speaker, what they're doing to the farmers. Anything at all . . . The member from Rosetown — I feel sorry for him. He was dumped out of cabinet because he didn't do a good job in Agriculture. It wasn't his fault. I've said it before. He got his orders. He got his orders from the minister of Finance.

Now the minister of Finance is gone. He's not feeling well. I understand. He may be back; he may not be back.

But there's a new Minister of Finance now. I feel sorry for the new Minister of Agriculture because he's going to say, where's my money? There isn't going to be any. And no money for farmers. There isn't no money for farmers.

The NDP government, and you know what they did a year ago in this Assembly — not quite a year ago but the last session. They absolutely come up and they rammed legislation through the Assembly, forcing farmers to accept the '92 GRIP (gross revenue insurance program). Now I didn't think that we came in this year we'd have to talk about GRIP. But boy, I'm telling you, we'll be talking about GRIP I guess till the end of the NDP, till they're never hear them again. Because they have absolutely, literally destroyed and finished many farms in this province.

It's not the past minister of Agriculture's fault. What did they do? The upper echelon says, oh let's just dump the member from Rosetown and the blame's all on him. I literally say, Mr. Speaker, that I felt sorry for you because you'd . . . I really do. Because you were told in cabinet — don't think I didn't sit there for four years — you were told: heh, you get this done; there's no money, you get this done, Mr. Minister of Agriculture. You go out there and you tell those Tories, you tell them, tell them right now.

But what a fool they made of you, what a fool. You poor guy. Because your own Premier stands up this winter and says: we should have stayed with the 1991 GRIP. I can't believe this, that a government could be so mixed up in their thinking.

How could you people . . . One by one as I talked to you over this last year, and every one of you people had an excuse for the '92 GRIP, how wonderful it was and how terrible the '91 GRIP was and how wonderful the '92 is. What are you going to say to me now? What's your views going to be now when your own Premier said we should have stuck with the '91? What are you going to say when we have our nice, friendly chats behind the ropes here? Are you going to still stick up for '91 GRIP as being no good, no good for farmers? No, sir.

You made a fool of the minister of Agriculture. And I know that you're going to do the same thing with the next Minister of Agriculture because the new Minister of Finance and the deputy minister of Finance, the member from Swift Current, is going say: I'm sorry, Mr. Member from Canora, but we've got no dollars; there's no dollars for farmers. And then people are going to hate him. It won't be his fault; it will be the upper echelon in the front row. So we've got to get . . . We can't get enough votes out of 60,000 farmers to get back in again. We only got a few of their votes last time anyway. We've got to hold on to the Regina, Saskatoon, urban vote. We've got to hold on to them.

Yes, the member from Quill Lakes is looking around where they come from. Just take a look at below No. 1 Highway and the West where they come from, pretty solid block. And all the ones over on the east side winning by 50 votes and 200 votes and . . .

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, likely the only way you'll get rid of the member from Quill Lakes and the member from Arm River is to eliminate his seat and my seat. He's hung on a long time. He must be doing something right. He's been my colleague since 1978 and I won't come down too hard on him.

The Regina Health Board, they went and cancelled the Victorian Order of Nurses contract, claiming it will save money. Government will lose thousands of hours of volunteer work and cash donations. I watched it on television, Mr. Speaker. Very clearly when some of these real nice people said that yes, they'll go work for government, but most of them are not going to work for government without some money. Now some of the ones that can afford it, they're good people, they're real good people and they've done a wonderful job out there. Why did you touch it? Why did you not just leave it the way it was?

If people in the city of Regina, and most have voted for you, why did you turn off these here . . . I watched it on TV like you people did. These dear old people in these homes, they open doors and smiling, and in come these here nice nurses all dressed up nice and clean and neat and said, how are you today in a conversation that people are lonesome, and they'd come in and they'd check their heart and they would check their blood pressure and they would fix something on their feet, their bunions or whatever, and made them feel good. And then maybe they'd tell the next one, you need to go to the doctor this afternoon; you're just not quite feeling as good as you think you are.

I mean these are wonderful things they've done. Why did you go eliminate something that was helping your friends? I can't understand it.

Mr. Speaker, why did they put a freeze on capital projects, cuts in funding on both education and health care? How could this government stand up and tell everybody and sit there and snicker at you when you talk about it in the House, smile and grin, when they said they'd put . . . there'd be increased funding on education and health care, and down she went. Down it went.

Proposed closure on many rural schools — for example, Elbow. I'm just going to talk for a minute about Elbow. It's very important. It's very important. It's going to be a very big issue in this here House before this is over. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to continue again from my seat.

Mr. Speaker, back in estimates last summer there was a real issue between the Minister of Education and myself over the funding of Elbow School. They were building onto the Loreburn School — I'm going to cut this short, but I'm just going to bring out a point — they were building onto the Loreburn School and moving Strongfield and Elbow to that school for a dollar figure of \$438,000.

(1500)

And I've got several evenings, night after night, from June 1 to August 6 where I argued with the minister, and finally . . . I'm going to read this. This is where she agreed. They

always said that I was wrong in my figures, but finally they did say this. I'm going to read it with your permission, an insert from *Hansard*, August 6, page 2061. This is myself saying this one sentence here:

I don't understand that. And I don't understand how come that the local school board has been given the figures . . . (that there are, that came out at the meeting) . . . the Elbow school board was at the Outlook (school) board meeting in Outlook. And an architect said it would cost about 1.4 to \$6 million to move Elbow to that school. Now that's what's wrong here. The wrong information's getting out. You can't have the taxpayers from Outlook school district, some thinking that it's one and a half million and you, the minister, says about half a million. Now that's \$1 million out. But that's the way this whole government operates. The Minister of Finance is out millions every day.

And I go on to say — one more short paragraph:

So, Madam Minister, I want you to be able to tell me and so I can have it on the record for the Elbow people, which is right. (Which is right?) Is it going to cost a half a million dollars, or roughly — whatever that figure was that you gave me — to move Elbow and have the Loreburn School (schools united together under one roof from) . . . K, 1 to 12 plus the kindergarten? What is it going to cost? Who is right, your figure or the Outlook School Division? Is it one and a half million or is it a half a million?

The minister stands up, very clearly, after several hours and days of arguing, and says this statement in this Chamber:

Mr. Chairman, the estimate of the facilities branch was that for a capital project for the Loreburn School — I repeat — to repair the roof and provide relocatable class-rooms which would accommodate the transfer of K to 6 students from Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow, if this was the wish of the school division, that that cost would be \$438,000.

Then she goes on to say:

Whether someone else came and said that to build a whole new school (for 1.6 million), which didn't include . . .

But whatever they are she called it. I can't get the word here. It's kind of been covered over.

. . . whatever the (hypocrites) . . . are (she says, whatever the hypocrites are) would cost more than that, I have no idea.

Now why I bring that out, Mr. Speaker, is because they just put out a tender, a tender saying that it's 1.6 million is the tender to build on the Loreburn School — 1.6 million, and they're spending money to close two schools. Spending money to close two schools. I never heard of

anything. There's something wrong here.

The minister thinks that it was built for 438,000, and then I find out they got to come to this new budget to get another three or four hundred thousand because there's not enough money to go around. They didn't have enough money to move Elbow in yet.

But to make this worse, and when closing off estimates, Mr. Speaker, I say to Madam Minister:

Can I have this commitment (to save time and get off estimates) from you so we can get off this estimate tonight, or off my part of it? Can I have this commitment — that you will sit down with me and we can discuss this personally ourselves to get to the bottom of these figures? Can I have that commitment, Madam Minister?

She rises, Mr. Speaker, and says this statement:

Mr. Chairman, I have no problem whatsoever with making that commitment. I'd be happy to discuss this with the member from Arm River . . .

The next thing I read a few months later — we've never met with her — is \$1.6 million contract's been accepted by Graham Construction. They're building the school now.

We're going to get into that and we're going to get into it very deeply in this House. What went wrong here? The critic for education understands this and maybe it'll come up when I'm away.

But it's serious and it's going to be discussed and we're going to get to the bottom of it because I think there's been some misrepresentation, there's been some misleading here — misleading. And I don't think it's the minister's fault because she kept asking her officials that night and got the answers from them, and they're the same people that dealt with Outlook. So something's not right.

This government, Mr. Speaker, they increased air ambulance fees, increased resident income charges for seniors and special care homes by as much as \$211 a month. Why do they do things like that? The NDP claimed people were dying on hospital lists. The lists are just as long, if not longer, today.

Let's back up a few years, Mr. Speaker, when we had the minister of Social Services as a critic for Health and we had the minister of Health was one time the critic for Health. And if we even so much, the Tories, had a nurse take an extra week's holiday in July, they'd come down on us as killers of people. They stood right here and said we're letting people die.

And I'm in St. Paul's Hospital a week ago today for a test and they told me they're closing 160 beds in Saskatoon — 160 beds. Now what is wrong with this government?

I mean I shouldn't talk about something that happened myself, but I'm going to. I was brought in an ambulance on November 29 to the hospital in Regina, and I couldn't move. The doctor examined me, said I had a ruptured

disc, and I was paralysed from the hip down. And he said, I'll get you a bed. And he said, you have to have . . . it'll be three or four days before we can get a CAT (computerized axial tomography) scan, an operation. They went away to admit me, came back; sorry, they said, there's no bed for you. Well I don't mind that. I'll wait my turn to die.

But in the same turn, same time, when you're saying there's no room, don't say we're going to close 160 beds and 100 over here and then close down hospitals in rural Saskatchewan. Come on now. There's no room. I'm waiting on a bed for quite a while to get back into Saskatoon. No room. That's all right if you weren't at the same time saying that we were wrong in the things we did with health.

You people are wrong in what you're doing. You got the wrong agenda. You're moved off the Tommy Douglas agenda where health care is number one in Saskatchewan — health care number one. I think, Mr. Speaker, that maybe this government is going to go like the socialists over in Europe and move right in with euthanasia and just let them go. Let them die. They're heading that way. They can laugh, but that's the way this whole thing's heading.

The socialists in the United States, the same way. The House Leader, the member from Elphinstone, he was down to the Clinton nomination. That's probably where this big deal happened on what we're talking about today. He's right in with them. But ah, I see now that they're changing their mind on free trade just because Clinton says we've got to go along on free trade.

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

Mr. Kluz: — I ask for leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kluz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member from Arm River for interrupting his address. I'd like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all members of this Assembly, two guests that are in the west gallery. They are district reps with Sask Wheat Pool: one is Warren Crossman who's in Garf Stevenson's district and one is Barry Olson who represents my district. I would like all members of the Assembly to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

Mr. Muirhead: — They also, Mr. Speaker, made a promise that they'd listen to people. But what did they do? They ignored all the plebiscite results, ignored chiropractors on user fees. They ignored the optometrists on user fees, they ignored nurses on cut-backs, ignored

farm families on the GRIP changes. Is that listening to the people, Mr. Speaker? And my friends in the Assembly: is that listening to the people? You've double-crossed everybody in Saskatchewan.

There's a member in this House here that used to represent Last Mountain-Touchwood. Gordon MacMurchy is in this House now. And his type of men and people like Wes Robbins would never allow this to happen. I sat with that man for many years in this House and there was a man of honour. I didn't agree with his philosophy, but they were men of honour. But what's happened to this young group? They've lost their honour; they've lost their sight; they've lost their goal where they're going.

And I'd like just to say, Mr. Speaker, welcome to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. He was an honourable man.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — They promised, Mr. Speaker, they promised open and honest government; but they had a closed-door Gass Commission review. Patronage appointments to government departments and Crowns after promising to eliminate patronage — Mr. Speaker, that's all right. These people . . . you should be entitled to a little patronage. Mr. Speaker, when they hired Jack Messer to come and run SaskPower, that's all right. They kicked out George Hill, that's okay. And they've hired Walter Smishek, Don Ching, the Minister of Justice's daughter. And they've hired Mr. Cowley back. I think that's all right. But don't say before the election you wouldn't do it. Don't tell the people of Saskatchewan: we will never do like the Tories and hire a Tory. We will just hire whoever's qualified.

Well I'm saying that, Mr. Cowley to his position, whatever I see in the paper he was doing, he'd be very qualified. I agree with that. But don't tell me that if there was a Tory right beside him just as qualified, that they would pick him. We know you do it. Governments do this, but don't be so ridiculous, you people, and sit back and try . . .

An Hon. Member: — Hypocritical.

Mr. Muirhead: — Hypocritical is a good word for you. Sit there and say to the people of the province of Saskatchewan: we don't do it. Dear Jack Messer, it's nothing to do with his politics. It's nothing to do with him being the minister of Agriculture. It's nothing to do with him being the president of the party. It's nothing to do with him being high profile. He's qualified for the job. He's qualified for the job.

Come on. Get off it. Why don't you admit that you believe in political patronage like most governments do. There's nothing wrong with the high profile, the policy-making people changing your philosophy.

I think if I was the premier of a province I would be saying before elections, or if I was a candidate, I'd say: here's the people that will lose their jobs come election. Executive Council, goodbye. The heads of all departments and

deputy ministers, goodbye. But I'd name them so everybody would know it when they get their job. Don't have everybody sitting on pins and needles in this province. Am I going to have a job tomorrow? You got people so upset they don't know where they're at, because all you can talk is cut back, cut back.

I want to just touch, for a moment . . . I haven't got too much more here, Mr. Speaker. I just want to touch a little bit more about what the Premier said this winter about this here '91 GRIP that made a complete fool of all of us. And do you know what it's did, what it has done out there to the NDP farmers themselves that did vote NDP that were supporting you?

They were trying their best out there to try to sell the '92 program, to stick up for you like the member from Humboldt. I was in the Watrous Pool here not too long ago. And I'll tell you, you better listen because I don't think there's one farmer that voted for you the last election will vote for you again. She's a one term more for you. Two years, dust. History.

Some of you honourable people that at least were honest and come out and said like . . . You know what you said to me? Yes, Gerry, I do believe the '91 GRIP's the best for the farmer.

You said it to me right here. But I wouldn't go and use your name. I wouldn't do it because that's not . . . that's breaking an honour. But the people that were hypocrites and took off when the '91 GRIP being the old . . . being absolutely a nothing, Grant Devine thing that's no good — sorry, Mr. Speaker — the member from Estevan.

Then they always talk, Mr. Speaker, about the third line of defence that's been a broken promise from Ottawa. That's why we haven't got any money. Well the third line of defence — and I was involved heavily when this '91 GRIP was put together — was the third line of defence. It would have been the third line of defence because this government just threw about \$800 million right down the river, just threw it away by cancelling the '91 GRIP.

You don't have the people in Alberta and Manitoba gathering in big meetings to condemn their government. They're having a hard enough time there too, but my goodness. On our farm alone between my two sons and myself we're going to be short about \$90,000 on our farm between '91 and '92, and there's no other way out. There's no other way out. Because '92 GRIP doesn't give you hardly anything.

The third line of defence was this. And if you had've listened to Don Mazankowski and Bill McKnight, those two hon. members that would have liked to have done something for Saskatchewan farmers but couldn't work with you people. They just couldn't do it.

Because what they wanted to do with the '91 GRIP was to improve it and then we would have had what we wanted. And what they were going to do to improve it, Mr. Speaker, they were going to take whatever your guarantee was of, say, 25, 30 bushels to the acre — the farmers here will understand this — whatever your guarantee be, and say it's guaranteed 4.15 a bushel. And

that's what you would be guaranteed and not penalize you for what you grew over that. That's what had to be changed and then take the premiums off at the elevator and that's what we have coming if we had've had a Tory government in this province. And you blew it away.

And I'll tell you one thing, that if I had voted Liberal in this province I would be having my head awfully low to the ground because they caused the problem. They elected the NDP. Nothing against the Leader of the Liberal Party because she's a good individual, she does a good job, and she's out there doing her best, but with no help whatsoever. But all it did by her working hard is made sure that we elected you people.

(1515)

So it's not going to happen again. The vote is not going back to the Liberal Party. We are going to be electing a new leader, be it one of the two leaders here now, and we are the ones that's coming back. Because all you got to do is go to café to café to café to café and see what's happening. It's not hard. You couldn't buy a vote.

I've got all my friends in my town of Craik where I live that I know that some of them, many of them, there's about a hundred, for four elections, approximately a hundred — I'm going to go back to my seat, Mr. Speaker — there's approximately a hundred of them voted NDP for four elections in a row. And one by one by one they said, Gerry, I'll never do it again. I'll never do it again.

But the Liberals that I know that forsook me — I still won — but they up and . . . they won't admit it at all. They'd come up and slap me on the back — sure glad I stuck with you, Gerry; we're with you all the way.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think the member realizes you can't use your own personal name in the debate. He's done it several times and I just want to remind him that that is unacceptable in the House.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I did realize that. Even when I said it I knew I shouldn't have used my own name.

Another promise this here government made — they were going to eliminate poverty. They increased all utility rates, increased all taxes, imposed health care costs such as user fees on optometrists and chiropractors, tripled deductible for prescription plan — I imagine it's gone in this budget — eliminated senior citizens' heritage program. Do these actions eliminate poverty? Does that eliminate poverty? No.

They promised to provide a stable, supportive environment for economic growth. The throne speech last year claimed seven — listen very careful to this now — the throne speech last year claimed 700 companies were planning to relocate or expand in Saskatchewan. Along with these 700 companies, 16,000 jobs would be created in Saskatchewan. Instead, the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics labour force report states that Saskatchewan's labour force decreased by 2,000. That means 2,000 jobs disappeared.

Now what does that mean? That means that the member from Elphinstone, he misled every individual in the province of Saskatchewan again. Everyone was misled again, looking for 700 . . . We all knew that couldn't happen. He was just talking, hoping we wouldn't even remember his statement. But well, we're going to remember it for four years, Mr. Speaker.

This throne speech that we just went through . . . I've seen many throne speeches with very little substance in it because nobody gets too much into the throne speech; the budget is the main thing we get into. But this throne speech was kind of a joke because the only meat it had in it was from our Tory policy. But the throne speech did promise to maintain — and that's quite a thing, maintain. Just think of that — maintain or create 8,000 jobs. Well that's quite a statement. That's an awful difference. That's a difference between nothing and 8,000. So it left themselves quite a . . . it said maintain or create 8,000. What in the world did the throne speech mean? Did it mean they're going to create 8,000 or zero? That's what it amounts to. They don't even know how to write a throne speech. Who's your writers? Maintain or create.

The NDP track record is not very good in this area, so I've got doubts with the member from Elphinstone, the House Leader; he can't do this. He's talking about all these lists of these thousands of companies coming into Saskatchewan, but he wouldn't let the media see it. But he probably rolled around . . . it's probably a New York directory that he seen when he was down with Clinton. Probably brought the directory back with him and he sees all these names of all these companies. But he wouldn't show the directory around long enough to pick out a name.

They're just fooling people; holding on. Because it's not going to happen. But I wish it would. For the sake of the people of Saskatchewan I hope he's right. But let's sit here a few months from now, or six months from now and see if it does happen. And I expect the media to be watching these kind of things.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I've been going through here really is broken promises. We've been talking about broken promises, broken promises to no end. And every time you hear out on the street about a broken promise, all you hear is: well the Tories caused it by the big deficit. The Tories caused it by their big deficit. Is that not what you people say? — the big deficit. You left us in such a mess. You're still saying it 18 months later. Well we can't help it if we have to put your rates up. The Tories left us that big deficit. You never made a promise.

We're going to close on something from *Hansard* here that's very important, that I'm going to be talking about every time we ever . . . almost every time I speak in this House for this session.

But I want to talk about a few promises. Just a few. This whole book is full of promises made by us and they were all kept before 1982 and after 1982. But it would take an hour to go through that, so I'm just going to talk about a few.

Promise. Promise made by this government. Land bank.

Will it disappear? Yes. It was a proud day for all of Saskatchewan when Eric Berntson stood up on that side of the House and said: this was a proud day for Saskatchewan; this government will never buy land again.

An Hon. Member: — Farmers owning their own land.

Mr. Muirhead: — Farmers owning their own land. And I'd say that this six-year lease program of yours is better than nothing. But if they had've stuck to what we talked about at election time, a lease-to-own gives them initiative. Get that lease-to-own in there. Don't just talk about . . . because I can see what's happening. It's soon going to be the six years is up; the farmer isn't going to have money and somehow the government's going to get involved here as landowners or something other again. I can see it happening. I like to prophesy, so I'll just remember that, my friends.

No protection from the 22 per cent interest rates. This was a promise. And we kept this promise. You people never kept one promise, not one. Farmers saved over 200 million in interest payments through interest reduction programs. That's a promise and we kept it. No mechanism to help transfer the family farm; vendor mortgage protection. That was a promise and we kept it.

When the member from Estevan, the new premier, in April of 1982, when he said the gas tax would come off, did he break that promise? No. When he was sworn in as premier out here on the step he said, at midnight tonight the gas tax comes off.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Did you people, when you made all those promises to get sitting over there with all your members, did you stand up here when your Premier was voted in and says, tonight at midnight will be all the promises that I made will come true tonight? Instead you've gouged them all. You've gouged every one.

I live up here when I'm in the city at Rainbow Towers. And about half the people, I would say, in Rainbow Towers have always had Tory signs in their windows — and there was less last time than before — and then there's quite a few NDP. Well I'll tell you, there'll never be an NDP vote in Rainbow Towers again. Because they're all seniors. And I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, that every one of those people on wheelchairs like I'm travelling on myself, the people that are well-to-do, the people that are just hanging on by a pension, don't ever talk CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) or NDP again. Because this government is not the Tommy Douglas government. They have not got a heart. Tommy Douglas had a heart for people but you people got a heart for the NDP.

Now there's some good members over here — and I could pick them out — some good, solid members that must stand up in your caucus and be counted. Stand up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I can tell you, you're not one of them. I'm looking at one across here that sure is. He's an honourable member. I've been with him, known him since 1978. Stand up and be counted in your caucus

and stop this here government for this wild, crazy stuff they're doing. Stop them.

Or, Mr. Speaker, is that the way of the socialist caucus? Maybe it's not the way. In our caucus I can remember if two or three of us would be against something, we could stop it, veto it. My leader, the premier of Saskatchewan for nine years, if he couldn't get a consensus, it was down to two or three strong people that were absolutely adamant that this was wrong, he stopped it. That's what you call democracy. Either you people that are strong-willed people, either you people that are strong, strong-willed can't get your voice heard because you belong to a party that two or three from the upper echelon says what it's going to be.

Now we know that there's some Bills talked about coming into this here House that's been talked about, and I'm not even going to bring it up today. I just do believe that the Minister of Justice is getting so many letters on this Bill that he'll pull this Bill. I have faith in him that when it gets down to the nitty-gritty, he'll pull it, just as the present Premier in 1980, when he was the attorney general, and they brought in a Bill . . . Just laughed at 17 Tories, just laughed at us. Mr. Speaker, I'll resume from my seat again. He laughed at 17 Tories when we said it's not right to change the age of consent from 16 to 12. Ha! Well I'll tell you, 17 of us went to work and we got so many letters in that he stood up in his seat and he said, there's so many people against that I'm going to pull that Bill.

And he did pull that Bill. And I've got faith that there's enough of you people that are strong enough to stand up in what's morally right and morally wrong to see that this happens, or we're hypocrites just to have that man, the Speaker, stand here and give a prayer in this House. We're hypocrites if we don't stand up for what's right. Don't call ourselves a Christian nation and then go out and do things that aren't right. The time has come for you people to stand up and be counted.

Now the last thing I've got to say here is this. The last thing I've got to say, and it's important. Mr. Speaker, it took me four hours one night to get this out of the Minister of Finance. And I never want to hear one NDP member ever get up and say again . . . Because I'll go right, straight to your riding and I'll send a copy of this to everybody in your riding if you say one minute you stand up and say, oh, it's the Tories that got us in debt.

Now listen carefully, please, Mr. Speaker, listen. This goes back to *Hansard*, June 1, 1992. Here's my last . . . last in my paragraph. I'm speaking to the minister of Finance. I'm asking you a direct question and you, as a minister of Finance, shouldn't have to ask anybody because if I was the minister of Finance and put a budget together in 1982 and the government falls on it, I would have dreamt those figures for the rest of my life.

But oh no, he couldn't remember them. For four days he couldn't remember. But we promised — we all heckled to him here — if you don't give the member from Arm River this figure, we'll be on this Appropriation Bill for days and days and days. What did he do? He had his whole front row mad at him when he got up and said this: "I can give it to you right now," he says.

All told, when you consider the . . .

And he was shaking when he said this, my friends:

All told, when you consider the sinking funds which are provided, and the member will know what that's all about, the gross debt for the province of Saskatchewan in 1982 was \$3.5 billion.

Now why do we have to listen to this here? And I challenge the press . . . Where are they? Because I carried that in my pocketbook when I would tell people on coffee row about this \$3.5 billion. Oh, Gerry, that can't be true. Somebody's giving you a bunch of malarkey. I've pulled this out of my pocketbook and I've used it so many times it's worn out. But I'll tell you, they believed it when they read it.

So don't one of you talk about this here big Tory debt. Because I go on to say down here, you take the 3.5 billion, and at that time interest was high, and you use a multiplier effect and you've got your \$15 billion in 1993. You've got it right there.

But you guys are trying to ride high, but you're not going to make it. Because I can promise you right now, I may not be here on the first Appropriation Bill because I'm leaving for maybe three weeks to a month. But I'll be here for one of them, Mr. Speaker, I'll be here. And the Minister of Finance is going to say those very same words or that Appropriation Bill will never pass if it takes months — never pass.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that this is going to be a tough session for us, and I mean tough. Because if you thought these 10 people sitting here . . . And I'm going to give some credit also to the member of the Liberal Party. We're all opposition members sitting here. I'll give her some credit. We are going to be 11 people that's going to make you people wish you never were born. You're going to wish you never, ever heard of an NDP ticket. You're going to be so ashamed of yourselves, you'll be crawling out the back doors.

(1530)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to close on a solemn note. I'd like to close on a very sincere message. We'll just talk about something else for one moment. I'm going to be gone for an operation. I have to have a disc . . . I had a disc removed from my back in early December, and they found out there's a piece of disc left in here. I'm leaving tomorrow to Saskatoon, and on Monday they're going to go in and remove that disc. So it could be approximately a month before I get back.

But I do want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the privilege you did and your people — I understand the Leader of the Liberal Party and the House Leader — is to give me the right to speak sitting from my seat and standing up. And I want to thank all the people that were so kind to me in the halls. They said, what's happened, Mr. Muirhead? And I felt sincerity.

I had some of your members that phoned me at home.

And I do believe that. I do believe that when you take all the politics out of life, we're still individuals and we still have a little feeling for one another.

I just say, let's have a good session. God bless you all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding and honourable service of the Lieutenant Governor. The Right Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk symbolizes dignity, achievement, compassion, and commitment. And we've been blessed to have the tireless service of such an accomplished and caring person in this most respected role.

And this is the first time as well, Mr. Speaker, that I'm able to wish you well in this new session. I respect your position and the challenges that you face in ensuring a sense of fairness in this Assembly.

In my responsibilities as a member of the Legislative Assembly for Saskatoon Greystone, the largest urban constituency in Saskatchewan, I have extensive contact with a diverse constituent population. The interests of my constituents range from small business to child care to farming and university research. The people who pay me through their taxes to represent them are people who work as doctors and lawyers, store clerks and carpenters, and some do not work at all — many of those because there's no work available. Some are retired; some are on welfare.

I represent people who speak English and French, Ukrainian and Chinese and Arabic. Almost half of my 12,000-plus constituents voted Liberal, but I represent everyone, regardless of their political affiliation, with the same level of commitment. The economic status, race, religion, or position on an issue does not influence the level of service I attempt to provide, because each of those individuals employs me to do a job, and each of those individuals has expectations of me as an MLA.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what life is all about — expectations. People spend their entire lives trying to meet the expectations which they or others have set for them. Politics is about creating expectations. Good government is about meeting them. The members of the New Democratic Party in this House did an outstanding job of creating expectations during the election campaign of 1991. It is most regrettable that those same members have been so ineffective in meeting those expectations at every turn.

An election is about trust. It is about signing a contract with the electorate — a simple handshake deal. And politicians shake many hands during a campaign. The contracts made are just like any other contract. If I say, you vote for me and I will do the following, and you shake my hand, we have a deal. If politicians appear on television or before live audiences and make promises, then those politicians should respect their commitments as they would any other verbal contract. I believe in it so strongly that I wish there were legislation that would render it illegal to make promises during an election campaign if one cannot or does not keep these promises.

once in office.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government created high expectations. And it is because of their not meeting those expectations that so many people in our province feel betrayed — betrayed by a Conservative administration that misused and abused the hard-earned taxpayers' dollars while in power, and the current administration for misleading the public when they knew the cupboard was bare.

On page 1 of the Speech from the Throne, the Premier and his government talks of urging the people to join in, and I quote, "... a journey to right the wrongs of the past ...". Mr. Speaker, if the NDP had been serious, the first legislation introduced would have included a code of ethics, anti-corruption legislation, fixed election dates and budget dates, and free-standing votes in this legislature. Price tag, zero; cost to the taxpayer, zero; value, a major step to restore faith in our political system.

And what has this NDP government implemented after more than 15 months? Zero. That is not a commitment to political reform, Mr. Speaker; that is a commitment to a calculated political agenda which puts politics and political best interests far ahead of the interests of the people of our province, the taxpayers of this province. This is not asking people to join in a journey, Mr. Speaker. It is taking people for a ride.

In the election of 1991, there were a great many handshakes exchanged, many promises made to people in exchange for their support. Far too many citizens and taxpayers have been left feeling that those handshakes weren't worth much after the NDP government took office. And I regret that I must agree.

And now, 15 months after the election, I'm responding to a third Speech from the Throne and I'm wondering whatever happened to the value of a handshake.

This government talks about investor confidence. The Finance ministers have talked about maintaining the confidence of New York brokers and bond dealers. The Economic Development minister talks about needing the confidence of foreign investors. But who's talking about restoring the confidence of the Saskatchewan people, the people who pick up the tab for all of this talk?

How can this government show such blatant disrespect for the trust and the confidence they sought from people just 15 months ago? People did not expect much from the first NDP Speech from the Throne in November of 1991 — I didn't either — and they did not get much.

People expected far more from the second Speech from the Throne, and there were some very broad statements made. The government made promises which again raised the expectations of the people — statements about improving the safety net program, Mr. Speaker; about reforming government; clearing out a direct path for health care and education; and creating an economic plan and providing jobs.

People became for a brief period of time cautiously optimistic. In fact, I believe that was the term used by the

Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers after the throne speech in April of 1992. People were cautiously optimistic that something would actually change for the better after they ousted the incompetent previous administration.

But that cautious optimism quickly dissipated after the first budget. Confidence surrendered to uncertainty. Optimism was replaced by cynicism. Trust gave way to feelings of betrayal.

Saskatchewan people have become angry and frustrated with the absence of a comprehensive strategy. They are infuriated with the complete inability of this administration to deliver on its promises to meet the expectations it created in people some 15 months ago.

And now, Mr. Speaker, it has been 15 months of having 55 MLAs sit on the government side of this Assembly. Taxpayers have been paying them and all of their advisers and all of their secretaries and consultants and ministers and deputy ministers and economists and analysts and political hacks for 15 solid months.

We've seen the cabinet increase from 12 to 19 just to satisfy political rumblings in the New Democratic Party. We've seen portfolios tossed around like hot potatoes. Energy, agriculture, gaming, and finance — people can't get away quickly enough from the heat this government is taking in every major policy area. Not because they are making tough decisions. The ministers are under fire because they are making thoughtless decisions — thoughtless decisions like initially cancelling FeedGAP (feed grain adjustment program), delaying the signing of the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) deal, and fumbling the ball on agriculture and gaming and health care and taxation.

And what do we have before us now, in the midst of the economic, social, and agriculture crisis facing our province? Well we have yet another throne speech — another throne speech filled with empty rhetoric. We have vague allusions to soon-to-be established committees to examine the viability of future projects.

This is it? This government spent hundreds of millions of dollars on salaries and wages and resources to produce certain results, and nothing recognizable has emerged from any of it. Thousands, thousands are out of work; hundreds of farm families are losing their farms; businesses are closing; "for lease" signs are the fastest selling commodity in commercial real estate, and we get twelve and a half pages of possibilities for action from a government more than a third way through its mandate.

I am quite simply astounded, and very, very disappointed. I truly cannot express how inadequate this document is to address the serious problems facing every citizen in our province of Saskatchewan today. And it is beneath my lowest expectations.

The NDP government spoke of bringing new hope to the less fortunate. Every day, Mr. Speaker, I get calls at my office from the less fortunate in my constituency, and I get calls from the less fortunate in the constituencies of the members opposite who have completely given up on

what they thought was their government.

And believe me, Mr. Speaker, these people do not have any new hope. They have no hope at all. Not only has this government cut basic necessities out from under the people through cuts in health care, increases to every utility and every item taxed under the E&H (education and health) spectrum, they have scared people in the province into program paranoia and deficit depression by preaching doom and gloom everywhere they go.

What is wrong with them? Can they not see the pain and the instability that they are inflicting on people who do not know how they're going to pay the rent and the grocery bill, never mind the provincial deficit and debt? Do the members opposite not spend any of their time taking calls from taxpayers in this province and meeting with the people whom they have further placed in desperate situations?

They are not just constituents who are hurting, not just mine; these are their constituents — their neighbours, the people they shook hands with in the last election and made personal commitments to deliver a strategy which would produce results. So far the results have been very negative.

The throne speech says that:

Of the hundreds of new, expanding and potential business projects in the province (none of which are identified), more than half are outside Regina and Saskatoon.

This is empty, unsubstantiated rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. But this is fact: in one year thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people have lost their jobs in Saskatchewan. Even if what the NDP government says is true about new jobs, we would barely get back to where we were before they took power in November of 1991.

The government proudly boasts of the implementation of the community bond program which was proposed initially not by the Conservatives, as they would have you believe, but by the Saskatchewan Liberal Party in the 1986 election. Unfortunately the taxation policies of the New Democratic government have been so brutal that many bond issues will experience the same difficulty in closing as the city of Saskatoon did recently, because investors have been losing faith in this government's ability to generate economic development and create the necessary wealth to expand the tax base.

The Saskatchewan government has long been in a state of euphoria over the response to the Saskatchewan savings bonds issue which was floated last year at a 7 per cent yield to investors. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that some of the members perk up their ears at this point because obviously they didn't know about this.

The reality surrounding those bonds is that the government offered an interest rate at 7 per cent when the competitive yield of this type of issue was running between 6.5 and 6.75 per cent. That interest rate differential, along with a very expensive, glossy marketing program, cost the people of Saskatchewan not

hundreds of dollars, not thousands of dollars, but millions of dollars.

(1545)

When the bond issue was floated, Mr. Speaker, the government made a decision between politics and good business. Good business dictates that you don't give any better deal than you have to. Politics says, give away whatever you have to in order to improve your image.

Experts agree that the government was at least one-quarter point, possibly a half a point higher in the interest rate offered than was necessary. Therefore in its eagerness to guarantee overwhelming success in the bond issue, success which the NDP tried to pass off as support for government policy, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are now going to be paying out millions of dollars in unnecessary interest. Granted, Saskatchewan investors will be the beneficiaries of some of that interest, but much of it is going to be paid to investors outside of our very province.

There's another aspect to this, Mr. Speaker, which often goes unnoticed. When times are good, Saskatchewan had a good supply of lenders and money markets we could tap into for financing. As things got progressively — I pardon the pun please — worse. The number fell to about 25. Now those 25 major players are watching every single move that this government makes.

Deficit reduction is only one aspect. They review the savings bond issue and they ask, what would be the reasons for setting the yield rate at a quarter to a half per cent higher than necessary? Is this bad management, more politics, or are they desperate to attract capital?

The worst message that we in this province can convey to domestic and international money markets through errors like this is that we are desperate. If money markets and financiers think that the NDP is making silly deals and floating bond issues at inflated interest rates, one of two things will happen. They may refuse to deal with us or they will see us as more desperate than we should be perceived. That could put us in a precarious position for paying more for our credit.

The government's memory is not only distorted on its role in the community bond issue and the Saskatchewan savings bond issue. There are other perspectives which seem a bit skewed as well. Obviously short on future promise, the government even uses the traditional look-ahead format of the throne speech to fondly pat itself on the back for the AECL deal. This was a deal, Mr. Speaker, for which all credit must go to the business community and other supportive organizations who refused to let this government kill it while under pressure to put politics ahead of progress in Saskatchewan yet again.

And the government's obsession with keeping its own party back benches in line sent waves of instability undulating through the research and investment communities while they were watched to see if Saskatchewan's NDP government would ever make up its mind on nuclear research and uranium mining.

They're still watching nervously on the second count.

The height of contradiction appears on page 3 of the speech, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP attempt to convince us that the expensive little booklet entitled *Partnership for Renewal — A Strategy for the Saskatchewan Economy*, actually sets out to, and I quote:

... create a positive environment for economic renewal, to build on existing ... strengths and to seek full employment.

Obviously the authors of those words are not familiar with the onslaught of taxes and increased costs levied by the NDP on businesses and consumers, all of which are guaranteed by even the most amateur economists to have the opposite effect on our economy.

In keeping with the NDP philosophy of quote, government knows best, end of quote, the government has named a Provincial Action Committee on the Economy. If government wanted a true working relationship with business, why not have the chambers of commerce and other recognized institutions of free enterprise elect their own representatives to such a committee? And if government were truly serious about taking instead of giving advice, perhaps it would be wise to give these committees some authority to implement their recommendations as well.

I do commend the government for cleaning up The Economic Development Act. I suggest that there are many others which could be looked at with that objective in mind.

I'm sure that the many communities who depend upon or could benefit from increased tourist activity will be pleased to hear that tourism will be, and I quote, "a key part of Saskatchewan's economic future." Actually it is already a key part of our economic present, and I wonder if the Department of Tourism has been doing ... what they have been doing for the past 15 months, if the government is only now proposing, and I quote again:

... (to) explore options for future partnerships in developing and marketing tourism opportunities.

In case the government has not noticed, there is a sense of crisis, a sense of urgency, a sense of emergency in our province, about jobs and economic development. Since the New Democratic government has deliberately created what I call deficit depression, perhaps the government could deliberately put some of the members opposite from the back benches to work exploring future options, not in the future, but right now. Saskatchewan may be next year country, Mr. Speaker, but this government should not interpret that to mean that we can wait until next year for something positive to begin to happen in our province.

The government acknowledges in the throne speech that we are more dependent on international trade than any other province. So what did they do to exhibit that understanding? Well they closed the trade offices overseas. They didn't get rid of the Conservative patronage appointments with little to offer. And have

these trade offices become effective? No. They closed them. They were so ignorant of international trade protocol that they didn't even know, Mr. Speaker, as people have told me from Hong Kong, that they actually insulted the people and the officials of Hong Kong by doing so in the manner in which they did it.

In the meantime, groundwork previously laid by companies is being threatened because there are no agents of the Saskatchewan government there to open diplomatic doors for entrepreneurs trying to establish working relationships with offshore trading partners. Unless the Minister of Economic Development plans to commute between Europe, the Pacific Rim, South America, and this legislature, I would suggest that this government rethink its decision to leave Saskatchewan's foreign trade in the hands of the federal trade representatives or the minister's travel agent for that matter.

There are a great many jobs to be created through overseas trade, but we must have competent and experienced trade emissaries who can establish and — mark this — maintain continuous rapport with our contacts around the world.

While the government assures us that it will continue to develop a comprehensive energy strategy, I remind the Premier and his cabinet that a great deal of time and scarce taxpayers' money has already been invested to date on reports, commissions, and studies which have so far not translated into any results.

And now to the topic of agriculture, Mr. Speaker. I don't know who organized the priorities in the throne speech, but I would suggest in the future that agriculture come under "a"; not after tourism and foreign trade, not after ...

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

Mr. Cline: — I wonder if I might ask for leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Cline: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, seated in the west gallery are three members of the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) Local 2067 bargaining committee: the chairperson, Gordon Gunoff, and members Gordon Laverdiere and Ken Wawryk. And those gentlemen are putting a lot of time in on behalf of their members at a very challenging time and I'm sure that all members of the legislature would join with me in welcoming them to our Chamber today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

Ms. Haverstock: — The degree of importance being placed on agriculture in Saskatchewan is simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. The Premier of our province should be making a daily call to the Prime Minister of Canada. He should have long ago called a prairie agriculture summit to develop a solution for the problems of our prairie region.

But what has the NDP done? After three speeches from the throne we find the government calling for a, quote, national solution, although no leadership has ever been shown by the Premier or his Agriculture ministers to initiate such a solution.

The government says it will do all within its power to rebuild the province's farm economy. What exactly does that mean? Raising taxes? Dragging their feet on safety net revisions? This government, which has broken every promise it made to farmers since day one, is now insisting that, and I quote: the federal government stand by its promises and fulfil its responsibilities.

And I ask what this government is proposing as a solution if Ottawa were to agree to contribute. Do they have a plan already in place for a new safety net program? Have the producers approved it through a producer-elected committee in keeping with the wishes of the 12,700 farmers gathered at Sask Place? Has the government circulated the many proposals which have been developed by producers to allow farm families to consider the many options and offer their feedback? Does this government even care whether farm families have a say in what program will eventually determine the way they farm their land or if they can continue to farm their land?

Where is the process? Where is the mechanism? Where is the proposal that Saskatchewan is taking to Ottawa, where political parties are gearing up for an election, willing to talk about making a commitment? How does the Minister of Agriculture propose to negotiate with Ottawa when he hasn't got an approved bargaining position from the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan.

The government speaks of the devastating effect of the falling net income on Saskatchewan farms and the further predicted drop in 1993. I wonder if the government has made the connection between falling net income and increases in fuel tax, sales tax on fertilizer, seed, machinery, parts, and family living expenses such as power, heat, telephone, and insurance. Surely the government is aware that net income is calculated after expenses and that its own taxation policies are directly responsible for some of that income shortfall.

I had a wonderful letter the other day from one of my constituents in rural Saskatchewan. And I call them all my constituents, you see, because there's so many people who simply won't talk to the parties they used to support, so they call my office.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, you wouldn't believe the amount . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm so grateful, Mr. Speaker, that they're actually listening when they're trying to act like they weren't. In fact, Mr. Speaker, you wouldn't

believe the amount of contact we have with people who used to support the members across from me and on either side of me. I really am never really alone in here. Everyone in this Assembly is doing a great job of increasing the Liberal support and I'm actually enjoying that.

In any case, I received a letter from a constituent from D'Arcy, Saskatchewan, who had taken the time to explain what many here should be reminded of. So I'm going to take advantage of some of this time I have today to share this with you, Mr. Speaker, and the members of this Assembly.

This young farmer writes:

I am and have been an RM councillor for 11 years and a school board trustee for seven. I'm currently arrangements chairman for Ducks Unlimited, member of Saskatchewan Bison Association, Saskatchewan Game Farmers Association, and numerous other groups. I helped to organize the Rosetown rally.

With my wife and four children, I farm six sections of land, have 50 cows, 20 bison, and 15 elk. We diversified in 1986 into livestock. I am presently negotiating with the Farm Credit Corporation, after receiving foreclosure notices on four sections of land last week. I am 38 years old. Now that I've introduced myself to you (he writes) I'd like to share some thoughts with you.

First, I detest having to seek help from other sources, especially government plans. However, it would seem appropriate at this time in Canadian agriculture to do so as the market-place is not adequate for our needs.

(1600)

He goes on to talk about the world trade situation and how farmers in Canada are quite defenceless, that people must support agriculture during this time. And he continues. And this is what I would like for all of us, Mr. Speaker, to be able to take as a message to all of those in Canada who don't understand the contributions of agriculture to our nation and our province. And I quote him:

We must convince the country that we are really just asking for our own money back. Let me explain. I did some Jethro mathematics the other day to try and get a handle on how much tax my farm produces for all three levels of government each year. I was very surprised at my findings.

First of all, I pay about \$12,000 property tax to my RM, of which \$8,000 goes to education, and another \$1,000 to hospital

I pay sales tax on the majority of items that my farm and family requires to operate. That amount is 8 per cent of \$150,000, or another \$12,000. My farm uses \$25,000 worth of fuel each year, of which 90 cents a gallon is tax. That equals another

\$11,000. My chemical and fertilizer run at about \$30,000 per year, on which a hidden tax is paid. The tax is paid by the company but passed on to me, which is about \$7,500. On an average year I pay about \$3,000 in income tax, although I won't pay anything this year.

I get my GST (goods and services tax) back, but the products I use have hidden GST which is paid by someone else and passed on to me, so I estimated this to be about \$2,000 per year. The total is approximately \$47,500 per year, and this about equals \$13 per acre on my farm.

I also pay \$3,000 for licences; \$500 a year for my radio licences. My GRIP premium was \$14,000, and my crop insurance 3,600 acres . . . and my crop insurance was \$14,000. All of this money too goes to government coffers. Another \$31,000 or \$8.50 per acre.

My farm also generates huge amounts of money for people in Canada. My farm delivered five cars of barley to the Canadian Wheat Board. That's 18,000 bushels. According to the Wheat Board, that would make about 6 million bottles of beer. But if we assume that 90 per cent of that barley were exported, I would still contribute to the direct production of 600,000 bottles of beer on the domestic markets.

Do governments tax beer? You bet. A conservative estimate would put \$500,000 directly into government coffers. Now that's a small "c" conservative so we can trust the figures.

To produce this finished product the truckers, the malters, the bottle manufacturers, the cardboard box people, ad agencies, Liquor Board employees, hotel owners, bar maids, bottle collectors, and even the .08 machine technicians all pay income tax that would not have been paid if my farm had not grown wheat to be shipped off to Timbuctoo. What figure should be put on this most impressive list?

By the way, I forgot the taxes paid by the seed developers at the U of S that develop the good malt barley. Also the ag reps, the secretaries, and the brothers-in-law of politicians at the Canadian Grain Commission. Let's not leave out Prairie Malt's owners either. Garth probably pays a little income tax.

Anyway, my point is clear. My farm contributes huge amounts of cash to my country's lawmakers. All this I will put at \$100,000, which is conservative. That gives a total of \$188 per acre in taxes paid, generated one way or the other. I want at least \$30 an acre back, thank you very much.

I think this course of action would be much more successful and more gratifying than simply asking for money. I know it will take some time for my thoughts and proposals to take effect. It took me three days to write this letter, Lynda.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Agriculture: when do we begin to involve farmers like this in developing our approach to negotiations? The commitment "to engage farmers and their organizations in a positive dialogue leading to the adoption of a new agriculture strategy" is very little and very late.

Priorizing producer input into the agriculture crisis should have been the first thing on the table after political reform in 1991. And this government should be ashamed and it should be embarrassed by the colossal abandonment of their primary obligation. It is simply not good enough to adopt a government-knows-best attitude once again and appoint a new Farm Support Review Committee. Farmers are getting ready to seed. And the government is now sending out another travelling road show to gather input and scurry back behind closed doors to emerge with another made-in-government proposal.

Has this government not learned anything from last year's bell-ringing experience? If the government wants cooperation, they must let members from all parties be involved. And I urge the government to set up an all-party committee to work with — and I quote — a producer-elected committee to allow them to jointly recommend directives to the Minister of Agriculture. Whatever the committee decides will still have to pass in this Assembly, but at least we will emerge with an agriculture plan that is supported by the majority of farmers, not the majority of NDP MLAs.

The government seems to want to do the right thing, but their actions continually contradict their words. They say that they want to create jobs, and yet they began by cancelling different things that would lose jobs. The government claims that it wants to develop an efficient, effective, and affordable transportation system. However the government . . . the NDP are not willing to take an open-minded, unprejudiced look at the existing transportation system that goes beyond paying the producer or paying the railway.

One of the most serious concerns arises from the NDP approach to long-term strategic research versus short-term demonstration projects. Without the money which was pirated from the Agriculture Development Fund to reinstate FeedGAP, we do not have the funds to sustain long-term strategic research in Saskatchewan.

I can't believe that the positions that are now gone from our own College of Agriculture happen to be those in the long-term research of sustainable agriculture. It's absolutely astonishing.

I checked the *Partnership for Renewal* paper to see what role agricultural research and agriculture in general will play in economic renewal. But agriculture didn't even merit its own paragraph. The only action taken by this government so far with respect to research has been to butcher the Ag Development Fund and to disband the department of science and technology. Hardly signals that we're getting ready for the 21st century or that we're preparing to become centres of excellence in research and development where agriculture is concerned.

If the province of Saskatchewan can show a true commitment to developing a solid agriculture strategy which has the support and commitment of all of the majority of the players, then we can take a leadership role in developing a prairie agriculture strategy to take to Ottawa and use the three prairie provinces — the producers, the political parties from across these Prairies — so that our demands can be heard. With all-party input and producer approval we will have an agriculture plan which can withstand the test of federal and provincial elections because long-term agriculture policy will then react to changes in the market-place, not in the polling booths.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the throne speech really is very short on substance. And I am quite shocked that a government which is preparing to deliver what appears to be a very bitter-pill budget would not do a better job of offering more concrete plans in the Speech from the Throne. The degree of vagueness is most disturbing.

And we pick this up again in the section on health care. People were initially anxious to hear about the wellness model. And in spite of their understandable apprehension, I think they did have a very open mind about the concept at the outset. Unfortunately the government's blurred vision of health care has caused considerable upset in our province. Health boards are making decisions in a vacuum-like environment. And this has gone on for 15 months — not sure what level of funding to expect, not sure who will be on the board, not sure whether to amalgamate or hold off in case the government changes its plans. And 15 months and 3 days after taking office, after hundreds and hundreds of hours of meetings by concerned citizens, the minister holds a news conference to give another tidbit to the public.

This is a very risky and most unfair way to treat the people — to treat the people who work so hard to deliver efficient medical care in Saskatchewan and particularly in rural areas where it's very challenging. I fail to see how a vision for health care, wellness, and health reform is such a secret thing, that the people to whom this system belongs will be unable to see more than an ad campaign until it is finished. It reminds me too much of the fable of "The Emperor's New Clothes".

This is our health care system, Mr. Speaker. People deserve to see the stages, understand what is expected of them, participate in the process, where the government can say: this is where we're going; this is stage one; this is stage two; this is stage three; and this is where we are, in meticulous detail, before any changes are made.

People want to be participants in the process and they will know how to adjust to change, the fear of the unknown, if in fact they know that the government is taking them someplace where they actually know they're going. We do not evolve through these stages, Mr. Speaker. They must be carefully planned and implemented with full knowledge and support of the participants.

I was pleased to read the approach to education and find that the government is working to keep the focus of the education system on the child. I made it clear in my

speech to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation last week that the focus must remain fixed on the child if we are to produce well-balanced adults for the future. Unfortunately there seems to be some difficulty with communications from the provincial level to the local level.

It's fine to talk about keeping the focus on the child, but in reality good schools in our province are closing and this is not related at all to the numbers of children in the school. Decisions made by the provincial government are passed down to the local boards and funding cuts are shifting the focus from the child to the bottom line, when the child should be the bottom line and the top priority item of education.

And, Mr. Speaker, I get a tremendous number of calls from university students trying to struggle through school on student loans. There may have been a time when students could survive on the provisions of student loans, but the fact is that there just isn't enough money available to students through loans, forgivable grants, research fellowships, and employment income during the summer. The cost of rent, telephone, utilities, and car insurance is up for students just as it is for every one of us. The additional sales tax affects students just like everyone else. Tuition costs have gone up, the price of books has risen, and all taxes are higher than ever before.

There are fewer summer employment opportunities, and prospects for graduates are ever diminishing. And as I commented yesterday in question period, Mr. Speaker, 20 per cent of our young people between the ages of 20 and 24 are without work. In eight weeks university students are going to be leaving their classes and searching for employment.

What do we see in this throne speech to address those problems, serious problems which will determine whether our young people stay here or have to leave our province? The speech does contain very, very few hopeful words for the young people of our province.

It does not contain any glimmer of encouragement for the parents with whom I met from Grosvenor Park School, who watch in frustration and helplessness as a good school, a model program, and a viable student base, is likely to be moved from their neighbourhood to prop up a sagging student body many blocks away.

I commend the initiative of the minister on the action plan for children, but this really appears to be a re-launching or a delayed launching of a program that was promised in the last session. Children in this province also need an advocate, a child's ombudsman, and the implementation of that action is overdue.

The NDP government has long been viewed as the government of those who have been taught to rely on government to look after them. Unfortunately those people who trusted their government — this government — to take care of them, there are some very painful realities that have become evident. I talk to a great number of these people every day. The workers in the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) who are supposed to administer the services to people on

social assistance are walking the picket lines. People in need of assistance are talking to answering machines instead of real people. And they are talking to me. There is confusion in the system and nobody seems to be accountable.

(1615)

The cost of living is going up and benefits are not. Unemployment has reached an unprecedented level and thousands are turning to social assistance when unemployment insurance and workers' compensation runs out. Yet nothing is happening to create jobs and generate wealth to support this tremendous pressure on our social safety nets. It is becoming painfully obvious that the NDP simply cannot generate the economic activity to get people working again.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government promised jobs in the environment sector. Well people are desperately waiting for some of the many hundreds of jobs relating to the environment that they promised during their campaign and their economic white paper.

They propose to follow up the environmental round table of 1992 with what? Well, Mr. Speaker, a new round table on sustainable development. Saskatchewan taxpayers have now financed a round table on conservation strategy for sustainable development in Saskatchewan; hearings on the environmental charter of rights and responsibilities Act, which is scaring rural business and farmers half to death; and numerous studies on energy and the environment of uranium mining; and as we say from the musical "The King and I," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

But we are still waiting 15 months later for the jobs. Is it completely unreasonable to expect that after nine and a half years in opposition and 15 months in government that this government could have flushed out one job creation program?

During the constitutional talks, the Premier and the Minister of Justice seemed willing to do whatever it took at the bargaining table to fight for aboriginal self-government and empowerment. Well it's been 15 months since they were elected and we've not seen any significant moves towards empowering aboriginal peoples to develop a long-term economic plan which will ultimately ease the pressure on the rest of society.

Either this government acknowledges the need for aboriginal peoples to control their own affairs or it doesn't. The throne speech says one thing, but the government's recent actions with respect to gaming are totally contradictory. I view the lack of government leadership in this area as extremely irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. Which is it going to be? — the words out of the left sides of their mouths last September in the constitutional debates, or the words of the right sides of their mouths that they speak this week?

I can assure the government that paying lip-service to the needs of aboriginal people will not generate any positive effect for Saskatchewan. If this government is committed to real change in living conditions for first nations people,

then one paragraph of political rhetoric won't get the job done.

By this point this government should have produced a concrete plan of action that incorporates job creation, housing, improved services in education for aboriginal peoples. And to date we've seen nothing. For most of these individuals, Saskatchewan is not next year country, it is never-never land.

Mr. Speaker, this government talks of hope and opportunity. They talk of honesty and openness, but their actions speak far louder than their words. People feel betrayed; they feel shut out. Local governments, farmers, educators, health care workers, ordinary taxpayers, government employees see evidence every day that this government is not listening to their problems, not really inviting them to be part of the solutions.

This is a government that is saying to people, we know best. Just send in your money and we'll do the rest. The people have sent their money, Mr. Speaker. Taxpayers are sending part of their incomes as a deficit tax which the government is in no way obligated to apply to the deficit. Taxpayers are paying more at the gas pumps to drive on deteriorating highways.

Farmers are paying more for fuel and are still getting less for their crops. Everyone is paying more for power, for energy, for telephones, for car insurance. Businesses are paying higher wages and are facing increased costs for workers' compensation premiums. Their customers have less disposable income due to excessive taxation.

Every single thing we buy in Saskatchewan costs more than if we bought it somewhere else. And people are asking themselves, what are the advantages of living here? And that is a very sad day when Saskatchewan people wonder why they live in their own province.

I had a call the other day from a man in Saskatoon who typifies the way people are feeling. And he said, Lynda, I want you to stand up in the legislature and give this message to the Premier and everyone else in there. I apologize, Mr. Speaker, for using my name.

So, Mr. Speaker, through you, I will comply with the wishes of the constituent of the MLA for Saskatoon Riversdale. Mr. Lindsay Popoff of Avenue M in Saskatoon wants the Premier to know that he considers himself a poor man, but he has always managed to support his family on one income. He has always voted for the New Democratic Party, but he says he will never do so again.

He says that his party has betrayed him. He believed the Premier when he promised that he would not raise taxes. And he has raised every tax there is. Mr. Popoff doesn't care about the government's excuses. He believes the NDP must be responsible for what they told people. He feels hopeless because he's the only one who works in his family and his pay cheque simply does not cover the bills.

None of this is his fault, Mr. Speaker. This government has raised his power, gas, telephone, his insurance, his income tax, the cost of his family prescription drugs. It has increased the sales tax on everything he buys. Mr. Popoff

wants his MLA to tell him that if you do nothing else, he wants a straight answer to one question in return for his years and years of support.

And here through you, Mr. Speaker, is the question on the mind of Lindsay Popoff and every other person in Saskatchewan today, and I quote: What am I supposed to do when my pay cheque just won't cover the bills any more because the taxes and increases to my cost of living don't allow me to do so? Tell me, what do I do?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask this government to take a hard look at the budget it is about to bring down, and to show the people of this province that their faith in the government was not 100 per cent misplaced. The citizens of Saskatchewan see the NDP in a round bin trying to find solutions in a corner. If they really care about finding solutions, they must listen to the people, not simply go through the charade of consultation.

If they really want the Liberal Party's ideas on job creation and economic development, then provide an opportunity for me in this Assembly every week to share them and to introduce fair taxation policies that would allow them to come to fruition.

On behalf of Lindsay Popoff and everyone else in Saskatchewan who is suffering from the irresponsibility of the Conservatives and the lack of concrete wealth creation ideas from this NDP government, I pray that they will abandon their bent for tax increases, put the focus on job creation and economic growth in order to restore the hope in the hearts of our Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to join in to this throne speech debate. Due to the lateness of the day, and I know there's other speakers wanting to speak yet today, I'll make my comments brief.

Hearing speeches from the members opposite over the last few days, I felt that it was important that I respond to some of the things that they have been saying. I know that members view the throne speech in many different ways. And later on if I have some time I'll touch on a few of the aspects of the throne speech that are very important to myself.

But first I'd like to respond to some remarks made yesterday by the member from Wilkie. And as I watched the member and listened to the member from Wilkie speak on the throne speech, I guess what this member saw important was to address the deficit and the debt.

And what came to mind as I was listening to him was it reminded me so much of the old Social Credit fellow that used to be on every Sunday morning. And he stood there with charts and he was able actually to balance the books of Canada just within an hour or so if you followed his mathematical wizardry. And I think the member from Wilkie was trying to emulate this fellow in justifying his arguments.

And back then I remember my parents used to get up and

turn the TV off, and I'm sure that happened again yesterday with most of the TVs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — Don't confuse us with facts.

Mr. McPherson: — No, I won't confuse you with facts.

So I'll take a few minutes to help the member from Wilkie and also the member from Arm River who spoke just a while ago, and spoke about the debt situation of the province.

And of course he made mention that there was a great deal of debt when they took over the province, and he carried on and on to say that should this ever be challenged he would then take it upon himself to use his communication allowances to send out replies into every constituency and make his case heard.

Well I can't wait to see what he's going to send out. Because what I have here . . . I took the liberty this morning to go up to the library and look for myself just what the situation of the province was back in July 1982.

And just so that the members opposite that I'm referring to can follow along, I have copies if the page would care to take these. I have copies so that the members can follow along. And I've taken the liberty to highlight a few of the sections so that they could always refer back to these sections maybe when they're giving speeches, you know, on the budget and such.

But we'll just touch on a few of these. Right off the bat, economic and financial position, July 1982. This document was tabled by then minister of Finance, Bob Andrew. And I'm sure that back then those two members were on the government side. They were members of the government of the day and they supported this, and there's no doubt they would have only voted for this stuff to go forward had it been correct.

So I just want to comment just a few lines out of here that I've highlighted for the members opposite and myself: Revenues for the Consolidated Fund were also higher than expected, making possible a surplus of eight million bucks.

It goes on to talk about some surpluses that the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Haven't seen one since.

Mr. McPherson: — Haven't seen one since. Heritage Fund revenues increased by four and a half per cent in 1981-82 to \$832.9 million.

But here's the one I find most interesting, because the members opposite keep referring to this supposed debt that was there. On a combined basis the Consolidated and Heritage funds showed budgetary revenues of 2.66 . . . 3.8 million — billion is what it should be — expenditures, and two and a half billion, with a combined surplus of \$139 million.

Now this is signed by then minister of Finance Bob

Andrew, tabled in this House, supported by those members who keep referring to this huge debt that was on the books.

An Hon. Member: — How much surplus?

Mr. McPherson: — A hundred and thirty-nine million dollar surplus.

Just to read on, a few columns here that I highlighted: As I announced in June, more recent estimates indicate that the budget being passed and implemented, the province would have experienced a combined budgetary deficit of approximately 200 million. This turn-around is largely the result of oil and potash revenues being \$250 million lower than estimated and in Consolidated Fund expenditures being 100 million higher than estimated.

I guess what they're getting at is that sure, there's going to be some debt; they're going to run a deficit the first time out of the chute. But it doesn't say there that it was because of the land bank, as the member from Wilkie and Arm River refer to. And it doesn't say it was as a result of debt that the government of . . . the previous government before pre-1982 had left them with. They didn't say anything about the debt back then when they had access to the books.

(1630)

Let me read on just a moment: a deficit situation for the current fiscal year is therefore unavoidable. However, the government intends to move a balanced budget over the term of its office

Well we waited. Which government were you referring to? Because you didn't deliver it. And I hope the member from Wilkie will keep that document just so he can refer to it while he's making statements in the House, as he did yesterday.

I picked up a copy of yesterday's *Hansard, Debates and Proceedings*, and I was looking through trying to figure out in my own mind what point he was making, where he was going, because I don't think anyone was really aware of that. There are so many figures and facts. I just hope that he saved the charts, as the old Social Credit fellow used to do, so that maybe we could revisit this at some point and get a clearer understanding of where he was going. And maybe this sums it up though, from his own words, after all the facts and figures have been used. It says:

Wonderful, wonderful. Whoopsy do and how do you do.
Well, golly gee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Well, whoopsy do all right. And that takes care of that.

Mr. Speaker, on a more serious note, I would like to make a few brief comments on the throne speech, the theme of the throne speech — the goals of this administration.

One being restore accountability, fiscal accountability to

the province. That's what the people of this province wanted. That question was put to them in the fall of '91. They rejected what the Conservatives had done in the past 10 years. They chose the NDP to correct it. They chose our government to correct it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — And we will. This spring is going to be another budget come down. And it's not going to be an easy budget, I suspect. But we're asking that the people of the province share in the pain and the responsibility to turn around the situation that the former financial wizards left us in.

Another highlight of the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, was to restore faith and respect of the institution and those who serve it. And this is quite important as you can tell by travelling around in our constituencies, the feeling that people have towards politicians today because of what happened in 10 years of Conservative administration.

I'm proud when I look at Bill No. 1 which was tabled yesterday, I believe. It was tabled yesterday in the House. 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.

I just want to highlight a few of these. And I guess it's because the people of Saskatchewan saw a need. They saw a need that this type of government should come forward and bring forward these sort of Acts and clean up and restore that faith that the people once had in store for the members who served this province.

Under the Act, all members of the Legislative Assembly will be required to disclose all their personal and business interests and the personal and business interests of their spouse and dependent children for preparation of a disclosure statement that will be available for public inspection — and I'm told this goes far and beyond what other provincial legislatures and governing bodies of this country have brought forward themselves; required to immediately declare a conflict of interest when an issue or subject arises in the Legislative Assembly or cabinet or a committee or of either, and absent themselves prior to discussion of the issue and any decision taken regarding the issue.

And there's a whole host of measures being taken under this Act and much needed, of course. And I commend the Minister of Justice for bringing forward this Bill yesterday.

One other point I'd like to touch on in regards to restoring faith. It's to do with the news release that showed up in the paper just recently: MLAs welcome to the real world. And I was reading this the other day. It says that changes will not surprise anyone who is used to expense accounts. In fact the only surprise will be that MLAs have until now been operating without the basic minimum standards of accountability.

The changes introduced last week include, and just a few of these points: expense receipts have to list specifically

what goods or services were bought; MLAs can't operate their constituency offices through management firms — it used to be that MLAs could submit one general invoice up to 40,000 without giving receipts for items like rent and furniture. MLAs can't hire members of their immediate families for constituency work or can't run their constituency office out of their homes. They must show receipts for all their telephone expenses.

Well I like to respond to the constituents I represent. All the things that are being listed here are things that I've done since day one of becoming a member of this legislature. I don't have any reimbursements that the legislature didn't have a detailed bill of what they were all about and why they were being brought forward.

Another focus of the throne speech is helping those in need. And once again, as in last year's throne speech dealing with hungry children, the unemployed, it deals with bringing people together. And we have a few, just to name a few of the consultation documents: *Partnership for Renewal — A Strategy for the Saskatchewan Economy*, our health care vision, and many more.

But as I said before, regardless of whether we're talking about reforming health care, bringing back some fiscal accountability, economic renewal, or job creation, the question was put to the people of the province in '91 and they chose this administration to take care of those problems. They knew they hadn't been dealt with fairly before, and they wanted it opened up and dealt with in a respectable manner.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say just a few words on agriculture. And I notice in the throne speech . . . (inaudible) . . . I'm going to pull out a few lines.

Provincial net farm income in 1993 is projected to sink to \$241 million, the lowest level since 1970. My government stands firmly with the farmers in their demand that the federal government fulfil its promise to deliver a third line of defence.

That is a good statement. Because what we're looking at is commitment to agriculture. We had a Prime Minister who, along with the former premier of the province, boasted all the time about the commitments they were making to agriculture.

The Prime Minister is on record as standing behind farmers. For a few years he was in all the newspapers, being quoted all the time that he would go to the wall for the farmers. Well where is he today? We know that when we were joining up in 1991 GRIP that spring, the farmers knew they were being cajoled into joining. There weren't people joining up to that program.

So what was being happened was reduced premium costs. The federal government picked up a good share of the producer's premium and the province's premium. When that wasn't enough, they started referring to future program payments, third line of defence payments. If you don't join, you're not going to be collecting. But there was reference made to that. There will be third line of defence monies coming out.

And there's members opposite, like the member from Morse and the member from Wilkie, who were around campaigning at that time and kept referring to those dollars that were coming out. In fact, they're referring often to the dollars that were coming out in western grain stabilization, probably knowing full well at the time that those dollars weren't coming out.

The other day the member from Humboldt brought forward a motion dealing with asking the federal government to reverse its decision on increasing grain transportation costs for Saskatchewan farmers by \$80 million in the Bill — I believe it's in second reading in the House of Commons right now — and also dealing with the third line of defence \$500 million-minimum question.

Well that was the first motion brought forward in this session. It was brought forward by the member from Humboldt, seconded by myself. It's very similar to a motion that I brought forward myself in the last session. The member from Humboldt and myself spoke at length on this motion — the need — and in our speeches we asked for cooperation from the opposition and we offered to set politics aside, get the help for the farmers. There's spring seeding coming up; there is very little money out there. And we're asking that you work with us.

But what happened was that the opposition decided that instead they would use stalling tactics. First motion of this session dealing with such an important issue — and they had agreed to bring the motion forward, to let us bring the motion forward — but they used stalling tactics so it would never come to a vote. That's not responsible. That's not what we're asking for when we're saying we want to work in cooperation to help get over some of these problems.

Mr. Speaker, somewhat dealing with that motion but also it was dealt with in the throne speech:

Saskatchewan's farm income is under . . . attack by the federal government's recent proposals to change the current method of paying grain transportation assistance and to speed up rail line abandonment. Changes must indeed be made to develop a transportation system which is effective, efficient and affordable. But my government firmly believes that this can be done while maintaining the current method of paying the Crow benefit.

Well we wanted that dealt with the other day but the members opposite chose not to bring that to a vote. Through stalling tactics once again they wasted away the day so that they wouldn't have to put themselves on record as to where they stand in case it was contrary to one of the leadership contenders, to one of the leadership contenders of the federal government, of the federal Conservative Party.

Now of course, looking at the newspaper that came out yesterday, *Leader-Post*, Crow may be used as a safety net. The Crow benefit they're referring to. Let me just quote from here a moment:

Agriculture Minister Charlie Mayer is considering a plan to pay farmers the Crow benefit through a farm support program . . .

Under the new proposal, the government would put the subsidy money into a "NISA-like account."

Well is that what . . . when all those meetings were being held last year, and I think it was Peat Marwick that the federal government had going around the province holding meetings asking farmers what their views were on how the Crow benefit payments should be handled, I didn't remember hearing anyone say that it was a NISA-like account would sure do the job.

Farm subsidies would be paid out of such a new account by two "triggers," said Mayer, one set off by rising transportation costs, (oh we'll get back to that one) and the other by falling net income.

To me that sounds like dilution of the payment all together. You know it's . . . regardless of the dilution when you're bringing in those that are in the beef industry and such. But here we're tying it to net incomes.

Since the money would be paid to these accounts rather than the railways, the railway companies would immediately raise their rates . . .

You members opposite are going to have to soon make a decision of who you're representing — federal Conservative leadership contenders or the farmers. You're from rural areas. You know the problem that is going to arise here, so where do you stand?

I notice the member from Maple Creek is doing a lot of chirping. But why doesn't he go out to his constituency and tell them where he stands? If he wants this thing diluted, why doesn't he go and tell them? Because I know from attending meetings out in his area . . .

(1645)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — I know from attending meetings out in his area, that's not what the farmers were saying. In fact if you went to the meeting in Medicine Hat, they even rejected any change to the method of payment; not just in our own province which was overwhelming support for status quo.

I don't see . . . I can't agree with you that somehow when we raise the rates, transportation rates, that we're going to help farmers. You know, you raise the rates so the triggers will work and then get a pay-out, it doesn't matter because the money will have gone to the transportation companies.

Since those proposals were put to a federal-provincial Agriculture ministers meeting last fall, Mayer admitted they have met with not a lot of enthusiasm. And that's an understatement, Mayer says. The Saskatchewan government, our government, because the members opposite have yet to come onside to defend the people, to defend their constituents who were quite clear last fall,

our government rejected Mayer's idea outright, but the members opposite are yet to be heard on the issue.

Mayer admitted if he plans to move on either issue he will have to do so quickly to get legislation passed before an election.

An Hon. Member: — He won't be able to do it after the election, I'll tell you that.

Mr. McPherson: — Well isn't that the truth. They've only got one chance at this one.

So what he's saying here, what he's saying here is that they're going to ram it through. And there's no doubt that the members opposite could be tabling letters of how they're lobbying their counterparts on Ottawa to stop such ram-through legislation. Surely you've taken a position on it as a caucus or members. You are going to support your constituents, I hope.

And the next article from that same page is: "Farm groups oppose the latest "NISA" idea". And I know, from looking at many of the resolutions brought forward by SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and NFU (National Farmers Union) and the Wheat Pool, they're all firmly onside of this issue. I think you guys are left out there pretty much on your own.

But something that you must keep in mind, like this . . . There's two leadership races that you have on the go here. One federal . . . and I understand why you want to stay out of this debate so that you don't maybe push forward the wrong federal leadership contender, but your own leadership.

I mean, Harold, you're . . . or the member from Morse. I apologize now, Mr. Speaker. The member from Morse has a lot of . . . the member from Morse no doubt has his eye on the leadership. And I ask that member: don't you think it's about time you're going to take a position on this?

Now the member from Rosthern, have you talked this over with the member from Morse to see if you're both on the same side of the issue? Or maybe you'll run on it. I don't know. If you know the member from Morse is opposing it, maybe you'll take a crack at it here.

Leroy Larson, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's second vice-president, said the new federal proposal looks expensive and complex.

That last line usually draws your guys' attention. But in this case it's negative.

If it is changed, farmers would have to pay that extra cost and that would be disastrous . . .

The article is quoted.

Because of that there would be a jump in the amount of money going to Alberta with its larger livestock industry and a drop in the amount going to the farmers in Saskatchewan, he said.

Well I'm going to have to ask the member from Maple Creek because he's right over there along the border, Alberta border: is this what you're after? Is this what you're telling your constituents? You know, when you go into Alberta to visit, it's nice to see a lot more enhanced red meat industry over there, not here. You're soon going to have to make a statement on that one, I'm afraid.

And in another news article, this one is in *The Western Producer*, September 19 of '91: Liberal leader says election is about more than agriculture. But what does the Liberal leader say about it? Grain handling and transportation: the Crow benefit should be paid directly to farmers rather than to the railways. The Liberals generally favour less regulation in the industry.

Now this statement goes against those farmers that are writing letters from all our constituents to the private member from Greystone. But I don't know if this is the position that the federal Liberal Party is going to take, but it's not one that is to the benefit of Saskatchewan farmers.

And I'm just back to the theme of the motion of the other day. Why not work in cooperation to help the people we represent? Why then to help our federal parties? It just makes common sense.

The federal government have been doing a great deal of offloading. In the last session the members opposite would not support us in opposing that federal offloading. This time I hope they will listen and support.

Other provinces are opposed to that offloading. They're opposed to the changes in the method of payment. And yet our own members opposite aren't supporting their farmers.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, my government strongly believes that we must build on the success of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — And not undermine its mandate. Well the Canadian Wheat Board has been under attack for some time from the Tories, especially federal Tories, but not opposed by the provincial members opposite of their same . . . And I look . . . the private member from the constituency of Greystone, her comments on the Canadian Wheat Board. And I quote: Haverstock has at times been critical of the degree of control exercised by the Wheat Board over the grain marketing system. She says Saskatchewan must be more self-reliant and farmers should be more directly involved in marketing their own crops.

That isn't what I hear the farmers saying. It must be different farmers writing to members opposite than what deal with myself on a daily basis because they're not saying that.

An Hon. Member: — What did they pass in Saskatoon? What did they pass in Saskatoon rally?

Mr. McPherson: — Exactly, 12,700 members that were

referred to earlier stood up, there was a standing ovation when it said we must support the Canadian Wheat Board and single-desk marketing. That's what they were saying.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — I didn't hear anyone stand up and say we should get out of supporting Canadian Wheat Board and its policy of single-desk selling. But where does the member from Maple Creek stand on that issue? He must be anxious to get into this debate. He's chirping but he doesn't chirp it to his constituents. But soon you're going to have to take a position on where you stand.

What the farmers are saying is that they want to retain barley under the control of the Canadian Wheat Board. What I hear them say is that they want oats reinstated under the control of the Wheat Board.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Yet I don't hear what the member from Morse said. Not a word. And he's from the same area of the province that I am from. The railroads down there are so important and we fear what's going to happen through the policies of deregulation and changing the method of payment. The writing's on the wall, and he knows that by having travelled into the northern states many times. Take a trip down to North Dakota and have a look and see what you guys are wanting to do up here. You got elevators you could throw a cat through. They're not supporting that system.

You've got closed rail lines. And if you think the short-line railroads are going to handle it, well we also have communication recently with people from Southern Rails Cooperative, saying don't let it go, because it can't be handled by short-line railroads.

You've got to take a stand on it and you've got to decide . . . the member from Morse has got to decide whether he's supporting his constituents, the people that need this support especially today when they're in such a financial crush and the financial burden that's upon them and the stress out there. And you want to add to it. You want to add to it. You want to have southern Saskatchewan looking like North Dakota, northern North Dakota. Well I oppose that.

Perhaps when the member from Arm River does this supposed mail-out that he's starting to do, you just staple on a little position statement from yourself and . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Maybe the member from Rosthern could staple on his position too just in case there's some election . . . (inaudible) . . . between you when you're running for the leadership. You might as well get at her. I do ask though, I do ask that you support us. The fight will soon be in front of us, both the Canadian Wheat Board, but on the method of payment. And I think as members of the Saskatchewan legislature, I think we've got to stand together and work in cooperation to do what's right for the industry, support our constituents, and leave the politics out of it — just for a while.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll adjourn debate for the day.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 57 of *Hansard* No. 4A Tuesday, March 2, 1993, 2 p.m., right-hand column last paragraph, “and discussed” should read “in disgust”.

We apologize for this error.

[NOTE: The online version has been corrected.]