

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs

Deputy Clerk: — Ms. Lorje, chair of the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs, presents the first report of the committee which is hereby tabled and filed as sessional paper no. 53.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you. As members of this Assembly are aware, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs was established on May 21, 1992 as a standing committee of this legislature to deal with constitutional process as is detailed in the terms of reference in the attached report.

The committee was established in the context of various federal and provincial and other bodies negotiating for constitutional renewal. The committee met eight times before the constitutional referendum, and we opted to suspend public hearings in view of the federal government's decision to conduct a national referendum.

We decided that we would continue an informal monitoring process during the referendum. On October 26, 1992, 55.2 per cent of the Saskatchewan electorate who cast ballots for the referendum rejected the proposals for constitutional renewal.

As a result of that referendum vote, the Government of Saskatchewan, and indeed other governments, have said that they do not wish to pursue the issue of constitutional renewal at this time. Consequently we feel there is currently no productive role for the committee to play.

When constitutional issues though once again are a priority with the various governments in this country, this committee as a standing committee will be an important vehicle for providing advice to governments and to the Legislative Assembly, for transmitting information to the public and for engaging in consultation on constitutional matters.

Based on the results of the referendum, the committee has decided that further meetings will be suspended at the call of the chair.

At this time I would like to thank the first chair of the Constitutional Committee, the member for Cumberland, the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, and the Premier of the province for the advice and input that they gave to the committee. I would also like to thank the various staff and contract employees, and in particular the Legislative Library for the services that they provided.

Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs be concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Could I ask the member from Saskatoon Wildwood who your seconder is.

Ms. Lorje: — The member from Kinistino.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I couldn't suggest that a member of the opposition second that, if it were agreeable to the member who moved the motion.

Ms. Lorje: — My problem, Mr. Speaker, was I couldn't remember the name of his constituency and I know I'm not supposed to say . . . utter his name in this august chambers. I believe the seconder is the member from Moosomin.

The Speaker: — Is this agreed to by the member from Moosomin? All right. Then it's moved by the member from Saskatoon Wildwood, seconded by the member from Moosomin:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Special Committee on Regulations

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Toth, chair of the Special Committee on Regulations, presents the first report of the committee, which is hereby tabled and filed as sessional paper no. 54.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege as chairman of the Special Committee on Regulations to present a report to the House.

As you will see, Mr. Speaker, from the report, your committee has diligently reviewed a number of regulations and by-laws, some dating back as far as 1984. However one must be fair in acknowledging that the process of review requires constant monitoring of files to see if committee recommendations have been adhered to or not; and if not, why not.

I would like to take a moment to thank Mr. Robert Vaive for his able assistance in organizing our meetings and having correspondence available. Also a special thanks to Mr. Bob Cosman for acting as legal counsel to the committee and for his assistance in providing information on the legality of the regulations and the by-laws. And to all committee members for their diligence and activeness on the committee.

I therefore move, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Regulations be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Regarding the Department of Agriculture's Farm Support Review Committee: (1) whose advice or recommendation did the minister follow in appointing each of the committee members; (2) how much has the department paid to each member for an indemnity, travel, lodging, meals, and communications for their participation on the committee; (3) how much has the department allocated to pay for the public meetings to be held by the committee in Melfort, Wadena, Spiritwood, Biggar, Swift Current, and Grenfell; and (4) how much of that proposed expenditure will be allocated to travel, lodging, meals, and communications for members of the committee?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my privilege to introduce to the Assembly through you, Mr. Floyd Glass, who is sitting in your gallery. If you would rise, Mr. Glass.

He managed Government Airways from 1945 to 1951; created Athabasca Airways in 1954 and it is still operating today. He really is attributed with opening up the North by air travel and has employed hundreds of Saskatchewan citizens over the years.

Please join with me in welcoming Mr. Glass.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, three individuals sitting in the Speaker's gallery from the community of Buffalo Narrows.

They are Ross McLeod who is the town manager of the community; Thomas Chartier and Thorvald "Skipper" Pedersen who are councillors in the community of Buffalo Narrows.

They're down here today to meet with SaskPower and their officials regarding non-utility generation facilities. And I'd like all members to welcome the three individuals from Buffalo Narrows.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also take this opportunity to welcome the gentlemen from Buffalo Narrows and thank Mr. McLeod for driving us around when the Environment Committee visited his community. I'd like to welcome him to the legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add my voice of welcome to Mr. Glass, Floyd Glass from Prince

Albert. As a former employee of Mr. Glass in Buffalo Narrows, I want to wish him all the best down here in the far south of Saskatchewan. I know it's nice to see him looking so hale and hearty and probably at the controls of his airplane. So, Floyd, it's nice to see you again, and thanks for coming down.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, in your east gallery, a constituent, Carmel Smyth, and thank her for bringing with her her guest visiting from Tokyo, Ko-Gee-Ma Ta-cow who is visiting Regina and Saskatchewan to learn more about the province and to learn English. Thank you very much for coming to our legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature a constituent of mine, Mr. Paul Harmon, in your Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker. And Paul is in town for a few days. I ask all members to wish him welcome while he's here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to welcome some guests of the legislature situated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker: Jody and Chris Nebb and her son, Colton; Gail Neisik from Rama; and Donna Sawchuk, who is a respite care-giver. And these folks attended a very important meeting in their lives last night at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure all members would want to join me in welcoming them to the session this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding Cuts to Wascana Rehabilitation Centre

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my first question to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, last night there was a meeting in the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre — a meeting, Madam Minister, that you were invited to attend. But once again you refused; you refused to talk to people, people who are being shut out of your government. Madam Minister, the parents at the meeting said that they have written you letters, that they have made calls to you on the phone, they have phoned your office asking for help. And, Madam Minister, they tell me that you would not even reply.

Why haven't you answered the letters and the phone calls, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Well perhaps the member could clarify for me what meeting he's talking about at Wascana Rehab, and then we could look into it.

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, the very same meeting that those parents wrote you letters to and phone calls were made inviting you to attend that meeting, Madam Minister. Are you not aware of that? Does your department not keep you informed as to what is going on? The meeting was held in the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre last night, Madam Minister. Are you implying now that you know nothing about that?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I wish the member . . . First of all, Mr. Speaker, I get asked to many, many, many meetings, and I have attended many meetings throughout this province and have done a lot of consultation. Now obviously there was a letter sent; obviously there were calls made because the member says so. I am asking him now to give me the information, what the specific meeting was about so that I can deal with it and find out where this fell between the cracks. And I think it's just being very silly of the minister to . . . with his . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I want to warn the Minister of Health that words like silly are simply unacceptable in this House. It's not for her to determine whether the question is silly. The member will ask the question, and it's the minister's duty either to answer it or not to answer the question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the House that it does not matter what the minister thinks; it does not matter what I think. I think what matters is what the parents think. That I think is what is the matter here, Madam Minister. And please don't get on a high horse here to try to snuff it off as not being relevant and as not being important. To the parents this is the important thing in their lives. They were called in to the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, and they were given some information, Madam Minister. The information that they were given is that the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre is going to be facing a 4 per cent reduction in their funding. Can you confirm that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I will have to wait for the budget before I respond to any specific numbers. However, I can indicate that last year we announced, with respect to large urban hospitals, reduction in funding of approximately 3 or 3.5 per cent.

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister . . . thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious now that you are not aware of the pain that that announcement is creating. Now it is coming to fruition and these people are going to be facing the brunt of it, Madam Minister.

This information given yesterday was that these cuts will force their rehabilitation centre, Wascana, to close a wing. Madam Minister, it is because of your choices, because of your offloading, that the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre is being forced, as I speak, to close an entire wing of their facility. Thirty beds, Madam Minister, thirty beds in wing 3-1, in 3-1. An entire wing, Madam Minister, that treats 800 children, 800 handicapped children from across the province, Madam Minister. Sixty per cent of them are outside of Regina.

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

Mr. Neudorf: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. This is what I want to ask Madam Minister. In view of the tragedy that is being perpetrated on the children of this province and their parents, Madam Minister, with this information, what do you say to those parents? What do you say to those children?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, I can't comment on the particular meeting he's talking about because I wasn't there and I don't know what took place and I don't know what was said. So I won't comment on that.

But I will make this comment: there will be budgetary reductions in Health. There is no question about that, and it's a result of their legacy. And the pain that Saskatchewan people are suffering today as a result of the need to control the deficit is as a result of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I want the members please to give the minister a chance to answer the question and not to interrupt.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The pain that Saskatchewan people are feeling, Mr. Speaker, as a result of budgetary reductions is to try and get a handle on the mess that they created. It's a result of their legacy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again we have the situation where the blame throwing starts. I want to remind you, Madam Minister, that on January 31, 1991, in the *Prince Albert Herald* the Premier said he doesn't believe that health care costs are sky-rocketing, the cost of medicare is well within the budget. And yet what we're hearing now is that 4 per cent cuts seem to be the general across the board.

One parent said that you were really more interested in pressing the government for more occupational therapists at Wascana. That's what one parent said. I'll repeat that. That you were interested in pressing the government for more occupational therapists at Wascana. But, Madam Minister, that was when you were in opposition. In fact you talked to her yourself. That when you won the by-election . . . or you won the election, you now form government, what do we find, Madam Minister? A complete flip-flop, a complete turnaround.

How can you possibly justify betraying the parents and the families that you made promises to? How can you justify, Madam Minister, to continue to ignore the needs of the people?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, when we won the election, what did we find? We found a \$15 billion debt. That's what we found, Mr. Speaker. And a deficit that runs us interest at somewhere between 700 to \$750 million a year — half of the Health budget, Mr. Speaker. The deficit, the interest on the deficit that the people of Saskatchewan pay every year, is about half of the health care budget.

The Speaker: — Order. I want to ask the members again, please, not to interrupt.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — If we had that 750 million in interest, Mr. Speaker, we could set up an occupational therapy school in . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I was just on my feet asking members not to interrupt and the member from Souris-Cannington is interrupting again.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you. If we had the 750 million that they drummed up in interest on a public debt, Mr. Speaker, we could afford to do a lot more of the things that we would like to do in this province.

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Wilkie. I've asked the people . . . the opposition not to interrupt; he's interrupting again. I'll ask the member from Wilkie not to interrupt while the minister is answering her question.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is the legacy that the members opposite have left us with have made it very difficult for the government in dealing with the deficit.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we have to make decisions constantly, budgetary decisions that we would rather not make. But we're left with no alternative because of the mess that they left this province in and the 750 million a year we pay in . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the blame thrower is at work. This seems to be the resort that you come to at every time when you do not have a question . . . or an answer to our questions.

Madam Minister, I thought I was being quite reasonable in presenting to you a problem that is experienced in the real world, the real life, the life of these parents and the lives of these children that are now being put in jeopardy. And you have no answer for me, Madam Minister. You have no answer for me because you don't know what is going on. That's the simple truth of it.

You are not aware of the devastation that is being created by your government's actions here. That's the problem, Madam Minister. And I ask you to get up now and tell these people what you can and what you are willing as a government to do to assist them in their problems. Madam Minister, what do you say to these people that are in desperate need of your help?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, as a result of the question from the member I will consult with the department to see what he's referring to in terms of closure of wards. We will look into the situation to make sure that people have adequate health care services, so the matter will be looked into from that point of view.

The fact of the matter is the members opposite should have thought about the consequences of their action when they were in office and they left this province with a \$750 million interest payment every year — half the health care budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, your Premier said in the **Moose Jaw Herald** that the former government caused considerable harm to the health care system by not providing hospitals with adequate funds. That is what we were accused of, Madam Minister, during the period of time when we were increasing this rate on health spending by 4 per cent. Now you are gouging and you are cutting, and you have the audacity, Madam Minister, to get up in this House and say, I will come back with the answer, Mr. Speaker, when I know what I'm doing.

Madam Minister, there are 30 beds being closed, 800 children that need this facility, and you get up in the House and you have the audacity to say, I don't know what's going on; I'll get back to you. Is that what you're asking us to believe, Madam Minister? Or are you pass-bucking now and saying, it's not my fault; it's the board of the Wascana Rehab Centre that made the decision; it's the Regina Health Board that made . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I don't accept the facts that the member opposite presents. I will look into the situation. We'll look into the situation and I will determine what is happening there and we'll make sure that people are properly looked after. But I won't accept your facts.

Now the fact of the matter is, is what we were saying during the election is that the members opposite were wasting their money on things like GigaText for example, blowing money in the wind, creating an enormous problem for the province. And they sit back there, the member from Souris-Cannington I think it is, and he sits there and laughs at what's going on, Mr. Speaker, which is an indication of their attitude about the situation that they've created in this province. They're like little children . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — I guess if we're little children, Madam Minister, I guess we can expect no further sympathy or understanding or compassion from you as the real children of this province can, as is being evident in this question period right now.

So, Madam Minister, am I to understand that you are accusing the former government of wasting taxpayers' money in paying for the Wascana Rehab Centre? Is that what you're saying, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — I want the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, to be aware of the flippant attitude of the Premier who started his cohorts in their clapping.

But I don't take this flippantly, Mr. Premier, I'm telling you. To me this is a serious . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Does the member have a question? We're almost a minute and he hasn't even asked his question yet.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will start again. Mr. Premier, I take this seriously when parents come to me and ask for help, ask for help. And he says we did nothing. I ask, Mr. Speaker, if I could just have their attention, and if the Premier could quit interrupting . . .

Mr. Speaker, I ask the member from Regina, the Minister of Health: you say we wasted our money when we built Wascana Rehab Centre. Is that why you're closing it? Is this your ulterior motive? Is this the end that you are coming to, Madam Minister? What do you see in store for the Wascana Rehab Centre, Madam Minister? What hope can you hold out for the people that depend on that centre?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, for the last nine years the members opposite, who now in their phoney, self-righteous indignation pretend to be concerned about the people, drummed up a debt that as far as I'm concerned is completely reprehensible and, in my opinion, was totally irresponsible — and in the opinion of the Saskatchewan electorate.

They threw money on things like Joytec and GigaText and NewGrade and Supercart, and the list goes on and on . . . Dome Advertising, and the list goes on and on. They created a situation in this province that makes it extremely difficult for any government to be able to manage the deficit and pay down the debt. But this government is attempting to deal with the problem they left in order to preserve our social programs, in order to preserve the programs at Wascana Rehab and other centres for future generations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, for the edification of those people who are watching, could you explain to us how this concept of closing Wascana Rehab Centre fits into your wellness plan. How does this fit into the wellness plan when these children now, they're not going to be accepted by Home Care, the respite care is going to be down the drain. All of these issues that these folks depend on are in jeopardy. How does that fit into your wellness plan? Could you explain that to us?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — This is an example of the member's exaggeration opposite, Mr. Speaker. Wascana Rehab Centre is not being closed. There may be a ward being closed. I have indicated I will check into what's

happening. I'll determine and make sure that the situation is being handled properly and people will have adequate care. We will look into the situation because the care of people is a concern of ours.

In fact, I had a letter sent in to me here in question period where someone is asking to meet with me by March 15. I will undertake to have that meeting by March 15. The members opposite, however, through their scare tactics and their political posturing, are grossly misrepresenting the situation by saying Wascana Rehab is closing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, if you are saying that I am misrepresenting or over-exaggerating, this is the information that has been given to me by the parents who attended that meeting. Why do you think they are coming to the opposition?

Madam Minister, you still have an opportunity to save the situation. You can still show that your government does have some compassion. And you can do that by today committing to supplying the adequate funds so that the Wascana Rehab Centre can continue to present those services for which it was intended, that it can legitimately give those services to the children, to the parents, who are depending upon that.

Will you make that commitment to this House, Madam Minister, then? And then I will be the first one to apologize and say that it was over-exaggerated by me. But will you make that commitment that that wing, that children's wing in Wascana Rehab Centre, will remain open? Would you make that commitment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I will make a commitment to look into the situation and to talk to the Regina Health Board about their plans in this regard and why they are doing this. The Wascana Rehab is under the Regina Health Board, so I will look into it.

Now when the member opposite talks about he would be the first person to apologize, I suggest he should stand in his place and apologize to the people today because of the mess you've left everyone with in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

CP Customer Service Centre

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Minister, in the next few days, Canadian Pacific Railway is expected to announce where it intends to locate its customer service centre. This centre will create up to 300 jobs and a \$10 million payroll. Saskatchewan is competing with other provinces and other communities across the country for this project. I'd like to know what your government has done to make sure that this centre ends up in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the Leader of the Liberal Party back from a

successful nominating convention last night — memorable. And I want to say that the issue she raises is a very important one to the people of Saskatchewan, particularly the cities of Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon who are very interested in seeing that centre come to their city.

We have had numerous meetings with Mr. Ed Dodge, the person responsible for making the decision, both here in Regina as well as in Vancouver. It's my understanding that a decision will be made in the very near future and we're hopeful that it will come to Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. Mr. Minister, if the service centre comes here we get 300 jobs and a \$10 million payroll. If it doesn't, we lose 61 jobs and a \$2 million payroll, as those jobs are going to go to the community that wins this project.

Now I've spoken with a CP (Canadian Pacific) official who states, and I quote him: if Saskatchewan does not adjust its bid it will not be awarded the customer service centre.

Clearly you've put forward a bid that falls short, and well short of the mark. What are you going to do to adjust it even if it is the 11th hour, to ensure that we don't miss this opportunity and ultimately have to lose jobs?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear with the member who raises . . . the independent member who raises the issue of a bidding war that's going on. I want to tell you that you're jeopardizing the deal by talking about bidding, because CP has been very clear with the community of Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw. They do not want to get into a bidding war and they have made that very clear to us. We're not in a bidding war.

We are putting forward a proposal that will meet the needs of our communities, that will meet the needs of Saskatchewan people, that will not be a deal like those struck by the previous government where hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars are used to lure projects to Saskatchewan.

And I want to say to you that putting forward the idea of a bidding war between our cities to compete for a project is the worst form of economic development. It's old-style economic development from Tories and Liberals from previous years, and we're not involved in that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. You've done such a great job — 22,000 jobs have been lost in this province since you took power. You say that the people of Saskatchewan have heard for 15 months from your government that its number one commitment is jobs. Here's an opportunity for your government to attract a business that, unlike Sears, offers full-time employment, well-paying jobs; and you're blowing it.

What kind of a message do your promises of tax increases and your bungling of opportunities send to the 700 or so companies that you said you were stating were going to come and set up in our province?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the member opposite that today's headline on the front page of the *Leader-Post*, it says: "Bank likes Sask.'s economic outlook", and refers to the economy of Saskatchewan expected to bounce back from the almost decade-long slump, this year. And continue to grow in 1994, according to the Royal Bank economic forecast. The bank forecasts 3.7 per cent real growth in Saskatchewan's economy this year and 4.4 growth in 1994.

Those are some of the highest growth rates in Canada. Now you can stand here and be negative, and preach gloom and doom, and try to destroy business deals that are being put together, but I'll tell you that's old-style politics that we saw last night at the Centre of the Arts, and I'll tell you, it won't work in Saskatchewan in this day and age.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development. Your government doesn't have a prayer of enjoying that kind of growth if it quits . . . if it continues to bungle the kind of opportunities like the Canadian railways.

Never are you going to enjoy that kind of growth if you continue to put forth your slate of taxation increases. The locomotive fuel tax will be an important fact in determining if this centre is located here. Manitoba, which has the second-highest fuel tax in Canada next to Saskatchewan, has already offered better concessions than your government in an attempt to get these jobs.

Now are you going to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I want to ask the government members to please not interfere when the member is trying to ask her question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most interesting about old-style politics comments.

Are you going to adjust your bid? Are you going to sit back and add to the already 22,000 people who have lost their jobs in this province? Are you willing to add another 61 to that number, the number that you have added to since you came into power? What are you going to do to ensure that those 61 people keep their jobs; the \$2 million payroll; and that you add another \$8 million to it; and another 240 people?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to straighten out the member on her dishonesty when it comes to dealing with numbers as it deals with unemployment.

When you say there's 22,000 jobs lost in Saskatchewan, you're comparing July with January. You know that. You know you're not being honest with the people of

Saskatchewan when you say that. You know that's old-style politics that misleads the public of Saskatchewan.

We're tired of that. That's why the people have rejected the Liberals for the past 15 years.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Will the government members please let the minister answer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . But the rest of us do have.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the member, if she would care to read the newspapers, the gloom and doom that you preach is not being felt in most parts of Saskatchewan. Your misleading numbers are not accurate. You know that. You were corrected in the press the other day.

In today's *Leader-Post* we have two stories: one, "Housing starts soar in Sask." which talks very positively about housing starts. The other one, "Bank likes Sask.'s economic outlook", which shows by graph how the economy of Saskatchewan has grown from mid-'91 and continues to grow and is predicted to grow even faster.

But I'll tell you, if the the gloom and doom that is being perpetuated by the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan at the present time predominates, we simply will not be able to continue that growth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act now be introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Wascana Centre Act.

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

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

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. Haverstock: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to have a ruling from you on rule 26, regarding when two or more members rise to speak, the Speaker calls upon the member who first rose in his place. There has now been more than one occasion when I have risen in my place prior to other members during question period, and I

would like your ruling on that, please, when you have not recognized me.

Mr. Neudorf: — To the point of order, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — . . . I will hear from the member from Rosthern.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, in support of the difficulty of being a presiding officer in this legislature, I think it is not well spoken of for any member to get up and question the Speaker's right-eyed or left-eyed ability. And you must do what you must do, which is recognize the person that you see first, and I think you're doing that. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I will take the member from Saskatoon Greystone's comments and will prepare a report back to you as soon as possible.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Order, order. Will the members please come to order?

Yesterday the Government House Leader raised a point of order that Bill No. 10, An Act to Protect Municipal Property Taxpayers in the Province of Saskatchewan, proposed by the member for Rosthern, was out of order. It was the minister's impression that because the Bill involved the repeal of a tax, it required a royal recommendation. Not having seen the Bill, I reserved my ruling.

Rule 33 of this Assembly outlines the constitutional requirement that in matters involving proposed charges upon the public revenue or charges upon the people, the Crown initiative must be expressed through a royal recommendation.

Any vote, resolution, address or Bill introduced in the Assembly for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or of any tax or impost to any purpose whatsoever, or to impose any new or additional charge upon the public revenue or upon the people, or to release or compound any sum of money due to the Crown, or to grant any property of the Crown, or to authorize any loan or any charge upon the credit of the Province, shall be recommended to the Assembly by Message of the Lieutenant Governor before it is considered by the Assembly. The consideration and debate thereof may not be presently entered upon but shall be adjourned until such further day as the Assembly shall think fit to appoint.

According to well-established practice, however, provisions involving the reduction of charges or the reduction of taxation do not require a royal recommendation. I refer members to a ruling of the Chair dated May 26, 1978, which states in part:

. . . while a private member may not introduce a resolution or bill to increase a charge . . . any member may move to reduce a charge,

expenditure or a tax.

In addressing the rules of financial procedure, Erskine May specifies those matters which involve money but do not necessarily require an expression of the Crown initiative. I point out that the principles outlined by May form the broad basis of financial practice in this Legislative Assembly.

On page 805 of the 20th edition of Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, it is specified that a Bill which seeks to abolish or reduce a charge authorized by existing law does not require a royal recommendation. Similarly, May indicates on page 825 that provisions for the repeal or reduction of taxation are not subject to the rules of financial procedure.

This of course is wholly consistent with the more generally known principle that allows members of this Assembly to move amendments in committee to reduce an estimate or monetary provisions in a Bill. I refer members to Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, 6th edition, page 260 and page 267, which outlines those procedures.

The purpose of the Bill introduced yesterday by the member from Rosthern is to abolish an existing tax through the repeal of The Hospital Revenue Act. The repeal of a tax, as I have indicated, is not subject to the requirements of rule 33. For this reason I find the point of order not well taken and the Bill to be in order.

(1445)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I rise today in support of the Speech from the Throne, I want to say that it's certainly a pleasure to represent the fine people of Pelly constituency.

This last year and a half has been, for me personally, an interesting time, a challenging time, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, a sad time. Sad because we find out what the true financial picture of this province really is. And by that I mean the plain, unvarnished truth, not the whitewash job that we got from this former administration.

Going into the 1991 election campaign, Mr. Speaker, we were led to believe we were looking at a debt of about four and a half billion dollars. Now when we heard that number we thought perhaps the former administration had manipulated the number to cover the real debt. We thought perhaps the debt would be more like six, six and a half, or possibly at the outside \$7 billion.

During the election campaign the number one promise

we made to the people of Saskatchewan was that the first thing we would do when we became the government was we'd open the books to a clear and concise independent audit so we'd all know what the true financial situation in this province really was.

We took over government officially November 1, 1991, and early in November we struck the Financial Review Commission headed by Don Gass, a chartered accountant. We suggested simply that the commission would be structured in such a manner that there could be no suggestions of manipulating the numbers for political purposes.

On February 18, 1992, the Gass Commission released its final report. And much to our dismay, Mr. Speaker, we found out that we did not have a four and a half billion dollar debt in this province; we did not even have a \$6 billion debt in this province. Mr. Speaker, what we found out is that we had a \$15 billion debt — \$15 billion, Mr. Speaker, that is costing you and I and the Saskatchewan taxpayers all across this great province just a shade over \$2 million a day in interest charges; \$2 million dollars a day that leaves this province and goes to New York, to Zürich, to Hong Kong, to Tokyo, doesn't stay here in Saskatchewan to work for the people of this province.

Two million dollars a day, Mr. Speaker, really saddens me, when you look at the fact that in 1982 we had an operating surplus in this province of \$139.6 million, and in 1992, a \$15 billion debt. Yes indeed, Mr. Speaker, times change and we are in the '90s, but I am very hard pressed to find reasonable and rational explanation for the give-aways, the sell-offs engineered by the former members of the former government when they were in power in this province, the give-aways and the sell-offs that has brought us to where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, in 1982 one-third of the money collected by our provincial treasury came from our resource sector, came from the very Crown corporations we set up to manage our oil, our potash, our forests, our coal, to manage them on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. These, Mr. Speaker, between 1982 and 1992, were given away by the former government. And now, unfortunately, the only vehicle of revenue available to this government or any other government in this province, Mr. Speaker, is you and I, the taxpayer. We're stuck with the bill. We're stuck with the legacy of 10 years of waste and mismanagement. We're stuck with \$15 billion worth of debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have personally a very hard time to imagine how big a pile a million loonies would make.

An Hon. Member: — How big?

Mr. Harper: — I'm not sure. And I know it's a proven fact, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition has absolutely no idea of the difference between one million and one billion. The record of their government certainly indicates that. So, Mr. Speaker, I thought this afternoon I would try to help out the opposition by making some comparisons that they might be able to understand, comparison between a Saskatchewan debt and time.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that doing this I'm making a large assumption that the opposition has the ability to tell time. We all know that there are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour. So of course, immediately the question comes to hand, how long is a million seconds? Well, Mr. Speaker, one million seconds is equal to 12 days. The next question, of course, is how long is one billion seconds? Mr. Speaker, one billion seconds is equal to 32 years — 32 years, Mr. Speaker. Now I think we can better understand what the debt in this province is when we talk about \$15 billion worth of debt.

If we are able, day after day after day in this fine province of ours, to scrape up the \$2 million to service the interest on our \$15 billion debt and pay one loonie per second on that debt, how long will it take to pay off \$15 billion? Well, Mr. Speaker, it will take all of my lifetime and that of my children and maybe my grandchildren. I find that depressing and extremely saddening. The former government's debt has shackled us and brought us almost to the brink of bankruptcy.

I have with me today, Mr. Speaker, a report from a bond rating company called Nesbitt Thomson dated January 7, 1993. I found this particular issue rather interesting because it made reference to the financial situation in Saskatchewan and in Canada. And on page 7 I'd like to quote from an article there which states, and I quote:

The Canadian fiscal situation ranges from bad federally, to painful in Quebec, to ghastly in Ontario, to terrifying in Saskatchewan.

My friends, we are the worst-off province per capita in Canada. We — you and I and every man, woman, and child in this province — today are carrying a provincial debt of \$14,700 each. For a family of four, we're carrying a debt of about \$60,000. That, Mr. Speaker, is a legacy that has been left to us by the former government.

We have inherited this debt, a debt that in all manner, shape, and form is worse than what Tommy Douglas inherited in 1944. Tommy inherited a debt of nearly \$800,000 and yes, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to make that comparison between \$800,000 and \$15 billion, but there is a dollar-value difference from that time to this.

But the advantage Tommy had, Mr. Speaker, was that half of that debt was owed to the federal government because of payments for relief and seed grain payments made to this province in the 1930s. And Tommy was able to go down to Ottawa and get the federal government of the day to write off half of that debt, leaving him the ability to bring in a balanced budget and to build into that budget a small cushion to start to pay down the debt.

It took from 1944 to 1961 for him to pay that debt off.

The difference today in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is that today 99.9 per cent of our debt is out to financiers outside of Saskatchewan and outside of Canada. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, so far Ottawa hasn't been in a frame of mind to write off anything except to write off Saskatchewan farmers with the help of their provincial cousins.

And when all is said and done, Mr. Speaker, a banker is still a banker. They want their interest, they want their payments, or they want their security. So we have no other choice but to pay our bills and try to get on with our lives.

We haven't even begun to talk about the debt. The first thing we must do is get the deficit under control.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — The former government brought in 10 straight deficit budgets. And make no mistake, a deficit and a debt are two different things. A deficit is where a government spends more money in one year than it brings in. The difference is then rolled over into the debt.

The last year of the former administration, they were running a deficit of nearly \$1 billion in one year — nearly \$1 billion in one year, Mr. Speaker. They were spending more money than they were taking in in one year, of a tune of nearly \$1 billion in a province with a population of less than a million. Talk about leaving us all behind the eight-ball.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have triumphed over waste and mismanagement. We have in our last budget cut the deficit in half. And this year we will cut the deficit in half again. We must balance the budget as soon as possible in order to get into a position, Mr. Speaker, where we spend as much money in one year as we take in. And then we will start to work on the debt.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, mother nature didn't necessarily help us this year in our farmers harvesting the most disastrous crop in the history of this province, through no fault of their own. That disaster has cost this province a billion dollars in agricultural income because of the reduced quality of grain. And on top of that, we lost jobs as a result of our downturn in our quality of our grain.

In spite of that, in the last six months we have created more jobs than we have lost in the first six months. That's a turn-around. Retail sales are showing a marginal increase. That's another indicator of the turn-around of our economy. Those things are all positive and I believe that through future economic development, that we are leading the way as government to the best of our financial ability.

Leading the way through such projects as Norquay Alfalfa Processors, which is a community-based industry that works hand in hand with the existing industry — farming. A community-based industry that not only works with farmers but it has managed to create 40 jobs in the community, which as a result is putting a payroll of a million dollars a year into that community.

(1500)

That, Mr. Speaker, is what progress is all about — a light at the end of the tunnel. A light that will show us in big and small ways we will succeed and take Saskatchewan into the next century. We will succeed because we are Saskatchewan voices making Saskatchewan choices. We will see bigger and better light at the end of the tunnel, Mr.

Speaker. And let me assure you that light is not a Tory freight train.

There is hope simply because of our history. We have the toughest people in the world here in this province. We have faced some desperate, tough times in the past and overcome them. We will overcome the present tough times we're facing here in this province today. In the past we overcame the tough times and built a province to what it was. And today we will rebuild this province to what we know it can be. Now we will rebuild Saskatchewan into the province of prosperity and opportunity, not only for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to offer my voice in support of the throne speech. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to take part in this debate and I am happy to speak in favour of the speech delivered by Her Honour. It is a good speech promising hope and renewal, something we've been short of in this province for quite a while. And it is a speech that has been more than admirably defended by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster and the member from Kelsey-Tisdale and my colleagues on the government side.

And, Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of wind blowing against this speech from the opposite side. But this is a government with a house built not of straw, not of wood, but of strong brick. So the member from Thunder Creek and his ragged little band of wolves can huff and puff all they want.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — This is a government with a strong vision, with a plan, and with a strong leader. And all the windy rhetoric from the opposite side cannot change that one bit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to see you in the Chair for another season. We operate with better rules and we know you know the rules.

I want to thank the fine people from Shellbrook-Torch River again for giving me the privilege of representing them. They are far away in distance from this Chamber, but they watch us, they know that government is working in their best interests. Distance does not mean blindness. My constituents know the mess this province was left in by the previous government. They know that the federal Tories will rediscover them only when an election is called, if then. They know the mess they're in and they know who put them in it.

In my constituency there are foresters and there are farmers. The farmers know that it was the Liberals who killed the Crow and they know that the Tories are trying to kill the Crow benefit. The old-line parties are working with the rail line to get it to the farmers one more time.

My constituents know until 1986 the federal government paid 100 per cent of disaster programs. And now because of convenience between the Mulroney and Devine governments, farmers and Saskatchewan taxpayers pay 60 per cent — offloading, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the recent farm rally in Saskatoon, speaker after speaker, farmer after farmer, stated what they needed to be done in our number one industry to be restored. And their suggestions were directly opposed to what the federal government has done.

I have a transcript of a speech by a farmer from Glaslyn that I would like to read to you because he says very particular what many farmers are feeling. This farmer runs a family farm at Glaslyn:

For our farm to survive, we need the Canadian Wheat Board to market our wheat, barley and oats. Therefore, we need oats reinstated . . .

Method of payment must be paid to the railways. It must not be changed for our farm to survive. The majority of farmers across Canada at the Transportation meetings told . . . the (federal) "Government" (to) Leave the Crow alone. (They) . . . are not listening to the majority of farmers.

Mr. Speaker, he says that the federal government:

. . . is catering to the multinationals and the minority groups. Some of these groups are not even linked to agriculture. Don't give us the line that under GATT it has to be changed.

The support system our farm needs to survive is one that pays us to produce. Present support systems pay us to farm the program.

(The federal government) . . . changed our marketing system . . . oats (was) taken off the Wheat Board. Now . . . (they) are trying to take barley off the Wheat Board. You changed the Crow, now you're trying to change it again. You changed how we depreciate machinery — the list goes on. You are trying to force us to . . . (make) our . . . (producers) like our forefathers did many years ago, before they had the Wheat Board. They lost their shirts. We don't want that to happen.

1. We want the Wheat Board with central desk selling.
2. We want the Crow left paid to the railways.

Mr. Speaker, at the recent farm rally in Saskatoon . . . Notice, Mr. Speaker, leave the Crow alone, leave the Wheat Board alone, strengthen our marketing system. Listen to the majority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — A voice can't be much more clear than that, especially when it's prepared by farmers across the province, and the feds ignore the voice because they've been after the Wheat Board and orderly marketing for years. Shame.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I once more again like to support this Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Speech from the Throne on furthering our commitment to the journey of renewal and rebuilding this fair province that we're all so very proud of. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add my support to the journey of renewal and rebuilding.

I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on returning this Chamber to a Chamber of decorum. I think back to a time when I was told by members who are present that the way that they would practise their speech in return to the throne speech was to stand near a television set, turn up the volume full blast, and that would be the noise level in this Assembly. I know, Mr. Speaker, you have a strong desire to improve the respect and trust for this institution, and it's showing results.

I would also like to join my colleagues in welcoming the pages, and I hope that their work provides them not only a furthering of their knowledge of the parliamentary process, but also some friendships and some fun.

Mr. Speaker, election to public office is indeed an honour. The people of the province have placed a tremendous trust in each of us. I thank, once again, the members of Wascana Plains who have placed that trust in me. It's indeed a privilege and an honour to serve them.

It's also very sad and frustrating though to know that the trust was once abused and broken by the members opposite and by their colleagues at the federal level. For trust is a very fragile thing, and it takes a long-term working relationship to establish it. What have the people of Saskatchewan seen in its place has been the betrayal of far too many people that have only served in their own good and their own interest and not in the interests of the public and the people that they were chosen to serve.

So we're all burdened with the consequence of that. We're all burdened with the self-serving and irresponsible decisions that have been made by the former administration. The damage has been done. It will take a long and steady road to repair that damage.

I liken it to someone who has an attitude or a mentality when they see an endangered species of flower who looks down and doesn't say: "Isn't that beautiful for all to appreciate," but instead plucks it and takes it for themselves — the me-first attitude. That's what has happened with the trust in the public service and serving the public in this province and it will take great patience and steady nurturing to bring it back to life.

Mr. Speaker, it's been said that government is only as good as its opposition and it's with that in mind that I don't believe in shrinking from criticism, and in fact I welcome it. For criticism and alternatives allow you to grow, to make improvements, to sharpen the mind, and also to become far more inclusive of all of the people in

Saskatchewan.

I wasn't surprised to see that kind of opposition coming from the 10 members opposite. They've buried themselves in the small political rhetoric and the petty fighting that we saw, of the past 10 years in Saskatchewan, and the politics of division.

But I was very surprised as I listened to the member of the Liberal Party opposite. I sat patiently waiting in her speech to see one drop of specific suggestion, one area of specific policy where she would agree with us or disagree on principle. I was waiting for that, and I was expecting it because of her own words that she did not believe in pandering to partisan politics.

Well if that's the case, I have to wonder daily about the type of questioning that she's asking, about the questions that could easily be answered by departments or a single phone call, that would not have the public eye on her to bring up some of the petty partisan politics that she says she despises so well.

I looked for, from the members opposite, and in particular the member of the Liberal Party, some substantive comments on issues. I was sadly disappointed. And I say sad in every sense of the word.

I had believed that when she claimed to be above partisan politics, and I thought, what a pleasant change for an opposition member, that the level of debate would elevate in this Chamber and we would have a House where ideas are debated solely on the basis of whether or not they were good ideas. And to hear some constructive alternatives sometimes to let us know just once in a while a glimmer of where the Liberal Party really stands on the issues of today.

I really held out a ray of hope for the Leader of the Liberals, and I was quickly disappointed as I listened to her return speech to the Speech from the Throne. Disappointed in the gloom and doom that she portrayed, no matter what. It wasn't the change of policy or the consequences of what's happening, but it was from her petty political criticisms that her opposition comments came and stemmed from. Whatever happened, the government was wrong and all bad and that somehow the member from Greystone was going to put her ideas forward, and they just did not come before this Assembly.

(1515)

Her approach has been very simplistic, and as some of her party members might say, perhaps naïve. She had a chance to improve the way things are done in this legislature and she chose not to. She rather took the low road instead.

Someone once said that Liberals are different from Tories because they have a conscience. The only problem is that they choose not to follow it. And we certainly saw that as a Liberal characteristic in the display and the spectacle of candidate selection last evening.

Well I'm disappointed, Mr. Speaker, disappointed that the member from Greystone, as I say, could not put on

record constructive comments, researched alternatives, and move past her negative attitude. This does nothing to help our whole economic climate in this province.

We expected it from the 10 Conservative members opposite because we saw it for the last 10 years, but we were waiting for something different from the member of the Liberal Party.

We asked both parties to join with us, to join with us to restore people's trust, the trust that's like a fragile flower right now and needs help to grow. It's one that moves past petty politics on agricultural issues and joins with us in a vote to ask for third line of defence. It doesn't say speak out your political rhetoric and do nothing about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the words from the Speech from the Throne, I would like to quote that my government accepts with enthusiasm its mandate to provide Saskatchewan people with honest, open, accessible, and truly accountable government and, I add, a government that wants to grow with the people of Saskatchewan in a respectful situation and a situation of trust, dialogue, and support.

This will lead to a renewed public trust and a restored confidence in the traditional values of Saskatchewan community that are essential in my government's vision for the future.

Part of restoring that trust will come this session with the code of ethical conduct and the conflict of interest legislation. We are serious about setting high standards of behaviour for all elected representatives. Elected representatives should seek to elevate the integrity of the position, rather than declaim the qualities of the me-first generation and the me-first approach we saw so evident in the past years here.

Mr. Speaker, along with restoring the trust and the integrity of the political process and of the politician, we're also concerned about the restoring of a healthy economy. The key to economic renewal is the increased employment opportunities. We know only too well the tragedy that befalls families when one or more of their breadwinners find themselves unemployed. This situation of high unemployment has been causing great damage right across our country.

Saskatchewan doesn't have some of the highest rates that we see elsewhere, but still the situation is unacceptable to us. I commend the government for recognizing that more must be done in this area and for recognizing a model that was given to us by the Regina Economic Development Authority.

It takes me back to a time on city council when we were working to develop the Authority and the bringing together of a broad cross-section of the community to pull together and to work together; business, labour, community leaders, elected officials, and the bureaucrats coming together in a positive way. We drew the community together and we came to this building to present a future Regina document that we were very proud of, that had all the stakeholders involved, and that had community leaders with us to present it.

And what did we get? What did we get for our results from the previous government was a Fair Share Saskatchewan program that was announced the next day.

People can tell you clearly across Saskatchewan what they felt of Fair Share Saskatchewan and what that would do for the economy of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very pleased to see what's happening in many of our rural communities with the community bonds program and the new expanding small businesses in rural areas. It shows us what can be done in a supportive government, a supportive atmosphere, and a working together with people across the province.

People don't want government to be the solver of all their problems or to do things that people can do for themselves, but rather they want a government that has the responsibility to stage a positive economic environment and to provide the coordination needed to allow people to take initiative on their own.

Saskatchewan people by their nature are problem solvers. What the government is doing is encouraging and fostering the opportunities for people to solve their own problems and implement their own ideas. On a small economic scale this government is offering empowerment to many small businesses that we recognize are the backbone to the economy in this province.

Another aspect of setting an appropriate stage or environment is the establishment of the cooperatives directorate. Mr. Speaker, we believe the best solutions are the ones that come from local communities and the ones that come from communities that have control over their own environment. Cooperatives are an excellent example of this, of people coming together to organize themselves and to cooperate over particular problems.

If this government can continue to nurture the hard-working and creative characteristics of Saskatchewan people, I am convinced that the economic problems will soon be turned around and be behind us.

Mr. Speaker, while I was a member of Regina City Council I worked hard on a women's task force and worked and spent hours listening to people on the inquiry into hunger and poverty. And what I heard from members opposite like Jack Klein and Grant Schmidt was there are no hungry people in Saskatchewan. I am encouraged by this government who has a commitment to delivering on programs and services for children, and many children who live in poverty and hunger.

For far too long our society has given empty lip-service to the importance to children in our communities and they are the future of our society. Yet when push comes to shove, children have often been neglected by our society. And I am glad that the members opposite bring up the food banks. For when was there a need, a great need in this community, that was met by the food banks, was under the idea of the Conservative government who felt to feed people was a responsibility of the charity of a community and not a government to take collective

action with public dollars that were put into public trust. A shame.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — And they should be remorseful, but instead they laugh and catcall from across the floor.

So I say, neglected because often the needs of the children in our communities were not taken seriously by the members opposite. It's gratifying to know that I'm now part of a government that is saying, enough is enough of the empty rhetoric. We're taking action. We're taking action to help our children.

And last year without a lot of fanfare few pilot projects were under way in the children first: community action program. These programs focus on the total child. They show understanding of children, and that children cannot learn if they're coming to school hungry, abused, or in emotional stress.

Finally we have a government that is prepared to deal with the total problem. The government is not walking in with heavy-handed ideas and into communities and saying, do this or do that or sacking welfare police on people with video cameras and trying to somehow skulk out the victims or the abusers in any situation.

They're not leaving families with the idea that they have to live in fear if they're hungry, that they'll be somehow reported for the use of the food bank and perhaps undermine the strength of their family.

No, this government is assisting with various facets of community support and bringing people together in compassion and in caring, communities taking ownership of those issues and developing the solutions and working together to solve those problems.

Government has set the tone, provided a forum and a few suggestions on process and from there the communities are developing the solutions.

Along the same model the government will initiate an action plan for children, a plan built on the belief that children have the right to adequate food, clothing, shelter, and a safe and nurturing environment. I cannot stress how long overdue this initiative is, not only for this province, but for this country.

Children however become the victims not only of hunger and poverty, but they're created by failed economic policies, the policies that lead to high unemployment, growing poverty among women. They're two critical factors that mean more to our children who are growing up in poverty. When parents are under too much stress or pressure from not being able to make ends meet or from having to work two or three jobs, the children suffer.

So for all the hollow rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, the hollow rhetoric from the members opposite, they spouted off about family values and protecting the family, spending money conducting family forums. When it comes to the consequences of their words, they're very hypocritical indeed. I would argue that no one can claim to care about

a family when it supports economic policies that have increased levels of poverty, that vie from the big for somewhere else, hoping that somehow the jobs or the wealth will trickle down for someone to pick up a few meagre crumbs.

With the present economic and job pressures that many families are facing today, it becomes essential that as a society, we all take responsibility for protecting those who are most vulnerable and those who are the real hope for our future.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a government who takes that seriously and who is now beginning to put forward programs to support and nurture the future of this province.

And I also stand very proud to be able to support the actions that we'll take in this session to introduce amendments to The Workers' Compensation Act and The Occupational Health and Safety Act.

These changes will improve the work environment for adults, but they will also relieve some of the unfair and unnecessary pressures that are on the job. And I know that helps the families who will also benefit from these two Acts. These are both further examples of setting the proper environment or atmosphere for a society of caring and support.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very proud to be a part of a government who's now taking that journey of renewal that unfolds through the throne speech that's been presented to this session of the legislature. We are continuing on a difficult journey, but we are making progress towards a brighter future.

I see this government reinforcing our party's proud tradition of providing fiscal responsibility. It's not that we value money for its own sake, but for what we can do with it collectively to put the public trust to work, and that we make sure every penny is spent wisely.

We want to make sure that our money is spent efficiently and effectively to provide a bright economic future for the province. But we also understand the meaning of freedom, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that the debts that have been mounted up, the way they've been mounting, and as other members have talked about, the growing interest and the many years of responsibility that our province will bear for that debt.

We want to take steps this session to make sure that the bankers, the people who are holding our credit rating and the bonds from other countries and other provinces, are not the ones who call the shots in this province.

This is true for individuals when they see their debts mounting in their home and they take action to correct it. But it should also be true for businesses and for government.

In the same way debt in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. It can be very useful at times — in emergency times in the province. When it becomes unmanageable and uncontrollable however, then it becomes a ball and

chain. And it also becomes a way to hold people captive because you must then cut further and further into the areas of social justice and social programing in our communities.

So, Mr. Speaker, this government is acting responsibly and also consistently with our CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) background and our NDP (New Democratic Party) governments that have gone before us.

The CCF Party grew up out of the conviction that we should not be controlled by eastern bankers. Well, that principle holds today as it did then. And I'm pleased to be a part of a government that is working hard to regain its financial freedom. In this area as well there has been much progress.

Perhaps the members opposite don't understand the progressive ways to look at new accounting principles since they didn't go forward in that way, or understand about strengthening an auditing process so we can clearly understand where the books are in this province. But we all understand clearly our commitment to be accountable and responsible to the people we serve.

(1530)

The rough and rocky part of this journey is almost behind us, and very soon we'll be turning the corner to a brighter future that's well within our view and within our grasp. It's thanks to the hard-working commitment of this government in cooperation and community and in compassion and caring, that the sun will soon shine once more on the people of Saskatchewan.

We're going through a difficult time and no one will tell you differently. Most often people come up to me and say, Ms. Hamilton, as the member from Wascana Plains is it congratulations I should bestow upon you or condolences? We're looking at what the alternatives are before you and we're nervous, and we know it's going to be a difficult task but we're behind you. We want to get together and we will all get together to survive.

And as the situation improves in this province, we will be stronger for having come from the great difficulties we face and come through them successfully. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan there will be a tomorrow for all of our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to respond to what might just be the biggest doom and gloom speech ever given, the NDP government's throne speech.

Before I carry on I would like to comment and thank the people of Souris-Cannington for electing me to be their representative in this legislature. Souris-Cannington is the constituency in the far south-east corner of this province. We're bordered on the south by the U.S. (United States) and on the east by Manitoba. We're an area of agriculture, oil production, and tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Souris-Cannington have a knack of getting their name into the news. Our area is the home of the Alameda dam, the dam that the government opposite doesn't talk about because, Mr. Speaker, we have water in the Alameda dam, we have fish in the Alameda dam. And I would invite the good people of this province to come to Souris-Cannington and visit us and enjoy the area.

I would also like to offer my sympathy to the mover and seconder of the motion to accept the throne speech — my sympathy, Mr. Speaker, because they had to put their names to such an empty document.

This NDP government, Mr. Speaker, is the most negative, most fatalistic, pessimistic group of people I have ever come across, and I'm not alone in my thinking. Hospital administrators, teachers, university students, parents, and literally thousands of people are disillusioned with the NDP members across the way.

A government is supposed to do many things, is supposed to make things better. A government is supposed to protect the people in the hard times. A government is supposed to lead the way to a better tomorrow. And what do we see? What do we find?

We find a lack of responsibility and leadership. We find ministers, the Minister of Education who yesterday refused to accept the responsibility for her actions. In August last session she said that she was giving \$438,000 to the Loreburn school, and lo and behold it ends up at 1.4 million, but she's not responsible.

All the NDP government has to offer this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a lack of vision, a lack of dreams, and a total lack of a plan. If anything, this government only offers a 1960s man with a 1970 game plan. They offer a return to ever higher taxes and utility rates, and that old one, the family of Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, the NDP administration lacks everything except new ideas on how to further tax the people of this province.

The throne speech is just another example of the same doom and gloom from the same old people who said Saskatchewan should not develop the natural gas industry. The same people who said the Saferco fertilizer plant was a white elephant. But it seems kind of ironic that they were very pleased to take credit when they got to cut the ribbon at the grand opening.

These are the same people who thought pulp and paper mills in Saskatchewan could not compete; the same people who opposed the Shand power plant, and the list goes on.

This throne speech is about choices. And I'm sorry to say that the NDP good choices are few and far between, yet the hurtful choices are very plentiful.

Take harmonization as an example. The former government said harmonization was needed to generate income, to provide a supplement to lower income families, to make the operations of small businesses, tradespeople, and farmers tax free, and pay for farm support programs. This government chose to cut farm

support programs.

I would like to add that coming from a constituency bordering on the U.S., that small businesses from Souris-Cannington constituency would have been especially benefited from harmonization because it would have helped to slow down cross-border shopping. And what did the members opposite say? Well they came out with a study entitled: "The Economic Impact of the Provincial GST on Saskatchewan", which stated that harmonization will, and I quote:

... will lead to increased inflation, reduced consumer spending and consumer confidence, thousands of lost jobs, and hundreds of millions of dollars lost in economic activity within the Saskatchewan economy.

Thousands of jobs lost, Mr. Deputy Speaker, hundreds of millions of dollars lost in economic activity. That's what it had to say.

Just think for a moment. If the guy from Riversdale and the guy from Regina Elphinstone and the member for Saskatoon Broadway and all of their colleagues really believed, Mr. Speaker ...

The Deputy Speaker: — I want to just remind the member that when he's referring to other members that he should refer to them as members and not use any other words.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, if they really believed that harmonization was going to do all these things, what in the world are they doing to Saskatchewan people today?

E&H (education and health) tax has gone up 16 per cent. If that study was the truth, then we might as well all pack our bags and leave on what is left of our highways before they rip them up and turn them into gravel.

Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite were being truthful, how can they now justify raising income tax, sales tax, fuel tax, tobacco tax, environment taxes, utility taxes, creating new taxes and looking at harmonization as well. And the mention of environment taxes, Mr. Speaker, will have a great effect in this province because it will again push people to shop outside of Saskatchewan.

And what of this? All of a sudden the NDP expect people to believe them when they say, well I guess we were completely off base with respect to harmonization. We've changed our minds, and now it's just fine to harmonize but we'll call it something else. And it's okay to raise every other tax too. I don't think so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Or in the vernacular of the youth today: not.

Why did the NDP ignore the facts? That's an easy one. They wanted to be government. The NDP thought that scrapping harmonization would get them elected. As one NDP strategist said, it makes good TV.

They didn't care. The members opposite chose only to care about getting elected. The NDP used, as the editorialist put it, tortured logic — that's from May 25 in the *Leader-Post*, 1991 — to obtain their end goal.

Tortured logic. I guess other words would fit the bill here like twisted facts or bamboozling the public.

So we see today the party that used tortured logic to get elected try to convince people that their destructive decisions are based on some sort of facts, that they are sincere. Give me a break.

It is obvious that the NDP's goal was to get elected, and that's where it stopped. Now they are desperately seeking a plan. So far the only economic development initiative the NDP can cling to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the initiatives of the former government — AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.), community bonds, Saferco, Weyerhaeuser, and the list goes on.

Sears is the only economic development that the minister responsible can hang his hat on. Even then, Sears was looking to come to Saskatchewan before he was the minister. Only Sears, you say. As the commercial says, what a pity.

Instead of taking the responsibility to govern, the NDP across the way are going to study and review everything from A to Z, to give them an excuse to do nothing for the rest of their term and to allow the member from Riversdale to do nothing and hope the problems go away.

This makes the member from Riversdale comfortable, because he does not have to make a decision. That is his choice and the choice of his colleagues. The choice the NDP made was to get elected at any cost and to make promises they would not keep to whomever would listen. That is where NDP commitment to the people seems to end. It is their choice.

Everybody has choices. Every government has choices, and the people aren't being fooled. The Minister of Health just chose to cut funds to 800 children at the Wascana Rehab Centre. The people aren't being fooled, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the NDP when they say they have no choice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP are choosing each action they are taking. The NDP are choosing to pit one community against another through their wellness plan for health care in this province. Communities are scrapping for the remaining health dollars instead of working together.

They are fighting over education dollars. In education they are pitting community against community, neighbour against neighbour as the NDP government abandons their responsibility and their duty to provide leadership.

I'm sure I will have ample time to debate this issue further with the ministers of Health and Education in the next few days. However, I sincerely regret that the ministers will not consult, visit, and talk to the people most affected by their decisions. This is not a caring government; this is not a compassionate government.

Mr. Speaker, I am the official opposition member responsible for portfolios including Education, Environment, Sasktel, and SGI (Saskatchewan

Government Insurance), as well as a number of legislative committees. And I was very interested to hear the member from Greystone mention the legislative Environment Committee in her speech. There are 10 members on the legislative Environment Committee, of which one is the member from Greystone.

This committee originally started sitting last October and met the last time this past Friday. We have held over 20 meetings across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and in all that time, not once did the member from Greystone accept her responsibilities and sit with the committee. She insisted on being on the committee, and perhaps she thought it would look good on her résumé when she was removed as Leader of the Liberal Party, but for the committee's work, she has been an albatross about the neck of the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I would recommend to the House that her name be deleted from being on this committee because of her dereliction to her duty to the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I hear every day how this government is callous, uncaring as it ties the hands of educators and educational facilities in this province. In opposition, the NDP criticized an over 2 per cent increase by the former government. Now they are cutting everything from capital expenditures to core curriculum. The member from Saskatoon Riversdale, now the NDP Premier for one term, put it best when he said in an NDP news release:

... the government's chronic underfunding of post-secondary education, which has resulted in 10 percent increases in tuition this year, acute shortages of instructors and classrooms, and increased debt load for students seeking student loans. What we are talking about here is a government making the choice of how to spend taxpayer's money.

(1545)

At that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Riversdale was talking about a 2.9 per cent increase, an increase in the operating grants to universities, tech schools, the K-12 school system. And he was right. The PC (Progressive Conservative) government of the day was making the choice to increase education funding. The PCs were increasing money to education in tough times, and this government is making choices today.

Now the member from Riversdale is sitting in the Premier's chair. He is making the choice to force the closure of rural schools, increase tuition, and force Saskatchewan education facilities to cut back on essential programs and services. This is the member from Riversdale's choice. This is the NDP's choice. In opposition, the same member was interviewed by the Moose Jaw Times Herald, and I quote:

Don't let any government tell you that they don't have enough funds for education. The money is there.

February 19, 1988. That's what the member from Riversdale said, and today he is choosing to ignore that

promise along with a litany of others. That's not my choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not the public's choice, that's his choice.

Choices, Mr. Speaker, is what this is all about. And I'm sure the upcoming NDP budget will add many more NDP choices to the list. Apparently the promises the member from Riversdale made and the promises his colleagues gave to the people of this province do not matter. Because he is sitting where he wanted to sit — in the Premier's chair — and that is as far as his commitment goes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say that is not good enough. It is not hard to figure out why the NDP preach doom and gloom and pass your wallet. They do not want . . . They do not have a comprehensive plan of how to run this province. And what is worse, they do not understand or care. If they did, Mr. Speaker, I would be standing here congratulating the members opposite, not condemning them for their choices; I would not be receiving hundreds of phone calls and letters from people who feel they have been misled by the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could support the throne speech and what it could have contained. But until the NDP rectify the hurt, the betrayal, and the grief the people of this province are experiencing, supporting the members opposite is an impossible request.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be voting in favour of this throne speech. Thank you.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join in the discussion on the throne speech here today, and I want to visit a number of issues that I believe are important for the people of Saskatchewan to consider.

I have, I believe, been involved in quite a number of these throne speeches, Mr. Speaker. And I have been involved with them in the context of government, and I have been involved with them in the context of opposition. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is the saddest throne speech that I've ever had the opportunity to listen to. It deals with very little substance, has a whole lot of rhetoric, and really does not provide any vision, does not really provide any hope, does not provide any of the opportunities, the security that the people of the province of Saskatchewan I believe were looking for in a Speech from the Throne from Her Honour.

I want to point out a number of areas that I think that there are serious omissions. One of the things that occurred to me as I have listened through the debate period has been the almost irrelevance of the individuals who got up and spoke about the future of this province. There was no vision for the future; there was no vision for what they expected it to be.

And I think it's clearly expressed in the opinion of the text of the throne speech in a number of areas. And I want to say that I have every respect for the involvement of Tommy Douglas, and you mention him two or three times in this throne speech. You mention Madam Sauvé. But, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to these people who have gone on before, there has to be a vision for the future.

And I will say to you and to the members of this Assembly that those people did have a vision for the future. They did have a vision to look ahead and say: that is where I want to be, that's what I want to build for, that's what the future of Saskatchewan is, that's the hope that we have, the energy that we will go about and say we will deliver that to that point in time. And they did, Mr. Speaker. They did as members of parliament; they did it as a member of this Assembly. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what formulated the beginnings of this provincial party that we see over here.

But it has changed, Mr. Speaker. It has changed dramatically. And now all they do is say grandpa did this and grandpa did that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have to go one step further than that and we have to say, what has the future got to hold for the people of the province of Saskatchewan? What do the opportunities in this province present themselves as as we look at this throne speech and analyse it and think about the context of what's in it? Is there hope for our young people? Is there hope for the young people that are children of the members of this Assembly? Is there a job for those people?

Now I'm not saying that the government has to provide that job. But I say that this government has to get out of the way of the people of Saskatchewan so that they can become involved in providing that opportunity for jobs and for opportunities that exist in this province.

We have had this government stand in the way on a number of occasions, and I want to point some of them out to you as I go through the things that I have to say. One of them is this: the involvement that this government had in the agreement that they finally reached with the Atomic Energy Commission of Canada. AECL was there for the taking from the very first day they were elected.

They wanted to be in Saskatchewan and the people here just froze them out day after day after day after day, until this caucus and the people in Saskatoon, with overwhelming pressure, said to the people, look, maybe it's time for you to put pressure on that caucus. You know them just as well as we do. You put the pressure on and make them change their mind, make their convention change their mind.

And that is the reason why this government changed their mind. They had pressure on them to make the decision from in the Assembly. They had pressure on them from the city council in Saskatoon. They had pressure on them from the people around the city of Saskatoon.

And eventually the people from Regina who are members in this Assembly were told, that's going to happen because the people from Saskatoon said it's got to happen because it's going to provide an energy component for jobs, for research, and all of the kinds of things that need to happen in that kind of a field. And that, Mr. Speaker, is important for the people in the province to know.

This government stood in the way, and stood in the way for months on end waiting for something to happen that they should have personally made the decision on at the

beginning.

We would be one year further ahead if they had've gone along and said, we have some reservations, however we know that it is an opportunity for this province to progress.

What we have seen, Mr. Speaker, is a delay process in everything that they're doing. And I want to point that out in a way that is relevant. And I also want to say that it is made obvious by the members opposite over and over again. And it's made obvious for this reason. I believe there is a lack of leadership of the people in cabinet, the Premier, and all of the people that are sitting on that side of the House. There is no leadership to make them say, I want to get to this place at such and such a time.

The people that you refer to in your throne speech did have that. Mr. Speaker, they had that in spades. If you take Madam Sauvé and you say you want to use her as an example in your throne speech, she had a vision for what Canada should be. She had a vision for it. Tommy Douglas had a vision for it. But what do these people have? They just say, go back to Tommy Douglas. And that's the beginning and that is also the end.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is what these people have as a problem. They have to carry their ideology along with them all the way through the system. And when they get to 1993 it doesn't fit.

And that's the problem they have in exercising leadership. There is no leadership on that side and that's the reason why the whole economy is floundering. I want to point out some very interesting things. I want to point out some very interesting things that were stated, and members opposite are saying that I didn't read the newspaper today.

Well the Royal Bank said that there are certain things in that statement that have to exist and if you want to have a three and a half per cent growth in the economy, there are things that have to continue to exist, and one of those things is that wheat prices go up. And if that doesn't happen, what's going to happen? Nothing. If the oil prices don't stay constant, what's going to happen? Nothing. And that is exactly what that Royal Bank statement has made and if you'd read it all you'd find out it was in there. And that, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely the context of what the Royal Bank is basing it on. If commodities stay constant and increase then they have that opportunity to have a rise in the price.

What does the statement about building homes in the province of Saskatchewan reveal, Mr. Speaker? It reveals for the first time that the people in the province of Saskatchewan are going to get the benefit from Crown Life coming into Saskatchewan and to Regina, and Farm Credit Corporation being involved in the city of Regina. Those are the context of the kinds of things that are evident in the report in the paper.

It has nothing to do with this government's vision, has absolutely nothing to do. The member from Melfort went into her city and town and said, fine, there's so much gloom and doom we don't even know whether we have a

credit rating at all. And what does the mayor say? He said if she had kept her mouth shut we may have had some investment. What creates jobs? What creates wealth in this province?

It's clearly my opinion that the statements made by Isabel Anderson in her letter to the editor are absolutely accurate, Mr. Speaker. She says it as well as anybody has said it, and what it does is, Mr. Speaker, you have to create wealth in order to have jobs. You have to create jobs in order to have sustained growth in your economy, and if you want to sustain growth in your economy, you have to have the independent individuals in the province of Saskatchewan, who aren't overtaxed, have an opportunity to provide an investment, and therefore create jobs. And it's a circle that goes around, and it has to come around and it has to be the small, independent businesses that do it in the province of Saskatchewan. That is a fact.

And, Mr. Speaker, the second point to consider in all of this, is this: if you don't have the business people in the province of Saskatchewan, have security of risk, security of tenure without increased taxation, the people in the province of Saskatchewan who are left will not be able to support the infrastructure that we have and the social programs in this province. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker.

And what do we have? Tommy Douglas would be ashamed of this kind of a throne speech. He would be. He would say to you, get yourselves together and show some leadership in a defined way. Clearly he would say that to you.

And what have you done? Absolutely nothing. You have done absolutely nothing except stand in the way of progress. And I want to point out some of the ways that you've stood in the way of progress today.

Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, have played a major role in this province, and one of the first ones that were brought into place were brought into place by Mr. Tommy Douglas, and that was the SaskPower Corporation. But, Mr. Speaker, today as we stand here, today as we stand here, the SaskPower Corporation has a debt/equity ratio of about 65:35. Probably the best since the '60s. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fact.

An Hon. Member: — The best in Canada.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Rosemont says it's the best in Canada. Well yes sir, Mr. Speaker, it's the best in Canada because of very sound financial positions taken by the former government.

The second reason, Mr. Speaker, is this, the second reason is that the people of the province of Saskatchewan could deliver on the payments for SaskPower because they were making some money.

But what have we got today? We have increased costs to business. Some of the largest components of business are the largest users: Interprovincial Pipe; the potash mines in the province of Saskatchewan. Rates go up. Everybody across the province has to suffer those consequences, Mr. Speaker. And every time they raise the taxes on the power

rates, every time they raise those rates, the productivity goes down.

(1600)

And, Mr. Speaker, the role today of government has been to provide the single-digit rate of inflation. That's what it has done. It has taxed this province so heavily in what it believes is the right way to go. It has taxed the people in every direction so much so that the people in the province of Saskatchewan are leaving and the only thing that is evident in an inflation rate in this province is because of the taxes of the people opposite. That's what has caused inflation in this province. It's the taxes, and at no time in the history of this province has that ever happened before.

And I think it's time these people take and realize that they have a responsibility to the people who generate wealth. Government doesn't generate wealth, Mr. Speaker, government only transfers wealth from one group to another.

And the businesses of this province need to have some recognition. What did they do for small business, Mr. Speaker? They increased the phone rates. They increased the phone rates. How do you do business in a province like Saskatchewan with miles and miles of travel that people have to do? You do it by telephone, Mr. Speaker. And what do they do? They raise the rates. How do you get to have business increase their capacity to be competitive? How do you increase that? Well, Mr. Speaker, you do that by lowering your costs. And what has happened, Mr. Speaker? People have had to lower their cost by laying off people and people and laying off more people.

And when you go and look for work in this province today, it is extremely difficult. As a matter of fact, it's almost impossible for any person to get a job in this province. And I could go into patronage. I could go into patronage and then say that there was one way and that is to buy an NDP membership. That's about the only way that's left.

The third point I want to make is small business in this province has a lot of payments that they have to make in taxes as it relates to natural gas. These people increase the price of inputs all the time. It doesn't matter whether it's small business, big business, farmers, home-makers, they all get an increase in those kinds of taxes. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why this government is in trouble with its tax problem. They have a serious tax problem because they have taxed beyond the point of recovery for a lot of the people in this province.

The other day, Mr. Speaker, we had another increase and that was in SGI. Well, I'll be . . . SGI, who's been raising the rates. And then what they did on top of that, they had a . . . As the Minister of Highways said one day, it was between 4 and 11 per cent; that's what they raised them.

But then I'm not sure that he was visiting with the minister from SGI when he — he should have probably been doing that — but he should have asked him, what about the surcharge on some vehicles because there's more people driving them, or because they have more

accidents, or because the people who have vans have more accidents and are a little sloppy in driving. I don't think it's that. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's because it's the largest group, the largest single group he could put a surcharge on and raise the taxes for the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

When small business goes around this province in a van, it's in a van with his tools in it; it's an electrician; it's a plumber. Those are the people that I believe, Mr. Speaker, are the people who are impacted in this and going to cause them a problem.

Who else has got a surcharge in this whole dimension of SGI? Who else got a surcharge? Triple-axle truck units, power units . . . they're the ones that do business in this province. They drive through. Oh yes, they drive through. I drive through Regina once a week to visit with people in my office here in Regina. I meet those trucks going by, and they're going interprovincially. I see them.

But there's a whole lot of people in this province, Mr. Speaker, who have trucks hauling potash, hauling fertilizer out of the new plant here at Belle Plaine. All over this province we have people who are going to pay extra for their vehicles to do delivery in this province on top of the tax that you pay for gas.

I've noticed something interesting happening also, Mr. Speaker. We're going to have a budget come down here on March 18. In that budget, my best guess is that gas prices are going up.

And I'll tell you what's happening across the province. I've been asking different people how much the gas is today. Downtown here it's 46 cents, I believe . . . 44.9. In other places it's 49; other places it's 51, it's 53. The price has gone down. Do you know why? Everybody's getting prepared for the real increase that's going to happen on March 18.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why these people are overwhelmingly convinced that you don't know what you're doing. The only thing that you know is that you have to tax to get the money. You don't understand the real fundamentals of earning wealth in the province of Saskatchewan. You have never learnt that. You have never understood that.

You should go back to Tommy Douglas. Find out what he did in order to create wealth in the province of Saskatchewan. He got the people working. He got the people making decisions about the kind of economy that they wanted to have. And that was a forward look.

Why is John Diefenbaker's name on the Gardiner Dam? Why is Tommy Douglas connected to that? Why is Jimmy Garner connected to that? It's because, Mr. Speaker, they had a vision for the future. They had a vision for what they were supposed to do with the kinds of things that were available to the people of Saskatchewan.

And that means, Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with processing in agriculture. We need to deal with processing in minerals. We need to deal with processing in our oil. We need to deal with processing in our

uranium. We need to do it here because we have the raw products here, and we need to do that.

And, Mr. Speaker, we do not need, we do not need a government who gets in the way of this. And we've seen that demonstrated over and over again. We're going to have it demonstrated again, I believe, Mr. Speaker, by things that are in this throne speech.

Getting in the way of business with your labour legislation. Getting in the way of business with your . . . all of the things that you're doing to curtail environment.

You had a little committee going around the province talking about environment. Well, Mr. Speaker, they were told what they should do with that Environment Committee. They were told in spades over and over again. And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, different people have told me across this province — co-ops, small bulk dealers, independent fertilizer dealers, independent chemical dealers — all across this province, told us in spades, if you put those rules in, we're gone.

That, Mr. Speaker, is all the way from Glaslyn . . . that is all over from Glaslyn down to Swift Current to Carlyle to Nipawin. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a fact, and that's a fact that these people here haven't learned a thing about. If you put those hidden taxes, Mr. Speaker, on the people of the province of Saskatchewan, you will cause them very serious hurt.

As a matter of fact, in my neighbouring constituency, which is Swift Current, the Pioneer Co-op built a brand-new bulk station according to the rules. According to the rules, Mr. Speaker, they put up dikes around these tanks because it was according to the rules. And that was less than five years ago. Today they're going to have to replace them all — replace them all, Mr. Speaker, at \$130,000 extra cost to the people of Saskatchewan and who are a part of that cooperative. And that's across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Now in Leader, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in Leader, Saskatchewan where the Highway No. 32 crosses over the 21, there's an empty lot. And it used to be a service station, Mr. Speaker. In that lot is . . . there's a reason why it's empty. And the reason why it's empty is because of environment, Mr. Speaker. Somebody's going to have to clean up some old tanks that are underground. The Royal Bank doesn't want it. They've got a mortgage on that property; they don't want it. The RM (rural municipality) doesn't want it. The town don't want it. Who's going to clean it up?

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what these people are aiming at doing. So they say, clean it up. What do they do? Well I'll use another example from my neighbouring constituency, one I travel in often, and that's the city of Swift Current. And the Co-op there again, Mr. Speaker, had to clean up an oil spill underneath the street. They hauled out load after load after load after load of contaminated gas and gravel. And that, Mr. Speaker, what did they do with that? They hauled it out into some farmer's field and said, there is where the contaminant is going to be.

And that is all to do with environment and that is what is costing these people in the province of Saskatchewan over and over again. The capacity for these people to lead with any kind of vision is stifled by their ideology. And that, Mr. Speaker, is evident every day in the things that they say and do.

I want to talk a little bit about the responsibilities that I have as lining up with agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan. There are probably no single group, Mr. Speaker, who contributes as much to the economy of Saskatchewan . . . well I know there's no single group that contributes as much to the economy in the province of Saskatchewan as agriculture does.

In the city of Regina, 50 per cent of the people employed in the city are directly or indirectly paid for out of agriculture. And that, Mr. Speaker, is going to be evident in the next three months. In the next three months farmers in the province of Saskatchewan are going to invest \$1 billion in the ground. They're going to put it in the ground and hope by fall that they'll have some way of paying that billion dollars back to their bulk fuel dealers, to their insurance agents, to all of the people that they come in contact to service the requirements they have in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, those are the people who work, not five hours a day or eight hours a day, but they work 16, 17, 18 hours a day. And I know, Mr. Speaker. I was at a ranch in the member from Rosetown-Elrose's constituency just over the weekend. And I met with him and he wants to sell his ranch. Why, Mr. Speaker? He wants to sell his ranch for this reason. Because he cannot convince his family to stay there. And so what he has to do is he and his wife both have to farm that place until they find somebody to buy it. And that, Mr. Speaker, is happening over and over and over in this province.

And we had an example of that with the people of Eston, in the area around the town of Eston. They wanted to sell their land. If they would have found a buyer, they'd have sold it. But, Mr. Speaker, we have people who believe that agriculture is living off the taxpayer.

And I want to point out to the people of the province just this one comparison. There is in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, 50 million acres of cultivated land. And if I was to take the amount of money that taxpayers put into agriculture and measure it against those 50 million acres, I would point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is less than \$5 a cultivated acre that every farmer gets in the province of Saskatchewan — \$5 a cultivated acre.

I want to point out one other thing. If you were to take that same comparison and compare that to education, education in the province of Saskatchewan — which I support and I wholeheartedly endorse — they get about \$20 a cultivated acre in the province of Saskatchewan from the taxpayer. And every teacher and every student has the benefit of having not to pay a single dollar to have that investment capitalized so that they can go to school. And the second thing is for the individual to have a job. They don't have to pay a single dollar to have that happen.

Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of thing that is happening in the province of Saskatchewan. The people are getting fed up with the high cost of taxes. They're getting fed up with all of those sort of things.

We have one other that I want to point out, Mr. Speaker. In the province of Saskatchewan, on a comparative basis, the taxpayer spends \$32 a cultivated acre in the province of Saskatchewan. That, Mr. Speaker, are three items that I want to bring to the Assembly's attention, three items — health care, education, and agriculture.

How much is sponsored by the taxpayer? And, Mr. Speaker, out of those three it comes to about \$55. And, Mr. Speaker, \$50 of that goes to health and education, and \$5 goes to agriculture.

And that, Mr. Speaker, supplies an opportunity for economic development that far exceeds any of the health care, far exceeds any potential in the education. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I think it's important and why I think these people are missing the boat entirely when they're not going to the assistance of farmers across the province in a time, in a time, Mr. Speaker, when prices are depressed.

All we have heard, all we have heard since these people got elected — and I brought along the throne speech from 1991; I brought along the throne speech from 1992; and it's in the throne speech from 1993, Mr. Speaker — and that is the federal government isn't doing their job. That's all these people can talk about — the federal government aren't doing their job.

(1615)

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, this government isn't doing their job either. This government is not doing their job in any way, shape, or form when it comes to agriculture, when it comes to small business, when it comes to education. And when I had to listen this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to the questions on health care, they're not doing their job on health care either.

And Mr. Douglas, for all of the respect that people pay him, which was well deserved, he would have cringed at what you're doing to children in the Wascana Rehab Centre today, as we have discovered. He would cringe at disregarding children from across this province. Respite care in a facility that is absolutely essential for people to be able to structure wellness in their own home, people who are taking and going the extra mile with their own children who have a very serious problem. They're going the extra mile in doing things in caring for their families, and they want one opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to say, I want a little bit of time off in a respite facility. And Wascana Rehabilitation Centre provided that for 800 children across this province.

And what's happening, Mr. Speaker? As we discovered today, it's being taken away. Mr. Speaker, that would make Tommy Douglas roll over. That would irritate him. He would stand in his place as a former premier of this province and he would chastise anybody that had ever

done that. He would do that. He would say you are wrong, you are wrong to do it. You are wrong to have thought about it. And, Mr. Speaker, as we go about the various kinds of discussion in our estimates in the budget we're going to inquire where else is this whole entity of what they're going to do with health care. Where are they wrong?

Mr. Speaker, my family has been a participant in a community health program, a health program in the province of Saskatchewan since I was a very small boy. And that started in health region no. 1 in the south-west part of this province, and, Mr. Speaker, it was organized with the assistance of the government at the time, but it was organized in a way that dealt with the municipalities in a way that was honest and forthright. It dealt with doctors in a way that was honest and forthright.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we have today is a total disregard for any of the people in the community. The Minister of Health doesn't go out and visit with people. She doesn't go and say, what would you say that we should be doing? She doesn't go and ask people in Eastend, should we have a health care facility here? What should it be?

And I can even go to my own constituency where the Minister of Health sent out, instead of going herself, sent out one of her employees through the department. And, Mr. Speaker, it was brought to my attention that only after the individual was confronted with the facts that he retracted his statement that he had made that Vanguard had continually lost money through all the years that they were in existence as a hospital. And, Mr. Speaker, it was the municipalities there that had to say to him, you're wrong. And when he went back he finally had to realize, Mr. Speaker, it was not a drain on the economy. In fact it was an asset to the economy.

Across this province we have small hospitals who are delivering health care probably at a better cost-effective rate than anywhere else in the province of Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why I won't be supporting this throne speech. Because it doesn't address those issues. It doesn't take and assess them in a direct and forthright way. It doesn't do anything for them.

And, Mr. Speaker, if this Premier would have some leadership and if he would have leadership ability, he would ask that Minister of Health to either change her ways and make it happen or he would ask someone else to do it. And I know that there were people who are sitting and have discussed . . . I say there are people in this Assembly who are sitting here and cringing at the fact that they're going to have to do that to health care recipients in the province of Saskatchewan. There are people here who say no, that shouldn't happen, and probably told her that.

And what do they do when they get this whole thing put together, Mr. Speaker? They decide that we can't afford it. We can't afford it. Why? Because the debt is too high.

Mr. Speaker, I pointed that out earlier. If you don't have a real view of what the vision and the direction of the province of Saskatchewan should be, you are never going to have people in the province having a vision. The

leadership has to come from the government. The leadership and opportunities have to come from this government. And what have we got? Absolutely nothing. They are stymied in their attitudes; they're narrow in their thinking. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the leadership is terrible.

They dealt last time . . . I'm just going to go through some of the things that they also did last year. And we're going to get a whole new batch of things to talk about in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, we had optometric services cut. What did the optometrists do? They had a day when you could get services provided. And I believe a thousand people went to see the optometrist for free of charge. That, Mr. Speaker, is starting to be the in thing to do. And that, Mr. Speaker, is happening over and over and over again.

What about chiropractic care? It's off. It's out of schedule. And what happened? These people said, well that isn't a part of wellness. We need a part of wellness to make this thing go. I think the only thing that they're talking about wellness is their budget, and I'm not sure that that isn't sicker than the other. That, Mr. Speaker, is the real problem these people have. They haven't generated enough wealth from the economy to sponsor the kinds of things that people expect in the province of Saskatchewan.

People in the province of Saskatchewan want to work. They want to deliver the best health care services in the province and in the country. They want to deliver the best kind of education. They want to have the best social programs in the province and in Canada. But what do they do? They're stymied by the very growth factor that this government is always putting their thumb on. They're curtailing any kind of ambition, curtailing any kind of energy and vision and future.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why these people have a very serious problem. That's why they have a serious problem out in the country. That's why members in this Assembly don't go back to their constituencies because they don't know what's . . . don't want to visit with those people. That's why the Minister of Health didn't want to leave the Assembly here today. That's why she stayed back, because she didn't want to talk to the media.

Why? Because she knew that there is a very serious problem at the Wascana Rehab Centre, and she knew that for a very specific reason. And that, Mr. Speaker, was that she is cutting the program out. And what is it going to do to 800 children in this province? It is going to make a very serious problem for those children. It is going to make a very serious problem for the care-givers in those homes. It is going to create a very serious problem for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, it took a lot of work . . . I've met a lot of people who have been through the Rehab Centre — adults, children, young people. And that, Mr. Speaker, they have said to me over and over again, we should have another one of those in the province of Saskatchewan, where they treat people in a way that is not only compassionate but it rehabilitates them. That's the kind of

thing that we need to have in this province. We don't need to cut it back. We need to have some of the other hospitals in this province be recognized for the kinds of things that can be delivered. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have the courage in this province to do that.

What did they do with other things that I want to point out in rural Saskatchewan? Well they took the natural gas program away. There were only about three areas or four areas in the province left to do but they said, oh no, we'll cancel that. That doesn't create any economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about costs of production in this province. When you talk about costs of production, you have to reduce those costs, and reducing those costs comes by delivering natural gas to the homes in the province of Saskatchewan. It also, Mr. Speaker, does some other things. It increases our productivity. It increases the capacity we have to produce and that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we need that in the province.

I could go through a whole group of items that have been cancelled as it relates to the things that have been done in agriculture. They cancelled the feed grain assistance program; they put it back in, called it something else. But we're not even sure whether that's on because they haven't paid out yet, Mr. Speaker. And that's another thing that is causing a problem. Pasture rentals went up. Cash advances were gone for livestock producers.

They cancelled the fee that went to pay for cancer patients who were rural people coming in to the cities. They cancelled those items in the province. And that, Mr. Speaker, is another thing they did. All of these things are all things that dealt the rural part of the province — and it isn't only the farming communities; it is the small urban centres in the province of Saskatchewan — it's dealing them a crippling blow.

Behind all of this is, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental belief, the fundamental belief that they want to have as few people in rural Saskatchewan as possible. They want to have as few there for one simple reason, Mr. Speaker, and the reason is this: they want to change the electoral boundaries.

And the other day when we were doing our voting, the members opposite when we were voting said: gone, gone, gone. Each of the constituencies as they came across the roll here, they said: gone, gone. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what they meant. They're going to reduce the number of seats in this province so that rural people will have less representation in this province. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason that they're lowering the population. They're deliberately doing it across the province. They're doing it systematically and they're going to say, I want to get rid of rural Saskatchewan so I don't want to have any voters there. That, Mr. Speaker, is why they're doing it. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say this: I have never had my constituencies changed since the day that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I wonder if the member from Morse would permit his colleague and the Government House Leader to have finished their debate first. But in this Chamber I think the member is on his feet

and should be allowed to speak.

Mr. Martens: — I believe, Mr. Speaker, that was the member from Moosomin or from Kindersley, but it wasn't the member from Morse. I was doing the talking, thank you.

I want to say to the Assembly here today that I believe that you are tracking on the wrong track. I believe that as strongly as I believe in the fundamental principles that in health care and in social concerns that Tommy Douglas provided for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. You're tracking wrong. He wouldn't have done what you're doing today. He wouldn't have done anything compared at all to what you're doing today.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is where you and your ideology are not going the right direction. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this throne speech. I hope that the people opposite have the courage to understand some of the things that are really going on in the province and vote no to the throne speech as it's voted on today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 4:29 p.m. until 4:37 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 44

Romanow	Murray
Van Mulligen	Hamilton
Thompson	Johnson
Wiens	Trew
Simard	Draper
Tchorzewski	Serby
Lingenfelter	Sonntag
Shillington	Flavel
Koskie	Roy
Solomon	Cline
Goulet	Scott
Atkinson	McPherson
Kowalsky	Wormsbecker
Mitchell	Crofford
MacKinnon	Stanger
Cunningham	Knezacek
Bradley	Harper
Koenker	Keeping
Lorje	Kluz
Lyons	Carlson
Pringle	Langford
Calvert	Jess

Nays — 7

Swenson	Toth
Neudorf	Britton
Martens	D'Autremont
Boyd	

MOTIONS

Address be Engrossed and Presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Regina Dewdney:

The said address be engrossed and presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor by such members of the Assembly as are of the Executive Council.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

Ways and Means

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Regina Churchill Downs:

That this Assembly pursuant to rule 87 hereby appoint a Committee of Finance to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty and to consider ways and means of raising the supply.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:42 p.m.