

EVENING SITTING

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 25 — An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 25 brings up a topic the NDP (New Democratic Party) don't much like to talk about. It's the U-word, Mr. Speaker, uranium. The NDP government is faced with a challenge, a challenge of just what to do with uranium. I realize that leaps and bounds were made in the last NDP convention when the party voted in favour of uranium mining in Saskatchewan. The previous stance of the NDP was somewhat confused. Just think about it. The same party that went bananas with taxpayers' dollars, buying every uranium mine in sight, was the same party that tried to phase uranium mining out of existence. How ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

Now the NDP of Saskatchewan have flip-flopped again and adopted a pro-uranium stance. And I say, Mr. Speaker, it's about time. But this stance wasn't reached unanimously. In fact there was plenty of dissension on this issue and it's still there today, as is evident from the NDP convention last year when some of the members opposite tried to stall the convention to prevent the uranium issue from coming to the floor.

The former government announced the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) deal and the benefits it would offer. When they did this, some of the NDP came out swinging against it. Other members in the opposition at the time waited. In fact, one editorialist in the *Star-Phoenix* said, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

"Here's a project that will create 30,000 man-(hours) of work, particularly benefiting native people in the North. It'll also turn Saskatoon into a major international centre for future sales of an estimated 30 CANDU reactors worth \$25 billion world-wide. Former mayor, Cliff Wright's considerable prestige and influence has been hauled into play. Who can be against such an economic bonanza? The hard left wing of the New Democrats, that's who. Regina MLA Bob Lyons threatens to halt the project . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I think the member must be aware you can't use members names in the . . . Were you quoting from it? All right, the member didn't indicate that he was quoting. But if he is quoting, that's fine.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am quoting from the *Leader-Post* . . . excuse me, the *Star-Phoenix* of January 12, 1989.

Regina MLA Bob Lyons threatens to halt the project with court challenge on court challenge, while fellow northern MLA Fred Thompson clasps the admirable pro-uranium,

pro-progress line of T.C. Douglas. Romanow, caught in the middle waits. And waits. It's turmoil time in NDP ranks."

And that as I said, Mr. Speaker, is from the *Star-Phoenix* of January 12, 1989.

Other MLA's (Members of the Legislative Assembly) could also be named that would be trying to hold up the uranium debate. Not only the member from Regina Rosemont, but such members as perhaps Regina Albert North, Saskatoon Broadway, the MLA for Redberry, and perhaps even the MLA for Regina Lake Centre. I guess it always takes turmoil time in . . . I guess it's always turmoil time in the NDP ranks. The budget will be further proof of that, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, uranium isn't only a political topic among the NDP Party, it's a vital industry in this province. In 1990, 20 per cent of the uranium produced in the western world came from Saskatchewan. This province is a world leader in uranium. The world needs Saskatchewan uranium, Mr. Speaker. And for Saskatchewan it means new jobs, new income, more diversification, new wealth, and a prosperous future.

Since the early '80s alone, capital expenditures have totalled more than \$1.2 billion with almost 500 million being invested in exploration and pre-development in Saskatchewan's North. In 1990 the uranium industry generated \$66 million in salaries, wages, and benefits for its 1,100 employees. It invested \$44 million in capital expenditures, paid close to \$30 million in taxes and royalty expenses, and \$2.7 million in industry fees; and donated, Mr. Speaker, \$350,000 to community and charitable organizations plus another 38,000 to the education of the province's youth in the form of scholarships.

Mr. Speaker, these figures reflect one year of what benefits the uranium industry brings to the Saskatchewan economy and its people. These benefits could be multiplied many times, Mr. Speaker, if we were prepared to go ahead in this province with the development of uranium — with not only the mining of uranium, but also with the re-manufacture of it.

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

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I wonder if the member from Cannington would be courteous enough to allow me to introduce some guests in the Speaker's gallery.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. This was a group which we had anticipated a little earlier. They're from Regina Albert South. The member from Regina Albert South had hoped to greet them a little earlier, but he had to leave.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, hope you would join us in welcoming some Brownies from the 56th Brownies of Regina. They're accompanied by their teacher . . . by their leaders, Linda Pettigrew, Joanne Beck, and Jim Ehmann. Hope all members join me in welcoming these students today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As an ex-Boy Scout, I would also like to add my voice to that of the Minister of Labour in welcoming the Brownies to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Toth: — To introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just introduce to this Legislative Assembly the NDP candidate in the Moosomin constituency, Mary McGuire, who happens to be sitting in your riding. We welcome her to the Assembly this evening.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 25 (continued)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The uranium industry, if we allowed it to develop properly within this province, would not only include mining, Mr. Speaker, but also could include the manufacturing and the use of the manufactured uranium products.

There is a value to the mining of the industry, to mining of uranium. But when you manufacture it into a more finished product, the value of that increases tenfold. And when you start using it in electricity, it increases another tenfold, Mr. Speaker. And there are many economic benefits available for us in that area.

And that's one of the things which the privatization of SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) into Cameco provided to the people of Saskatchewan — was the opportunities to utilize the resources that we have available in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the figures I gave earlier reflect one year of the benefits the uranium industry brings to the Saskatchewan economy and its people. Saskatoon receives the greatest benefits from all of this activity. In fact, it is estimated that for every one person employed in the industry, there are two to three employed outside of the industry that support the industry. And this support is mainly based in Saskatoon.

This includes transportation for employees who must be flown into the northern mines, to equipment provision, engineering services, and catering services. There is a wide range of support employment generated in Saskatoon by the uranium industry. Mr.

Speaker, it's an industry that must be fully developed for the benefit of both our urban and rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1988 debt of Cameco . . . was over \$600 million. And only a few years after being merged, their debt was cut to \$120 million at the end of 1991. These figures are from the *Star-Phoenix*, February 15, 1992.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, that was a successful transaction. Even the NDP across the way can't deny that. As I said, the NDP are faced with a challenge, Mr. Speaker. That challenge is whether to do what is best for the Saskatchewan people or to continue to toe the party line regarding uranium. There seems to be some ideology that believes social democrats should be hand in hand with the anti-nuclear movement, but that's just not so.

One of the largest countries under social democratic rule today is France, a strong proponent of nuclear power with some three-quarters of its electrical generation being from nuclear plants. And environmentalists should take note. Tourists in Europe observe a marked difference between the blue skies of France and the grey ones of fossil-fuel-using Germany. I cite France, Mr. Speaker, to suggest anti-nuclear is not a social democratic fundamental principle, although the NDP Party seems to believe so.

In a world where the greenhouse effect and air pollution generally are severe problems, nuclear power, especially from smaller, less costly reactors, is an absolute necessity. While we were touring the province this past fall and winter, Mr. Speaker, nuclear energy, the uranium issue, came up on our environmental tour. We saw evidence of the benefits that the uranium industry provides to the North on our tour through Buffalo Narrows.

While we were visiting there my colleague, the member from Kindersley, asked a person working at the local airport, what do you have in this area for industry? What is the economic engine of the Buffalo Narrows area? And, Mr. Speaker, her response was, well in the summertime we have fishing. That didn't say anything about what they had in the wintertime.

They had a very large unemployment sector in that area, Mr. Speaker, but one of the things that was creating some employment, was when the trucks would haul the uranium ore down from the North. I'm not sure which mine it was coming from, perhaps it was Cluff Lake, but it comes down the road on the west side of the province down through Buffalo Narrows and that created employment opportunities within that community. And I'm sure it creates employment opportunities along that whole highway. One of the things that was available there was some service stations that, Mr. Speaker, because the large trucks that were rolling through that area used those and it provided a benefit for the whole community.

Mr. Speaker, we need more electrical generation within this province. Not that long ago at SaskPower

there was talk of shutting down the no. 6 generating unit at Boundary dam. The government had to hold off, SaskPower had to hold off shutting down that plant because there was a prediction of cold weather. There was not enough electrical generation capacity in the province of Saskatchewan to handle the peak-load demands that would be placed on the system if we had a cold snap while one of the units was down at Boundary dam.

Now it's fine to say that we have enough electrical generation capacity while we have all units up and running, but that's not always the case, Mr. Speaker. We need to take a serious look at producing some more electrical generation within this province. Co-generation is one of the alternatives, but co-generation at the present time is only looking at a very small portion of our potential needs.

We should be looking at nuclear generation as an alternative, or we should be looking at clean coal-burning units. Now that technology is not yet in place. It's not available. But the nuclear option is available at the present time and we should be looking at that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are beginning a new era in uranium mining and nuclear development. With the repeal of The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act, we put onto the trash heap of history an ideological and narrow-minded approach to uranium mining and nuclear development — the trash heap, Mr. Speaker, where it belongs.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the lone NDP speaker in this debate said the Bill was necessary to clean up the mess left on the books. And, Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with that member that SMDC legislation was a mess. Anything that commits the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to owning mines is a mess and a dangerous idea in and of itself.

Mr. Speaker, I want to relate to you how the legislation that this Bill will repeal is related to the financial difficulties the province faces today. Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act was passed in the 1970s. In the 1970s, Mr. Speaker, the government of the day enjoyed the greatest inflow of revenues of any government in the history of this province. More revenue dollars poured into that NDP government than to any government before or since, Mr. Speaker. And what happened to all that money? What happened to it? Was it put in the bank against a rainy day? Was it saved, Mr. Speaker, so that the people of Saskatchewan would have some measure of safety against the potential of collapsing commodity prices, the dangers of a deep recession?

(1915)

No, Mr. Speaker, the money was not saved. It was managed in a shady, secretive, and closed way. The people were told that the government had created this wonderful Heritage Fund and that in that fund was their future security. The people were led to believe that the rainy-day fund did exist in the form of the

Heritage Fund. But what was that fund, Mr. Speaker, what actually was it? Let me quote, Mr. Speaker, one Allan Blakeney, regarding these revenues.

The Heritage Fund, said the former premier, the Heritage Fund was to take money and invest it like Saskoil, in potash, in uranium mines. It was not the belief that the money would be there in cash to build hospitals and nursing homes. End of quote.

Allan Blakeney said that on CFQC on November 7, 1985. The money was not there to provide services to the people or provide them protection for the future. It was there, said Mr. Blakeney, to buy uranium mines through the SMDC legislation that we are now repealing in this House.

All that wealth, Mr. Speaker, all that opportunity, all that hope that came in the form of cash from oil and other resources during the 1970s, all of it frittered away so that the member for Riversdale could say he was a uranium mining baron. They used the wealth of this province to purchase existing holes in the ground rather than bank the wealth for the people of the future. And the former premier now admits that this was what was happening when his deputy premier, the member for Riversdale, was the minister of nationalization in the 1970s.

Getting rid of this SMDC law, Mr. Speaker, is very symbolic in that it is an attempt to purge the soul of Saskatchewan of the bankrupting of our people's future. And that is what the SMDC Bill was, Mr. Speaker. It was the bankrupting of the future. They took the tremendous riches of this province and they did not put it away in cash for the people as the people were led to believe. They used it to buy the uranium mines.

They did not invest it in new jobs, they did not invest it in diversification or secondary processing and manufacturing. No, they did not invest it in the future but rather in holes in the ground — potash and uranium mines. And while the member from Riversdale was out on his shopping spree buying up the uranium mines as allowed by The SMDC Act, while he was doing that, Mr. Speaker, his boss, Allan Blakeney, was pressed by reporters.

What would happen, the premier was asked, what would happen if all the commodity prices fell at the same time. First, Mr. Blakeney stated, it would never happen. It could never happen. But the reporters pressed him and asked, what if, what if it does happen? What if all the commodity prices, including the price of uranium, what if they all fell at the same time?

And finally the premier confessed. He said, and I quote: It would be a disaster. It would be a disaster, he said, Mr. Speaker. And it was a disaster. This spending spree was the direct cause of the economic hardship that our people faced throughout the 1980s and that they continue to face today.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, how can this government get

and be so sanctimonious about the financial situation of this province when it was their wanton spending habits, their socialist zeal to buy up the entire resource sector of Saskatchewan. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if we had the money the NDP used to buy up the uranium mines, imagine if that money had just been left in the bank.

At the tragically high interest rates that the economy endured during the Liberal-NDP coalition days of the early 1970s, at those interest rates the money spent on the uranium mines would have grown geometrically, exponentially, and we would have had some money available to support our people throughout the 1980s when the crunch came.

They did not know how to save in the fat years, Mr. Speaker. They knew how to spend but not how to save. They did not save for the lean years.

What did they do, Mr. Speaker? They spent the money on the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation. They put the future of this province at risk, and because of that, Mr. Speaker, we do approve of this Bill of repealing The SMDC Act. Thank you.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with indeed a lot of pleasure, I guess it would be, to talk to this issue, Mr. Speaker, having not expected to have such a luxury in this sitting of the Assembly. Certainly we never would have expected that the NDP government of the day would have had the kind of turn-about in their thinking as they have had in the past six months on the nuclear issue, and it certainly, I think, comes with a lot of relief to most of the province.

And some, I'm suspecting, Mr. Speaker, might be sitting over in their seats tonight thinking, why would they choose to talk about this uranium thing? We've accepted it now; we're going to go ahead and do some of it in spite of the fact that we have some problems within our party. Why would they choose to talk about this at some length?

And the reason, Mr. Speaker, is quite simple. We believe that there is a lot more that needs to be talked about and thought about, and we want to drive home to all of the members of the government, especially to the back-benchers, that all of these other spin-off effects are available and that they should be pursued with reasonable caution, but with some vigour.

We feel, Mr. Speaker, that if we take the opportunity, when we have it, to point out to the members of the government what they can accomplish for our province, that they might take that one extra step. They've gotten over the hurdle of the infighting within their political party. We all witnessed the great struggle they had, and we understand it. I can't say that I envy anybody in that position. There certainly are some serious concerns about the use of nuclear energy and how it can affect people if it's not properly handled. It certainly must have been a difficult time for that party to make the turn-about that they had to make.

But I want to compliment the Premier for having accomplished that with his party. There aren't that many things that we can compliment him on these days. But certainly the decision he made to turn about their direction and to use the nuclear option to some extent is a great, positive step for our province and one that they should elaborate on and should now go out into the public and actually use as their mechanism to try to gain back some business confidence in our province — especially for the northern part of our province, Mr. Speaker.

I suspect that we have a tendency to forget sometimes about the importance of the North because it has a tendency to be out in the north of the timberline and the population is very small. And I suppose maybe there isn't much feedback up there because we don't likely have a live television hook-up up there. So the folks up North probably don't feed back to us very often about the things and the needs that they have in terms of jobs and security and a way of life.

And so I think as time goes by they will be telling us about that. The city of Saskatoon certainly will be benefiting greatly by the expansion of the nuclear industry. My colleague has alluded to that positive spin-off with regards to the larger city often in competition with the city of Regina for the limelight in Saskatchewan.

And so now that we've explained to the members why we need their attention, we should go into it just a little bit deeper and explain to them not only how this Bill can benefit so many people if it's taken in the right direction, but where those directions could lead to so that they won't miss them.

Fear is the word that comes to mind for many people when we talk about nuclear energy or nuclear things. And obviously when any kind of an energy source or a fuel source is used as dramatically as uranium was in the Second World War and so many lives are taken in one fell swoop, it is only natural that all of civilization would not only take note, but also take upon itself a sense of fear whenever the topic is approached.

It's only natural, and yet at the same time gasoline is a source of energy that has driven the machinery of war all through our last century and a half. Gasoline — if it hadn't been available, we couldn't have had tanks. We wouldn't have been able to have trucks. There wouldn't have been airplanes. We would have had to fight the war on foot. First World War, Second World War, the Korean War — take any of them.

But nobody is afraid of gasoline even though once in a while it still blows up. If you're not really careful with it, it will burn you really badly. Gasoline is a very flammable product, and yet people don't fear the use of it. We'll drive up to the gas pumps and fill our car up with it and drive merrily on our way without ever considering the fact that it's a very dangerous product. I can assure you though that there are many people that have been seriously injured if they use gasoline to wash, say, a starter on a tractor or something like that and it ignites.

So, Mr. Speaker, my point is that fear is something that sometimes gets out of hand. And in the nuclear industry I'd be the last one to say that we should go headlong without caution, but the fear is based a lot on the way the product was used and abused. And if we use it with common sense in the way that technology has taught us, I believe that we have to trust the people that have researched all of these uses, that have done the work in the background and taken the chances with their very lives. They work with it on a daily basis in research for quite a few decades already now.

And the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that very few people are hurt any worse from the nuclear industry than are hurt from explosions of gasoline or any of our other power options. You've all heard about how the GMC (General Motors Corporation) trucks, if they're hit from the side, will burn and explode. And many people have been burned up. There have been law suits and all kinds of things.

But we don't hear a hue and cry from the NDP or from the rest of the world saying that we should ban gasoline. In fact, they would be the first ones to drive up to the tanks tomorrow to fill up their vehicle to make sure they don't have to walk to work in this cold, icy weather.

Now nuclear, of course, is not as simple as gasoline in some ways because obviously you do have to take more pronounced precautions in using it. But we do know what we're handling. We've got lots of scientific data and lots of scientists that have told us how to handle it, and there really isn't a problem if you're willing to follow the rules and follow the guidelines.

One of the things that I've learned about nuclear energy though is that we do have to be very careful if we employ it. And I'm suggesting to the government members, Mr. Speaker, that they take the advice of some of the people in Europe where nuclear devices and nuclear power plants have been in existence for many years.

The problem that they're having, of course, is that their plants are getting old and the cement grows old along with it. And one of the things that people in the concrete industry will tell you is that there's nothing more dangerous than old concrete when you depend on it for your life and your safety. And the problem in Europe, of course, is the fact that these power plants are now growing older and no one is willing to spend the money to rebuild them. Therein lies the whole problem of the fear of nuclear accident.

We have to, as a society that produces uranium, convince the people that buy it that they have to agree to replace the broken and worn-out parts as they're needed. That's a world responsibility, Mr. Speaker, a world responsibility that the sellers have to take and point out to the people that buy the product and use it. If they're not willing to replace the concrete in their ageing facilities, they will blow up.

I have that on firsthand from some of my wife's relatives out of Switzerland. They have a power plant there. And the problem that her cousin points out to me is that they've become so dependent on the use of the nuclear energy that nobody wants to live without it. But at the same time, nobody wants to spend the money to fix it. So it is a great dilemma. And we have to be cautioned not to fall into that same dilemma if we happen to take that extra step and bring in a nuclear plant here.

(1930)

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I even have in my mind a good location that I could suggest. I would suggest that you could take this next step and we could build a nuclear reactor just north of Burstall along the South Saskatchewan River. And you would say the argument there is that there isn't quite enough water in that system perhaps to cool a nuclear plant. Well I have the answer for that too because it's been pointed out to me by some of my constituents, we could quite easily bring some water from the North Saskatchewan, divert it down to the South Saskatchewan, irrigate with it on the way, run it through the power plant to cool the plant and run it into the South Saskatchewan River, and it will all end up back in the same place up in the North Saskatchewan River going out its normal process. In the mean time the warm water could be used for some irrigation in the Burstall area and we could grow some hay crops for the much-needed feed stocks that we require during some of the droughts that our corner of the province is so famous for.

Now somebody's going to say, boy this guy is really off-the-wall. But the realization is . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — But the realization is after they think about it, that this not only is workable, it's probably something that's going to happen. The first time I heard it I thought, it sounds a little off-the-wall. Whoever heard of taking water out of the North Saskatchewan River and bringing it down to the South Saskatchewan River? Well I hadn't, and I was quite frankly a little bit amazed by the idea and I thought, this can't possibly work. But I did a little research as you folk's over there might try some day — a little research might go a long ways.

The reality is that it's not that hard to bring water down from the North Saskatchewan to the South Saskatchewan. And believe it or not, it all runs into the same spot in the end. And it wouldn't hurt anybody because the folks along the North Saskatchewan have got lots more water than they really need at this present time, so why not run it through a nuclear power plant and cool it off and then use some of that warm water for irrigation. Sounds like a good idea to me.

Well you may not agree with the location. Mr. Speaker, they might not. But they could always pick another one and I'm sure that it would serve just as

well. My colleague from Kindersley thought it would be a lot better in his constituency than in mine, and I suppose maybe we could have a draw some place, maybe a hat, and all our names will be in and we'll pick one and that's where the plant would go.

An Hon. Member: — No, it goes to Kindersley.

Mr. Goohsen: — No he says, it goes to Kindersley. Well if he wants it that bad, I suppose that we'll probably have to share and build two.

But really, Mr. Speaker, there are many other uses for the uranium in our mines and it is so very important to us — the jobs alone. I have some cousins that have worked in the uranium mines. One of them told me that he worked on the mole — I don't know if the members opposite know what a mole is, but it's a big machine that needs expert operation — and he worked in the mine.

He told me that you have to take some very extreme precautions when you work there because obviously you're working with a very deadly material. And they would work the right number of hours in the mine, and the doctor would check them, and it was all quite safe because they were monitored.

And, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, if the NDP employ some of these spin-offs and use the nuclear option to our benefit, and follow the guidelines of the people that are working in the mines and have worked there for many years, I don't think they'll have near the problems that they're worried about.

Quite frankly, my cousin looks quite healthy. I haven't seem him shining in the dark yet. It just seemed that he was quite natural and normal after he worked there. So I don't think there's any problem at all.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that when people get so fearful of a thing that they're afraid to touch it, they sometimes lose perspective of the reality or even sanity. It becomes a kind of craziness that we get with fear. And yet they will forget that if they've got a cancer and need to be treated, they might go to Saskatoon and have a radioactive treatment right in the University Hospital, and they may even come to discover that there's been a small nuclear plant running on that campus, in that city, for many, many years.

And it hasn't blown up. The people of Saskatoon don't shine in the dark either. And many people who have had diseases cured with the reactor materials and equipment that are used there are quite indebted and quite thankful to have had the right and the ability to be able to use those pieces of equipment to get themselves healthy again.

The dangers, of course, can't be minimized. There are risks involved and we have to be very careful with the product and how we use it. But we can overcome those things, Mr. Speaker. Other people have done it quite well. We've seen some consumer resistance, of course, and in the process of food preservation, I

recall some few years back that we had in our store packages of food that didn't have to be refrigerated. They had been treated with radioactivity in a particular kind of a container and in so doing all of the things that could cause food to decay or to rot or to perish had been destroyed, and yet the food was perfectly good. But there was consumer resistance because there was a fear at that time planted in the minds of the people, mainly by the wing of the NDP Party that didn't like nuclear things, and people refused to buy the product in sufficient quantities in order to make it economically feasible.

The reality of life is, though, that in some parts of the world people have had to use these kinds of foodstuffs to stop from perishing; they simply had no other way to get food. So, Mr. Speaker, what's happened? They've used these foods that were treated in this manner, and lo and behold, they don't shine in the dark either, and they're still alive and they're quite healthy. And the process does work and it is not one that has been proven to be detrimental to people's health.

We talked about . . . A few minutes ago my colleague mentioned that we are very concerned about our ozone layer. And I think it's very important that we take consideration of that and play our role, although I have to say out front that I don't feel that the people in Saskatchewan should share as big a blame for the holes in the ozone as do our bigger cities around the world. Obviously where populations are concentrated they will emit more deadly fumes in probably one day than Saskatchewan would in a whole year, but we'll have to do our part. There's no getting away from that. We are members of the world society, and being members of the world society we have to do our part to try to protect the world that we live in.

And I think that we have to then say, if there is a power option or an energy option that is not serious in the depletion of our ozone, we must promote that and use it not only for ourselves and not only to sell to people around the world, but we have to sell the idea. We sell them the product and we sell them the idea. We have to educate them along with the product.

And there's nothing wrong with pointing out to people that, if you're going to buy our product we don't want you building bombs. That's been done in the past and it should be done in the future. And when the NDP go out to sell the uranium that they're going to get out of the mines that they've now decided are okay to have, I suggest to them, Mr. Speaker, that they do exactly that; that they send an education team along with it to tell them how to use it and where to use it, and lay out a set of rules that we believe should be followed in their use of our products.

But at that point of course, Mr. Speaker, our responsibility has to end and we have to get back to the ramifications of the good the industry can bring to us. Somebody has said recently that we'll have too much power in Saskatchewan. We're going to burn a bunch of coal and put in some natural gas options,

and we may have too much power.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I dare say that the people that live in areas of the world where they have brownouts and blackouts that are planned because there isn't enough electricity, would not be ready to accept the fact that we have too much power.

In fact I suggest to the members of the government they might have a ready market to sell some electricity and go ahead and produce it. We've got the raw materials. We have got the uranium. We already dig it up; we're not afraid to do that. We've got the water to cool the plant. We've got the location; I just told you where it would be. I've told you how you could even irrigate along with it.

And now I'll tell you where the market is. Just south of us the Americans will buy any amount of electricity that we can produce that we don't need. And there's nothing wrong with selling them a finished product. Why would we continuously sell our uranium to the Americans to produce their own electricity when they could just as easily buy the finished product from us and we could have the jobs and the created activity and the spin-off here at home?

And there's nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker, because whether we like it or not there are 300-and-some nuclear plants, I think it is — I may have that figure wrong — but there are many nuclear plants around the world. Whether we like it or not, if they blow up in China or in Russia or in Africa, the effects as the residue comes around the world, as our world is round and does spin around, the effects would probably be as devastating for us as if we have one blow up at home.

One of my colleagues one day said, what's the difference if you blow up now or two minutes from now? You're still blown up.

So you might as well keep the thing at home where you can watch it and monitor it and make sure that it's fixed right and that it's getting the proper repairs, and that the proper precautions are being taken in the operation.

Now why not do that at home with Canadians who are sensitive to the needs of others. Whereas other parts of the world we have people in control of governments that are not sensitive to the needs of people, who are not sensitive to whether or not people live or die.

The reality is that we've got the experience and history, Mr. Speaker, of people like Joseph Stalin who killed millions of people out of no regard whatever for humankind. Those kind of people shouldn't be in charge of something that needs the attention of nuclear power plants. We ought to do that in a country like Canada where the people who know how to do it, who can do it and will do it, have the opportunity to do it and take care of this very vital resource.

We've also talked, Mr. Speaker, about whether or not these things should be privatized or government

controlled. And I understand that this Bill leans in the direction of the government privatizing the uranium industry further. And I think that's great.

I compliment the Premier again. Once again, not only has he taken a vital industry from the proverbial scrap pile of the NDP policy book and made it a vital part of reality in Saskatchewan today, but now he's going to privatize it so that it actually will work. I shudder to think what the nuclear industry would look like if government had total control over it. And so I'm happy about that prospect.

I'm sure though, that the MLAs in the back benches must be very confused in this government. I'm quite sure they don't know exactly who to follow or which direction to jump any more. Last year they were told to fight nuclear expansion and nuclear development with every ounce of energy they have. Then this year they're told to support the development and expansion with every ounce of energy that they have as well. So it must be a very confusing time for them and I don't envy their position.

We have tremendous world opportunities, Mr. Speaker. Uranium sells very cheap in the world market, in my opinion far too cheap for the benefits it can provide. For the amount of energy that you can get out of a small bit of uranium we shouldn't be selling it nearly as cheap. I don't know how we get around that but it's something that the NDP should work on. We should definitely be compensated a lot more for the raw product when we sell it, and we should try to sell the finished product as much as we can.

In Alberta they had the oil boom — the oil boom that put Alberta ahead of Saskatchewan, not only by billions of dollars, but also hundreds of thousands of people. People just naturally go to places where there's activity that creates jobs and wealth. And they went to Alberta.

And we have that same opportunity with uranium, Mr. Speaker. There's no question in my mind that we could have the boom out of Saskatchewan's uranium, if properly handled, that Alberta had out of their oil patch.

We've been sitting on it a long time. But what good is it to just sit on it for a long time? It's usable. We know how to handle it. Let's put it to work and get ourselves out of this recession. Let's get ourselves out of the doom and gloom. Let's use it to create the jobs and the forward thrust that our province needs. There are other areas of opportunity, but this is one that is clearly available to us now. We don't have to search for it. We don't have to have any commissions or boards study it. We know it's there.

Then we've had people say that there is problems with deciding what to do with the waste and all that. Well, Mr. Speaker, one of my constituents said, you dig uranium out of a mine, is that true? And I said, as far as I know. And he said, when you finish with the mine you've got an empty hole that's quite radioactive yet? Yes, I suspected that's true too, I told him. Well, he

said, why wouldn't you just put the waste back into the same mine shaft where you took the original ore out of? If nature provided that it's safe enough to be there in the natural state to start with, why wouldn't nature take care of it in that mine shaft? He said even to be safe about it, you could probably cement it in and all those kind of good things.

To tell you the truth, Mr. Speaker, it made good sense to me. And I think we ought to have the government take a long, hard look at using those kind of alternatives so that not only we take care of the waste that we have, but we take care of the waste that's being misappropriated throughout some of the world.

We have heard stories of people pushing barrels full of uranium waste into the ocean. I don't know if that's true or not. I've never been there to see it, but I hear these things. And that worries me. So what we ought to do is bring these barrels and put them back in the mines and cement them in there, and we will at least know where they are so we can watch them and keep them out of harm's way.

(1945)

We not only provide opportunity and employment, Mr. Speaker, we now provide safety for the world by taking the proper action. And I think the NDP could do well to follow that kind of a course of action, and I don't think we need a whole bunch of studies or commissions to do that either.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just think that while we are here talking about this, we should also point out for the members, the fact that we can do a lot in terms of saving the oil and gas and other depletable resources we have as well, by using this power source. And I want to point out to the members that oil and gas wells don't run for ever.

I sometimes think we get to taking them for granted because they are here in our province and we have them and they're so nice and convenient, and somebody seems to always go out and do all the work and gets them producing, and we seem to enjoy everything. But they're not for ever. In spite of the fact that in Kuwait, the great fires are out and they say there is so much oil there, somehow I feel that if you keep burning up a product that you take from the ground, eventually it might be depleted.

I've seen oil wells that have pumped for a few years and gone dry and been abandoned because there's no more oil in them. Well the nuclear option can help us with our atmosphere; it can help us with our depleting supplies of those things that we need.

So quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the government would even hesitate but to get right busy and try to expand this industry and just go to work and produce.

There are a lot of people that agree with our point of view on this, Mr. Speaker. I have from the *Leader-Post* here, way back to 1989, the present Premier. It said:

... the proposed reactor would be judged on its merits if he becomes premier although he takes a dim view of it being in private hands.

But he wouldn't dismiss it out of hand, as a member of his NDP caucus did earlier.

So even at that time, the present Premier was looking at the option as one that was good for Saskatchewan. We've had other people that have talked about this energy situation and how the nuclear industry should be used. We've got clippings from several: the former premier of the province; we've got several people from the federal government who have made comments. And my colleagues are going to go into that a little deeper, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, so I'm not going to quote all of them.

But we have in an article here about the spin-off benefits for the members opposite who wanted me to go into this a little deeper. And I heard them calling for that, so I'll quote a couple of little quotes here:

Those promoting the nuclear option say it will provide more than a new source of electricity, it also will be a major catalyst to economic development.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have private people saying that. We have industry people like:

David Bock points (out) to nuclear medicine which had its beginnings in research conducted at the U of S, saying the province's failure to retain that portion of the nuclear industry has cost millions of dollars.

Now this was back in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker, when the industry spokesmen were saying that we ought to have expanded the medical spin-off of the uranium industry a lot more than we had been doing. We'd already lost a lot of our potential by not going after it faster.

So rather than crying over spilled milk, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying to the NDP, what we've got to do is get right to work on this and promote the industry, promote sales, get us some activity, get us some jobs, get us out of this recession. Use this weapon against poverty in our province. Use it to the best of our ability so that we have a good place for our children to grow up with some prosperity instead of all the doom and gloom.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to get into this debate today, Mr. Speaker, but I want to make a few remarks considering what I hear coming across from the other side. They're talking about SMDC being in such a mess when they took over. But I just want to indicate to the members opposite that if it wasn't for SMDC, we wouldn't have the situation that we have up in

northern Saskatchewan right now regarding the mining industry.

I want to touch on a few items. First of all, I want to assure you that it most certainly wasn't a mess when you took over. SMDC was a Crown corporation that was working well. It was getting assets for the province in the field of uranium. And I want to indicate to you quite clearly that all the activity that took place in the mining industry in northern Saskatchewan took place under SMDC. All the exploration that took place in northern Saskatchewan, the Cigar Lakes and the McArthur Rivers and in the Midwest Lake, that was all through SMDC's initiatives. They spent the money. They had joint ventures with other corporations, and that's how we arrived at these large deposits.

And I will indicate to you what that meant to this province before you folks came along in 1982 and sold off all the assets that we had. We had 50 per cent of the assets in Key Lake, which is the biggest operating uranium mine in the world. We had 20 per cent in the Cluff Lake deposit, and that's a fairly large deposit also. And we had 50 per cent in Cigar Lake and Midwest joint ventures. We were 50 per cent shareholders. The citizens of Saskatchewan were 50 per cent shareholders.

Let me tell you, these were good assets. They were good assets, as two of the members, including the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Thunder Creek, indicated just what it means to Saskatchewan, the uranium industry. And I want to say that the price of uranium has dropped in the last few years, but it's on the upswing now. And once they get rid of the stockpile in Russia, you're going to see the prices are going to continue to rise.

And I think that one of the last big sales that was made . . . And these are long-term contracts; they're not at spot prices of 7, \$8 a tonne. They are brought in at larger prices, and they're brought in at long-term contracts. And the last country and the utility . . . a small country with four and a half million people is Finland — living right beside Russia, which has stockpiles of uranium — but they decided in their wisdom to come to Canada and to Saskatchewan and to get their long-term supply of uranium for their utilities. And that's Finland, a small country right beside Russia. So they have made a name for themselves, and that was created through SMDC.

But we had assets until the Tories came along and they sold them off. We had assets in the oil industry . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I just tell the member over there: we had assets in the oil industry, we had assets in the coal industry, and we owned the forest industry in the province until you came along and sold off all those assets. And that's why we're in the mess we are in this province today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — If the Conservative Party across the way had not sold off all the assets, we wouldn't be in

the mess that we are in today. Let me tell you, if we were getting the revenue from the oil industry, from the forest industry, which is booming right now, and the uranium industry, we wouldn't be faced with a \$15 billion debt that's over our head right now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Another thing under SMDC, under SMDC they set the rules as to how the uranium industry was going to be developed in this province. And they were the strictest rules any place that you would find in this industry in the world. The environmental regulations that were put in were the toughest in the world. Health and safety to the workers who worked in that industry are the toughest in the world. And they were put in by SMDC. And I say to you, it was a good corporation. They set the regulations.

And I just want to go back to tell you what it meant to northern Saskatchewan. When the uranium industry was being developed in the early '50s, there was no such a thing as a surface lease. We had local people up in Uranium City area where Eldorado Nuclear was operating, and all their employees came from other parts of Canada and other parts of the world. And the local people in the Fond-du-Lac area and the Black Lake area and Stony Rapids and Camsell Portage, they never got jobs in that industry, very few of them did.

SMDC made sure that there was a surface lease agreement signed. And what that surface lease agreement meant to northern Saskatchewan, I tell you it meant lots. It meant that we were going to get 50 per cent of the jobs in the mining industries that were operating. It meant that we were going to get 50 per cent of the construction jobs when they were building the new mines.

And that took place at Cluff Lake. At Cluff Lake, when that mine was developed, 50 per cent of the labour force were from northern Saskatchewan. That's the first time northern Saskatchewan, the residents of northern Saskatchewan, have ever had an opportunity to work in the industry.

And the same thing applied to Key Lake. The surface lease was signed there with the Key Lake mines. Again, 50 per cent of northerners had an opportunity to work in the mine when it was built — 50 per cent of northerners had an opportunity to work in the construction phase of one of the biggest mines in the world and also 60 per cent of the apprentice jobs went to northerners.

And then what did you do? You came in in 1982, and you decided we didn't need a surface lease. You decided in your wisdom that we didn't need the surface lease that was created by SMDC. You decided that the industry would control itself, and they could hire to the best of their ability. And what happened? At Cluff Lake they always maintained the 50 per cent. But you went to Key Lake, it got down to around 12, 14 per cent, and that was Tory policy. And that was the type of policy that you carried out, not only in this province

but in Saskatchewan.

If there was ever a mess created, it was created by that 10 Conservative members and their colleagues who are not here any more. They were the ones who created the mess that we have in the province. As I indicated, if we had all the assets . . . and let me give you one small example — Cigar Lake. Saskatchewan and SMDC had a 50 per cent share in in Cigar Lake. There's 365 million pounds of uranium in the Cigar Lake deposit — 365 million pounds. And at the way the prices are going right now, when that mine is developed, if it gets the go-ahead, ever is developed, it could be selling at 20 to \$25 a pound. Now you just figure that out, what that means to this province. Just figure that out what it means to this province. And that's one deposit. And the citizens of Saskatchewan, they owned that. They were the owners until you came along and you sold it. And I say that you are the ones that got us into this problem.

You're talking about SMDC and you're talking about one specific industry today. You're talking about the uranium industry. Well I'll tell you, it's not just the uranium industry that would have got us out of this mess, it's all the assets that I indicated — the coal, the forestry, the oil — all our assets you sold. And that's why, that's why we're in this problem today.

But I just want to close off by saying that most certainly SMDC was a good corporation. My colleague from Cumberland in his speeches always indicated that it was a good corporation. And I tell you they believed in fairness, not just to the province but in the regions where we had underdevelopment in northern Saskatchewan. They made sure that the asset was up in the North, that Northerners got their fair share. And now we have to redo that again and build that up. But we most certainly intend to continue to work to make sure that Northerners get their fair share.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to say any more, but just to indicate that I am surprised at what I'm hearing over there, that they want to blame the New Democratic government for the mess we're in.

I tell you, and the citizens of Saskatchewan know full well who created this problem in . . . who created the problem that we have in Saskatchewan, and it's that group across there who sold off all our assets including all the assets that SMDC had built up.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(2000)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and join this debate. I planned to say some of the things that the member for Athabasca said, but he so ably covered the topics that I would have chosen, that I want to stick strictly to Bill 25, which is an Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act, that being the title.

This Act has three sections. Section 1 that says:

This Act may be cited as *The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Repeal Act*. (That's the entire section.)

Section 2 which says:

- (1) *The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act* is repealed.
- (2) On the day that this Act comes into force, the assets and liabilities of the corporation continued pursuant to *The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act* are transferred at their book value to the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan.

That's section 2. And section 3 which says:

This Act comes into force on a day to be fixed by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor.

That's the entire Bill, Mr. Speaker. I have been listening to speeches all day about a Bill that does two things: it repeals the SMDC Act, and it moves assets at book value from SMDC, as it's wound up, to CIC Saskatchewan. And that's all this Act does.

This Bill does absolutely nothing about to mine uranium or not to mine, to generate power by a CANDU (Canadian deuterium uranium) nuclear power plant, or by hydro, or by coal, or wind, or solar, or demand management, or any other energy conservation measures. This Bill does nothing about jobs; nothing with respect to health care; nothing with respect to education, highways, social programs, water supply or water diversion, as I heard a member opposite talking about a grandiose scheme of water diversion.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that other than the PC (Progressive Conservative) Party that doesn't deal with issues at their annual convention, the New Democratic Party deals with these issues and many other issues at our annual convention. Year after year we discuss all sorts of issues, and we have some grandiose debates at our annual conventions — debates that I am intensely proud of, Mr. Speaker. We deal with these issues and then we come with our policies. We talk to the people of Saskatchewan about what we believe in.

I am, Mr. Speaker, pleased to say that I support Bill 25 which one, repeals the SMDC Act; two, moves the assets from SMDC at book value to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan. I will be supporting this Bill which does those two things.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to become involved in this debate. Originally I was not — I was like the member from Athabasca — not going to get involved. But for

an obvious reason, I'm still a home-grown country boy from the constituency of Rosthern and one of my bigger towns in Rosthern is of course the town of Warman. And everybody knows that Warman was in the limelight a few years ago when the uranium issue was a very, very deep concern of many people in this province.

So I do that with some trepidation. But having gone through two elections where my constituents know where I stand on the issue, that I'm certainly not one to say we must bury our head in the sand, we must ignore the situation. I'm always of the type that says, progress is progress. We must continue to forge ahead. We must do it in a very conservative fashion. We must know what we're doing. We have to have all the safeguards in place. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, that is no reason to become paranoid about the situation and no reason not to go ahead.

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to finally see a member from the North get up — and I have a lot of respect for the member that just spoke from the constituency of Athabasca. I know he speaks from his heart about some of the concerns that he was expressing.

And I also know and I also appreciate the fact that he got up and, for all of Saskatchewan to hear and to see, very eloquently put forth from his mind the benefits that the uranium industry can have for the people of the North and indeed for all of the people of Saskatchewan. And I concur with him on those benefits. Essentially I think we are thinking the same.

And I would also give the reason why I'm up here to talk briefly in this debate, and that is that I think the government is to be commended for the step that they are taking. And I will certainly be going along with the member from Regina North when he said that he's going to be supporting this Bill. And I will also, because I think it is a culmination or the coming to fruition, the process that we began where we try to devolve government from control as much as possible.

Now what essentially this does, Mr. Speaker, is take an Act, that I understand from the minister, the Associate Minister of Finance, from his remarks earlier this afternoon . . . SMDC, according to him, was set up by an OC (order in council), and I was not aware of that, Mr. Speaker. I thought it was a legislative Act of this legislature that had set up SMDC, but apparently it had not. But all the more reason I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, to do away with something that the Lieutenant Governor in Council has set up.

But we find now that the government is finally taking the ultimate step which we began, Mr. Speaker, when we set up Cameco. Cameco was an amalgamation of Eldorado Nuclear with SMDC.

Now for the government to say, we're going to take SMDC, repeal that Act, and put all of the assets of Cameco into CIC, the Crown Investments Corporation, is I think a step in the right direction.

Because what it does, it once removes, removes a step further, this corporation and the mining industry from the direct control and the direct tentacles of government. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is certainly the right direction to go.

But just before everybody feels that I'm getting a little bit soft here, I must take issue with the member of Athabasca on some of the points that he raised.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the fact that government owns something does not mean that all of the control and so on and the benefits are vested in the people. That, Mr. Speaker, with due respect, is a typical socialist way of observing the world, that if government controls things it's automatically better. More government control in your life, the better, because government is after all the wise, all-knowing institution out there that will do proper for you. And, Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ from that.

We have examples of where government has controlled industry. We have an example of that vested interest that people had for example when government controlled PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company). Now is that a classical example of what governments can do for people? Well if it is, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that many people in the province of Saskatchewan are saying wow, do we really want that kind of control.

We found out that PAPCO was losing \$91,000 a day for the taxpayer of this province, Mr. Speaker — \$91,000 a day. A drain. A drain on the Consolidated Fund. So we did a deal as a government, Mr. Speaker. We did a deal with Weyerhaeuser. They came in. They not only absorbed that loss and freed that burden from the Saskatchewan taxpayer, but part of the deal, Mr. Speaker, was that they would also increase their investment in the province of Saskatchewan. They spent a quarter of a billion dollars — \$250 million I believe, if my memory serves me correct.

They built a paper mill, a paper mill, Mr. Minister from Athabasca. And you know the impact that that paper mill has had on the North. Not only did they create — and I hesitate to say how many hundreds of jobs because I can't remember, quite frankly — but it created hundreds of new jobs, a quarter of a million . . . a quarter of a billion, \$250 million investment.

And we find now that the poplar trees in the North that used to be waste products, waste products because we only wanted the spruce because that's what you can use for pulp . . . And the result was that we don't have those trees being wasted any more. We can harvest the hardwoods as well, bring them into Prince Albert, put them into the paper mill, and grind out top-quality paper like I'm holding in my hand right now — top-notch paper that is going throughout the entire world.

So from going from a government corporation, from a government-owned, from a people-owned industry that was losing us money every day in the tens of thousands of dollars, a deal was struck to get

Weyerhaeuser in. And that has been to the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now granted, because that was done by a Tory government, of course it was no good. So this current government has renegotiated the deal. Instead of having a long-term pay out coming in to the people of Saskatchewan, we find out now that the deal was struck where we took about a fifth of the money that we could have had, and we took it in immediately. So we had some short-term gain, but over the long period it's going to cost the taxpayer money.

But I mean that's the way that this government wants to do business, so I guess that's how it'll have to be. But the point being, Mr. Speaker, that just because government owns things, and government runs things, does not make it better. It is no . . . somehow a magical solution that things are going to be better and that the profits will necessarily accrue to the provincial taxpayer, because, I suggest to you, members opposite, that just because we have Weyerhaeuser running that deal now, while we have Cargill in the Plaine here with the fertilizer plants and Saferco, the benefits still accrue to this province. The benefits still accrue to the taxpayers through royalties, through the spin-offs that are here. And had this not happened, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to all members opposite, we wouldn't have that fertilizer plant now that is churning out fertilizer around the clock, going great guns, can hardly keep up, adding to the provincial treasury, which means that the Consolidated Fund will have more money in it now than it ever would have had.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying to you now that the mentality that we had in the '70s under SMDC was not necessarily . . . it may have done some good things that I'm not aware of, so I won't take that away from them entirely, but certainly when we have the mentality of a socialist government running around, buying dry holes in the ground, Mr. Speaker, spending literally billions of dollars, buying potash mines, dry holes in the ground . . . They were there already. I mean it was nothing new. There were no new jobs being created, gentlemen. It didn't create a single new job. There were no spin-off activities as a result of that expenditure, but I'll tell you what you did do. You went to New York and you went to Toronto and you borrowed money. You borrowed money and we had to pay that interest rate for years and years and years. That is a drawback, Mr. Speaker, that I think we have to make sure that we are aware of.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that members on the opposite side are starting to get to their feet, they are starting to make their points known, and some of the points are certainly valid, but, Mr. Speaker, I think what we are ultimately doing here is we're looking at a Bill that's going to do away with SMDC. SMDC we know is a uranium mining giant, and well it should be when we take a look at our natural assets. It's something I think that we as Saskatchewan people can certainly be proud of, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is one of the reasons why we find that the Premier of this province, the Premier of this province has

changed his mind.

(2015)

During the election, prior to the election, he was saying uranium is not for us, uranium was not for us. Since the election, I think that what we have seen is that the pressure of the people who need jobs, the pressure from his own members, the pressure from his own back-benchers was such that he finally caved in to his philosophical bent which the NDP Party has traditionally held and that is, no uranium. They were going to close them down. He was prepared to close them down. He was prepared to create unemployment. He was prepared to shut down businesses. He was prepared to depress the economy in the North even further, even further, by saying that as the jobs were created in the North, the uranium ones would be phased out.

Now he said that. And he changed his mind. And we're glad for that. On behalf of all of the people and certainly on behalf of all of the members on the opposition benches here, are very glad that he has done that.

I don't think some of his colleagues are necessarily very happy. I know there are a number of them that are not. And what we on this side are disappointed in, is that they will not take their place, that they will not speak, that they will not make their views known publicly, in a public way, because I think that would contribute to the debate. However, that is not to be the case.

I know that we have the member from Regina Rosemont who has been known to be vocal on this topic. Certainly the member from Saskatoon Broadway. I would like to see these members stand in their places and bring forth their concerns. Because, Mr. Speaker, because, Mr. Speaker, I suppose we could call them environmentalists, that that is the basis of their concern. I think that to a degree it's the concern of all of us. Certainly we cannot go into something like this without being absolutely sure of the consequences of any actions that we will be taking.

The environmentalists are concerned that Cameco was selling uranium that ended up in weapons. And of course we also know that Cameco has very vigorously denied that allegation. The allegations have even been made that Cameco was involved in the production of uranium bullets used in the Persian Gulf War. I've heard that version. And of course, then Cameco has certainly come a long, long way from its inceptions, from a mere Saskatchewan Crown corporation to an arms producer as such.

But we are certainly encouraged by the NDP's pro-mining stance.

But we're not the only ones, Mr. Speaker, that are encouraged. I think Cameco itself is encouraged by this trend, this stance that are being proposed here — and that is that Cameco is now talking about the next

step in this progression. And the next step is that about a safe disposal site in the province, a safe disposal site of uranium waste products.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, right at the outset of a discussion on that topic, that that is something that is of concern, I think, to all of us, to go to that step. And I'm certainly not suggesting that we're ready for something like that. But again, in the progression of this entire situation, is it something that should be looked at? Is it something that should be prepared for?

Or is that something that is so new for some people, so disgusting and revolting for some other people, that again we accept that philosophy of putting our heads in the sand and hoping that the situation will go away? Or is it something that we stand up face to face and address, and see what the future will hold for us on that particular issue?

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that this Bill is something that we can support. I think this Bill is something that holds a future for Saskatchewan. Cameco is going to survive. Cameco is going to survive whether it's under SMDC or whether it's relegated to the CIC holding its shares and its profits.

And I'm going to give you an example of that. The uranium giant . . . and I'm quoting now, Mr. Speaker, from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* of February 10, 1993 because I know that some are going to be saying, oh look at the situation Cameco has gotten itself into because this year it only made \$8 million profit, \$8 million profit. The year prior, it made almost \$50 million profit. So there's a big difference there. It says:

Uranium giant Cameco Corporation reports net earnings of \$8 million for 1992.

This compares with \$47.9 million (I said 50) in 1991.

Why is that? The reason I bring this up, Mr. Speaker, is because of what the member from Athabasca said earlier in his remarks, earlier this month, and I quote again:

. . . Cameco sold its 20-per-cent interest in the Cluff Lake uranium mine for an \$83.4- million loss.

And it did that because it was rationalizing its operation. It wanted to do that so that it was pinpointing all of its efforts into one area. So it was cognizant of the loss. But, Mr. Speaker, if you say that it has an 83.4 million loss, what was its . . . on that one particular deal, the net result at the end of the year, Mr. Speaker, was that Cameco still had a net increase profit of \$8 million. That, I think, underscores the strength of the company and the future that it can hold. And my colleagues during the course of the day — and I thought very adequately — portrayed some of the potential, some of the areas into which uranium is going in these days.

But I want to bring out a few other points now, Mr.

Speaker. And that is . . . and I'm looking at a headline here out of the *Leader-Post*, February 16, 1993. And the title is, "Uranium sale completed"; "Sask. firms get seven-year Ontario contract" — seven-year Ontario contract.

Ontario Hydro is ditching its high-priced local suppliers . . .

Notice that:

Ontario Hydro is ditching its high-priced local suppliers in favor of buying uranium from Saskatchewan and overseas.

Now I want you to note, Mr. Speaker, that we now have an NDP government in Saskatchewan that has admitted that it was wrong in the past, that there is a future for uranium, that there is a future for Saskatchewan uranium. And we have a government in Ontario, an NDP government, that is now buying uranium from Saskatchewan. There's a little bit of irony involved there, I would suppose, but it's certainly something that we would be endorsing and are very happy for.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we have to have a look at, and without getting too negative, I find it disconcerting to some extent that we will have a government or an opposition — when the government members were in opposition — to say one thing and then do a flip-flop. And we have scores of examples — we'll be going through them during the series of the budget debates coming up — where this government is doing exactly the opposite of what they always said that they would do, some of them bearing obviously very, very, dire consequences.

This flip-flop we don't really mind. We will accept some of them once in a while. But the flip-flop is here because we have always been hearing about how bad uranium was. And I have a June 9, '92 *Leader-Post*. It says, "Cameco names offered." Who was going to sit on the board of Cameco, this uranium giant?

Well certainly, it could not be any of the traditionalist NDP members who, philosophically, during their entire lives opposed the idea of nuclear development, nuclear energy — anything that was nuked has got to be bad. But notice, notice . . . And I quote now from that article June 9, '92, *Leader-Post* "Cameco names offered":

Former Saskatchewan premier Allan Blakeney and Kim Thorson, once a cabinet minister under the NDP, are among those in line for positions to the new board of Cameco Corp.

Now we know of course that a lot of the NDP lead two lives — one in their philosophical political life. Once the political life is gone, the philosophical ideologies can evaporate, disappear, and they get into the hard, real world of what the world is all about. And needless to say, was it Husky Oil which was a corporation that Tommy Douglas was a director on as soon as he quit his political NDP life?

Now I guess there is somewhat of that kind of nature in all of us. We stand for our principles, and at times I guess we succumb to those kinds of things that we have not stood for in the previous part of our life. But I think that what we're looking here . . . actually what I was thinking, what I hesitated there, is how we could handle this. We have a particular situation here where the NDP are going to be voting on a Bill that is not in keeping with some of their philosophies.

And I'm going to make a suggestion to the Premier and I'm going to make a suggestion to the minister — Who's the minister involved in this one? It was the Swift Current minister that presented the Bill, but it's not his. I'm going to make a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, that, because of the paradox involved and because of the inner turmoil that many members of this legislature are feeling with this Bill, I'm going to suggest that we have a free vote on this.

The Premier publicly claims that yes, we are an open party, we are a free party, that we will let our members vote the way our conscience dictates, so that if there are members back there that are uncomfortable with this flip-flop that the NDP is doing, let them be able to do so without fear of retribution on the part of the party solidarity. So, Mr. Speaker, I just throw that out to members opposite so that indeed we have a true indication of what the NDP thinks about.

And so once again, I will be supporting this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and I would encourage as many members as can see their conscience free to do the same. Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to take a few moments as well to speak to Bill No. 25. Certainly, as one of the government members had mentioned, there may not appear to be a lot to the Bill, but I think in reality when we look at the significance of nuclear development in this province, there are many areas, as my colleagues have so infinitely shared with us today, and eloquently shared with us today, the fact that the development and the position the NDP have taken recently regarding the development of nuclear energy in Saskatchewan is something positive for this province.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that major industry in this province continues to be agriculture, and of course it's facing a significant downturn right now as we're in major competition throughout the world regarding price.

And I think people across this province, and young people in general, are looking for opportunities where they can apply the education and the learning that they have taken over the past number of years, certainly to graduate from high school or even from university, and the development of nuclear energy in this province is a significant part of economic activity. That's another area of diversification that Saskatchewan has the opportunity to go in.

We're well aware, Mr. Speaker, of the role the former government took regarding diversification of this province; and the efforts that were made by the government of the 1980s to help people in Saskatchewan, whether they be small businesses in their homes or whether they have small businesses in the local communities, or large business sectors such as WESTBRIDGE or Saskferco or Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker, and even the recent agreement that was signed just prior to the . . . or signed in 1991 with the federal government regarding Atomic Energy.

The former government, under the leadership of the member from Estevan, did a number of things to really enhance this province and show the people of the world that Saskatchewan had more than just agriculture. And we don't want to belittle the fact that agriculture is the main component of our province.

(2030)

But, Mr. Speaker, I believe the member from Athabasca talked about the other aspects of economic activity in this province — certainly the oil industry. Saskatchewan has vast resources of oil, and certainly natural gas. And it's unfortunate that the government of the day saw fit to discontinue the natural gas program to rural Saskatchewan as that in itself was a major economic spin-off to rural communities.

None the less, Mr. Speaker, it just shows, and members opposite have been indicating too just through their speeches, the fact that they're beginning to realize that as a government they're going to have to look ahead to the future.

And they're going to have to look ahead at ways in which they can develop industry or encourage industry, encourage economic activity, encourage companies to move to this province and create the opportunities, the job opportunities not only for our young people but, Mr. Speaker, we're all aware of the fact that so many corporations and companies and small companies are having difficulties these days.

And there are men and women in all sectors of our society that are looking for opportunities, and the men and women and teenagers who really don't want to leave Saskatchewan. I believe there are people who believe that Saskatchewan is a fine place to live, a fine place to raise a family. They don't want to leave Saskatchewan.

So the fact that by encouraging the development of the nuclear industry in Saskatchewan creates opportunities not only for young people, but it creates opportunities for middle-aged people who through no fault of their own find themselves working for a company who may have, because of the difficult economic times, have decided that they must downsize. So, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the Bill we certainly, as my colleagues have indicated, can be in agreement with the Bill.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, just by looking at a number of the articles that we've seen . . . and my colleagues

have brought forward a number of articles regarding nuclear development in this province, regarding Atomic Energy of Canada development, and the agreement that was signed in September of 1991.

Mr. Speaker, at that time the then premier suggested that Saskatchewan wouldn't commit to a reactor until an energy panel reported. And at that time the suggestion was made that an energy panel would be put in place to raise the benefits of a reactor to this province and to look at the opportunities and the options and maybe the best locations for a reactor; maybe the size of a reactor. It may not be a major reactor but I believe the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon campus, certainly had an idea in mind regarding a small reactor that they could generate power and heating capacity for their university.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many things that can be done with nuclear energy. Most people just take and believe nuclear energy, it's only use is for power generation. But, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the technology that we have available today, certainly uranium can be taken and used to develop vast resources. And we could have small uranium reactors, if you will, around the province. We don't need one major reactor in a large centre. You could have small reactors throughout the province developing energy and creating jobs and economic activity.

I also realize, Mr. Speaker, when the former government, and now the government of the day, were talking about the possibility of a reactor, the possibility of an agreement with AECL, that many communities in this province were looking forward with anticipation to a contract that would bring some technology and some development to the province.

And we saw the lobbying that was going forward by specifically the two large cities because, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated earlier, by bringing an agreement, by looking at atomic energy development, our two major centres were certainly thinking of the job opportunities and not just jobs for the young people, but they're also looking at businesses that would spring up within their local communities because of the new jobs. And I think Regina is a prime example of what can take place just by bringing new jobs to the city, by bringing Farm Credit to the city, by bringing Crown Life to the city.

And certainly the development of Saskferco, just a few miles down the road, Mr. Speaker, has created a larger spin-off that I'm sure if you talked to any businessman or woman in the city, and even the elected representatives of this city, they would indicate, Mr. Speaker, that the spin-off has generated jobs in the construction industry. It's generated jobs in the fact that new businesses have opened up — they may be small businesses or large businesses — or even large businesses have added employees. All of these things have taken place. And when you have major components come to an area, Mr. Speaker, it just shows what can be done and the spin-off that can take place.

I'm sure that Saskatoon, when the former premier, the member from Estevan, had talked about a possible agreement with the Atomic Energy of Canada, Saskatoon was really . . . came alive in anticipation of the possibilities that could develop just from this agreement. And it may seem that it was insignificant at the time.

It may have seemed, Mr. Speaker, that it didn't mean a lot. But I'm sure that the mayor of Saskatoon, Mayor Dayday, and his council and businessmen and women throughout the area of Saskatoon were really looking forward to not just an agreement, but the potential of doing some research in the Saskatoon as to areas in which they could develop and even develop into the technological age and processing of, and building and construction of, materials to go into a small, medium, even a large reactor.

Mr. Speaker, we're all aware of the fact that around the world many countries really do not have a major source of power generation outside of the atomic energy. Many countries with the large populace basis just do not have the natural resources that we have at our disposal. And we in Saskatchewan are certainly fortunate to have such a large flow of resources available to us.

We can use coal for power generation. We have a water resource for power generation. We have oil that we can utilize for power generation. And even today, Mr. Speaker, we now are looking at ways of taking excess heat and excess steam off of heating plants such as TransGas out at Moosomin, Mr. Speaker, where they're looking at utilizing that to form a 25 megawatt power station, Mr. Speaker.

There are endless opportunities for Saskatchewan people in power generation. But I think we must also look beyond what we already have here naturally and realize that the development of uranium in this province is another significant area of development and economic activity.

And I would think that the men and women of the North, our indigenous peoples, would be more than pleased and happy to see . . . and are more than happy to see the work Cameco has done in the area in development of uranium mines. And certainly the possibility that expansion of uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan creates opportunities for many of our indigenous peoples as many of our native leaders are very concerned about the problems that people in their society face.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to . . . when I look at the debate that took place, I believe it was last fall, regarding atomic energy, and many of the government members talked about how open their party was and the fact that they allow for open debate at their conventions, I just want to also indicate that I don't know of any party in this province that doesn't allow its delegates to speak openly at their conventions.

But I think the debate that took place at the NDP convention was certainly indicative of the fact that there were many people on that side of the House who are very set in their ways — many people who feel that the development of uranium is to the detriment of our society. And also it's good to hear that there are many people who believe that the development of uranium can be a very positive impact on our society, create a very positive impact not only in the jobs and the economic spin-off.

I was pleased to see at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, and I know many people in my constituency were also pleased to see that when everything was said and done, the NDP Party decided, even though it may not have been totally popular with all its members, it decided to go ahead and at least look into the possibilities of further research into uranium development.

I believe it was one of the . . . a present cabinet minister mentioned, he says: I feel a sense of relief and I'll bet the majority of cabinet ministers feel the same way, said Provincial Secretary, a strong pro-development booster.

Just reading through a number of the articles that were printed at that time regarding the convention, one can see the heated debate that took place on the floor of the Saskatoon Centre as the NDP debated their uranium stance.

And I think you must give each one of the members who spoke credit for standing up and voicing their opinions. Many people were voicing concerns. Many people had major concerns on the issues regarding especially, specifically, the environmental aspects of problems that could be created.

And I think when we look at nuclear development, Mr. Speaker, certainly the one area of concern, or the one thing that comes to most people's mind, is the accident at Chernobyl. And yes, Mr. Speaker, it did create a major problem for the people in Russia. And it did create a major problem for people in that area of the world in that accident. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I think we in Canada have one of the best and the most efficient reactors available.

And there's no reason why Saskatchewan shouldn't become a part of the uranium industry, shouldn't become a part of atomic energy development, and shouldn't become a part of the work and the process that is taking place in developing new and safer ways of extracting uranium through mining and developing that resource so that we can build for the future.

I'm sure as well, Mr. Speaker, that there are many companies that are more than happy with the decision that the government made to at least explore in greater depth, the development of uranium mining. I believe in the January 19, '93 issue just this year, the government of the day had indicated that they would be making a decision as quickly as possible regarding allowing underground exploration at the proposed McArthur River uranium mine, and it was announced

by the Environment minister, the member from Rosetown-Elrose. And this, Mr. Speaker, we find was good news to Rita Mirwald, a spokesman for Cameco, the giant uranium company.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, the minister also went on to say, and I'm quoting here:

The panel's recommendations are not binding, but Wiens said Premier Roy Romanow has previously stated the government would be guided by the panel's recommendations on this and other proposed projects.

When I think back to the agreement that was signed by the then premier, the member from Estevan, he indicated that a panel would be put in place and certainly as the government of the day rethought their decision on uranium development in this province and put a panel in place there, also asked the panel to research uranium mining and its potential and its possibilities and what it could do here in Saskatchewan. Also, as I indicated earlier, Saskatoon city council should support proposed uranium mining.

No doubt across this province there have been lines drawn over the years, lines that have been drawn that have placed people at odds. But in the end, Mr. Speaker, I think the proper decision was made. Certainly in my area of the province, in my constituency, people felt that the government made the right decision when they reconsidered their decision to cancel the original contract and the original deal signed by the member from Estevan and decided to revisit the issue.

And certainly we were all aware of the debate that took place in this House last September when the member from Estevan was speaking with . . . when we had the minister responsible for Energy and Mines and his officials here in estimates. At that time the member from Estevan, in his discussions and in his consultation and his perusal of the Department of Energy and Mines, brought forward a number of suggestions. And at the end of the day we saw the member from Swift Current, the minister of Energy and Mines, agreeing that certainly there is a lot of potential for economic development in this province in the uranium industry.

(2045)

I think, Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have indicated, we have brought forward a number of ideas, a number of suggestions, and certainly we're not opposed to the Bill that is before us. We're in support of the Bill. And we want to suggest that Saskatchewan has so much more it can offer and it can be.

We want to commend the government, and we trust that the government will even go beyond where it is today and look at . . . become very serious in its perusal of the uranium industry in developing more . . . or allowing for greater development and greater enhancement of our industry in this province, not only

for job creation but so that we can build a province, build towards the year 2000.

And in discussing our debt and the financing of this province, the more that we can manufacture and process in this province, Mr. Speaker, it goes a long ways to our development and to job creation for our young people and people across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be supporting the Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to have a few words to say regarding this Bill. I believe that in essence this Bill will do away with the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, SMDC. The Act says that the money and the assets will be transferred to the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan. And I believe that that's a proper way of dealing with it. We will be supporting this motion.

And I guess one of the things that my colleague from Rosthern mentioned that I thought was a reasonable suggestion and one that could demonstrate a reasonable amount of reform in this Assembly, and that would be that individuals would be given the right for a free vote, which means that individuals would have an opportunity to decide on their own merit whether they believed in this kind of a transfer of assets. And I believe that it would be a demonstration of confidence in the people of this legislature — that the Premier would give that option and make that option available to the members of this Assembly.

I note too that there have been a number of debates that have gone on about what this Bill really has done through its tenure. There have been times in history when the NDP formulated the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation. They put it into place as a part of a development program in mining and uranium. There are a number of areas that they dealt with. One of those areas was the salt plant at Chaplin. They became involved with that one.

And I noticed today as I drove by it on my way to Regina here, Mr. Speaker, that the salt plant there has been privatized. The people there have expanded their business. They have expanded their business, and they have done it on the basis of their own initiative and an initiative of the company that they are a part of.

I also want to say that this company has also provided an expansion. The mining system at Chaplin works on a residual. The salt is left on the top of the ground, and it slowly pushes itself up out of the ground. And that layer of salt is skimmed off and put into a pile to be refined and put into place for a number of processes. The original process that was used or the product was used, Mr. Speaker, was to make glass. It made glass for . . . It was an ingredient used in making the glass, and it provided a good opportunity for the development to take place. Through the years that transferred itself into various other things. And now today, Mr.

Speaker, the salt is used as a filler for detergents in the home, the powdered detergents like Tide. These are the kinds of things that this salt is used for and becomes a filler in that component.

What happened in this Assembly when the discussion was taking place about the privatization of that company? That company was being privatized, and we had doom and gloom, and we had anger and irritation by everyone who was sitting at that time on this side of the House. The opposition did nothing but run it down, rail on it. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that is even being kind to them about what their attitude was for that privatization initiative.

And what is it doing today, Mr. Speaker? Today it is an energetic company that is growing in that community. And I doubt, Mr. Speaker, if that opportunity would have been made available to them given the circumstances that these people are under today. I don't believe it would have. I don't believe that they would have had the imagination and the creativity to define a way to make that company expand. And I believe that that's a fact.

SMDC is now, or has been a part of a development of two companies, one was Eldorado. It joined forces with Eldorado Nuclear plus that it gave the whole volume of a company called Cameco. And in that company, the opportunity for expansion has been greatly enhanced.

I want to think back too, Mr. Speaker, about some of the progress that we went through and the discussion and the debate that we went through in relation to that. We had in this Assembly, as I was recalling earlier about the privatization of the sodium sulphate plant at Chaplin, we had the same thing occur on the discussion on privatizing the uranium industry. The uranium industry was going to fall right on its head, Mr. Speaker. That's the doom and gloom that was said by the members opposite when they were in opposition. And that hasn't come to pass, Mr. Speaker. It actually has gone the other way.

I'll tell you what has happened. Opportunity has been given to people in Canada to make an investment, people in Saskatchewan to make an investment.

Mr. Speaker, we have to come to the place in this Assembly where it isn't only tax dollars that generate revenue, Mr. Speaker, it has to do with the ability to invest and have profit that gives us an opportunity to make an investment. And that is what we're talking about when we're doing away with this Bill, Mr. Speaker, it's being . . . it's a symbol. It's a symbol of an opportunity for people in the province of Saskatchewan to once again be able to invest their money in something that it is here.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it's an excellent opportunity for people to make an investment. We have today an opportunity to make an investment in a uranium mine in the province of Saskatchewan. I as an individual do and every one in this province does.

But what did we have before? Mr. Speaker, we didn't have that opportunity before. But with the involvement of privatizing the uranium industry, we now have an opportunity to make an investment, Mr. Speaker, and that can be done at any time. And that is as important today as it was at any time in our history.

It's a symbol, Mr. Speaker, it's a symbol of freedom. It's a symbol of an opportunity to exercise that freedom that we have, not only in what we do on a daily basis but where we invest our money. That is, Mr. Speaker, the object of the symbolism of this Bill. And I believe that is very important for the people of Saskatchewan. It's important for the people in this Assembly.

And I say to the members opposite, if you don't believe in this kind of thing, ask your Premier for a free vote. Ask your Premier for a free vote if you don't believe in this. Have the courage to stand here and vote no. Have the courage to vote no. I challenge you, if you really have a conscience about this and it bothers it to vote yes about cancelling the SMDC Act here, repealing it, vote no.

I challenge the Premier to allow his members to vote no. Allow them. Give them the freedom to do that. And that, Mr. Speaker, will demonstrate some parliamentary reform. It will bring to the forefront individuals who will say, yes I want to . . . I believe in this sort of thing; and no, I do not. Allow that freedom, Mr. Speaker.

And that, Mr. Speaker, as the member for Shaunavon indicates, he'd be probably strung up for voting no. And that's the kind of thing that I've always believed that would happen there. If the Premier says yes, then those back-benchers, just to a man, will stand up and say, fine, we'll go with what the Premier says. That's the kind of thing that I think will be demonstrated here this evening as we vote on this later on.

I want . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the men and the women can have their choice as to whether they want to vote yes or no too, and so it's open to all. I think we should have a free vote in this. It would be the beginning of a tradition, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point out some things that I really believe in that this is symbolic of. This is symbolic of an agreement that was reached with the former administration with Atomic Energy. I believe this is a symbol of the kinds of things that we can do with government involvement and with the private sector. I believe it's an important part of it.

What have we got in the agreement with Atomic Energy? We have an agreement with Atomic Energy that will provide an opportunity for research in atomic energy. Atomic energy comes about by mining uranium, processing uranium, and all of the things related to it.

We have, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity here to do what I believe is set a stage for job opportunities for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. I think we

have that in place, and it will be enhanced by having the people in this province being able to invest their money in the uranium industry and also, Mr. Speaker, being able to invest it in research as it relates to atomic energy. I think, Mr. Speaker, that we have only begun to touch the tip of the iceberg in this uranium industry. We have only begun because it's almost a new menu for the kinds of things that can happen in energy and research.

Mr. Speaker, we have traditionally in this province done a number of things, and we've done them well. We have been involved in agriculture, and we have grown the kinds of products here that are recognized the world over. We have, in this province, got the oil industry in a position where they understand and they know about what they're doing. We have in this province, as I just read earlier about, diamonds in the North. We have people who are exploring for diamonds in the North.

We have people all over this province who are capable of understanding and developing the product for the international market. But what we have traditionally done — whether it's uranium, whether it's oil, whether it's potash or any of these products — we have traditionally developed them by taking them out of the ground and selling them to somebody else to process. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not utilizing the facilities of the people and the capacity they have to develop the kinds of things that we have.

And uranium is typical of that capacity that we have to expand ourselves. We can expand ourselves in research. We can expand ourselves in development of various kinds of things even as it relates to uranium, to AECL, and to agriculture. And as my colleague said earlier, if we just would begin to be able to maximize the potential of irradiation in agriculture products, we would be setting the standard way ahead for food that would not deteriorate. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we need to have research.

I want to point out to this Assembly too that this province is rich in the capacity of individuals to do this. We have in this province people who are extremely intelligent, people who are aggressive, who will take an opportunity like this and move with it. I believe that we need that sort of thing to keep on happening. And by having the symbolism of this Bill and its direction that it takes, it provides an opportunity for that intellectual property to be expanded.

And how do we market that, Mr. Speaker? We don't have to take a train load of that intellectual property and move it into China, or move it into Korea, or move it into France. No, Mr. Speaker, all we have to do is set up a computer that will transfer that directly to those individuals.

And who gets the benefit, Mr. Speaker? When we copyright and market that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, it's the people of Saskatchewan who will get the benefit. That's the kind of thing that we're talking about, and that's the kind of thing that we need to

develop in this province.

(2100)

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has everything to do with symbolism. This is symbolic of the things that we believed in when we were government, and it's a conclusion to the kinds of things that we believed in. And, Mr. Speaker, they were right then and they are right today. And I challenge the members opposite to really assess themselves, whether they really believe this within themselves — that they believe this.

Because I can recall, Mr. Speaker, individuals from that side of the House standing in these seats over here telling us how bad we were when we privatized this. We were really, really, really wrong. And now, Mr. Speaker, these people are moving this into the Crown Investments Corporation. They're repealing this Act. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if they really had the intentions that motivated them in previous years when they were in opposition on this side of the House, I believe that they would have the courage to say no to this Bill. But I don't think they will, Mr. Speaker, because they're going to be told what to do.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is important. It tells us what we should be doing and it's symbolic of the things that we should be doing. What else will this Bill be a symbol of? It will be a symbol of an opportunity for jobs. Mr. Speaker, the northern part of this province is going to be built, if it's ever going to be built, it's going to be built on mining. If there is nothing else that can be done there, mining will generate the income that people in the North will have. They will have an opportunity for jobs.

They will also, Mr. Speaker, have an opportunity for research. Why do we want to exclude an opportunity for research in the kinds of things that we're doing through various agencies, whether it's university or whether it's private research, whether it's Atomic Energy, or whoever? The opportunity for research is absolutely necessary. It will provide jobs for every one of the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunity is necessary for us and I believe this Bill symbolizes that opportunity. It symbolizes that opportunity in the North. It symbolizes the opportunity for investment. I'm going to put this question to you too, Mr. Speaker. The symbolism is that the people in the southern part of this province have an opportunity to make an investment with the people in the North.

The people in the North will provide an opportunity to do the mining, whereas the opportunity for the investment comes from the people in the South. And that, Mr. Speaker, is symbolized by this Bill and the things that it will do. It's a symbol of an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and that's what I want to express for the public of the province of Saskatchewan.

Saskatoon has traditionally been known as the uranium capital of the North because services are provided out of the city of Saskatoon for the North.

P.A. (Prince Albert) has had that reputation. And that, Mr. Speaker, in a time as we look at the job loss in this province, is symbolic of an opportunity to move in those kinds of areas.

We need to have this kind of wealth-generating opportunity in the province of Saskatchewan in order to develop the kinds of things that we need to have, whether it's jobs, whether it's research, whatever it is. It's an opportunity for investment by the people from within themselves and from the money that they earn and that they have. That is what this is talking about. That's why this is important. That's why it's necessary to pass this.

And I say to the members opposite who loudly condemned every one of the actions over here, stand up and be counted if you don't believe in it. Stand up and be counted and say no to this Bill.

My challenge to each one of you is to say no to research. Say no to jobs. Say no to economic opportunity for investment in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, if they would have had the same attitude on that side of the House as they have over here, it would be no question that there would be not a single yes vote on that side of the House.

That's the kind of change of values that we have had in the last two or three years from those members opposite. And it's typical of say one thing and do another, say one thing and do another. And this, Mr. Speaker, is symbolic of an excellent opportunity for the people in the province of Saskatchewan. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this Bill when it comes to the vote.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to be very brief, but I could not stand by and listen to the words from the opposition today in regard to An Act to repeal the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, which should be a non-controversial Bill demanding very little debate, and to listen to the rhetoric and misinformation passed on today by the official opposition, cannot pass without at least some comment.

As the minister in charge of Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, I presided over my first and last board meeting this week. And I want to assure the members opposite that we feel, based on all the information available to us, that the repeal of The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation Act is the right thing to do.

If the members opposite, when they were in government, had not decimated the corporation, there may still be a very meaningful role for it to play in the policy and the finances of the provincial government. But nevertheless, when they sold off the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation and amalgamated it with the Eldorado Nuclear to form Cameco, it's a done deal. And I'm not sure that it was

the right deal at that time, but nevertheless Cameco today is a very profitable corporation of which the province of Saskatchewan still holds substantial shares.

I would want to point out that the assets that went into forming Cameco did not come from Eldorado Nuclear. The great, great majority of the assets that formed Cameco came from the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, which was a company that made very good rewards and very handsome profits for the province of Saskatchewan to deliver adequate programs in social programs, in health care, in education, and finance a substantial part of the activities of the province of Saskatchewan.

That was not the case under the administration of the Progressive Conservative government between the period 1982 until 1991, when the roller-coaster actually did finally run over the top of them.

And I find some of the comments today just a little bit hypocritical. The debate ranged from talking about losing money at PAPCO to all kinds of assertions and statements which are totally unfounded in fact. And I couldn't resist, while listening to the member from Morse, it was the final straw for me to want to get up and say something about the credibility of the arguments they put forward today.

And this relates to an incident which I think shows something about the credibility of the members of the Progressive Conservative Party. And this goes back to a question asked by the member from Morse in question period a few days ago, about interference by the government in bingo associations across the province.

And I just want to read for the record, Mr. Speaker, the letter that has been circulated to all members. And it is from the Highway East Bingo Association. And it says in it . . . And I quote to you the letter, Mr. Speaker. And the point I'm making is to show that the argument put forward by the members of the opposition are totally unfounded. And I use this as an example to very graphically demonstrate the lack of credibility in the arguments they make.

This individual writes:

It has recently been brought to my attention that Mr. Harold Martens, Progressive Conservative MLA for Morse, has implicated myself, and that of the Highway East Bingo Association, as being associates of Mr. Reg Gross.

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

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that we're talking about the repeal of SMDC. The lotteries that are being talked about now, Mr. Speaker, I think you would find, Mr. Speaker, are totally . . . Mr. Speaker, I would think that you would find that his comments right now are totally irrelevant to the matter at hand. And I would ask you to bring the member

back to order.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been sitting here all evening and most of the afternoon and listening to the range of debate in this. And I know that Mr. Speaker has allowed wide latitude. And we were here and sat here very, very patiently listening to their debate. And I would be very interested in listening to a corresponding response from the government member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I have listened very carefully all afternoon and it was a very wide-ranging debate this afternoon. And the Speaker is put in a very difficult position because he doesn't know what's in the Bill itself, and therefore you have to allow some breadth of discussion, and I did that this afternoon. And the member can proceed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to start the quote so people can listen to the entire text at one point without any interruptions in it. The letter, and I quote:

It has recently been brought to my attention that Mr. Harold Martens, Progressive Conservative M.L.A. for Morse, has implicated myself, and that of the Highway East Bingo Association, as being associates of Mr. Reg Gross.

Let the record indicate that I have never had the opportunity to even meet Mr. Gross or communicate with him in written or verbal form. The statement also applies to the Highway East Bingo Association, and to suggest such a relationship is totally unfounded.

As President of the Highway East Bingo Association, I wish to inform the legislative assembly that the formation of the Highway East Bingo Association was the result of a well researched and structured presentation to the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. Our proposal clearly indicated a demand for a new bingo hall facility for the Regina area, and the number of charities now fund raising in the facility will attest to this fact. Mr. Martens' irresponsible conduct has drawn a large number of charitable organizations into the political arena, which serves no purpose but that of political expediency.

In closing, I respectfully request that Mr. Martens retract his politically motivated statements and cease his misleading, inaccurate and false statements regarding our Association.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Virgil Cairns, Chairperson, H.E.B.A.

Mr. Speaker, I draw this to the attention of the Assembly and the people who might want to listen tonight, in that you cannot take with any credibility the words of the members opposite. I think what we've seen today is a shameful filibuster in this House.

The Bill is a very to-the-point Bill. The Bill is An Act to repeal the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation — a conscious decision made by the government — from what I understand will be supported by all members of the Legislative Assembly. And I ask that if the members would go to a vote, we would have a free vote of all our members in this Assembly because we support this legislation.

And I want to point out to the members who are viewing tonight and who will read this in *Hansard*, that be very wary of the arguments and the falsehoods that the Progressive Conservative Party puts forward in this Assembly because they have no basis in fact.

And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, we proceed forthwith to get on with the business of this Assembly, to dealing with issues of the financial situation of the province, with education, with health care, with the Bills and the Acts of this Legislative Assembly that will serve all people of the province to some benefit, and not the ramblings of the Progressive Conservative Party. No one knows why they do the filibuster today other than to not want to get on with the serious business of the people of this province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 9:15 p.m. until 9:20 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 33

Van Mulligen	Cline
Thompson	Scott
Tchorzewski	McPherson
Shillington	Stanger
Anguish	Kluz
Goulet	Renaud
Atkinson	Langford
Kowalsky	Jess
Carson	Swenson
Mitchell	Martens
Upshall	Neudorf
Lautermilch	Boyd
Calvert	Toth
Johnson	Britton
Trew	D'Autremont
Flavel	Goohsen
Roy t	

Nays — Nil

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

Bill No. 26 — An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Act

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the brevity of the comments of the members opposite caught the minister in charge of CIC short and he's unable to be here to deliver this, so I will deliver this speech on his behalf.

Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my comments, I will move second reading of An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Act. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if this will inspire such eloquence from members opposite or not.

In any event, it was enacted in 1973 to establish the Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation known as SaskCOMP. It was designed to provide computer data and processing services to the Government of Saskatchewan, its Crown corporations and agencies.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, at the time SaskCOMP was established, mainframes were the mainstay, if you can forgive that alliteration, of computers. Today mainframes are playing a smaller and smaller role in the computer business as laptops and desktops become ever more powerful.

We probably, even if it weren't for the machinations of members opposite when they were in office, we probably wouldn't recreate the Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation now. The nature of the technology's changed.

In February 1988, the previous administration privatized all the assets and liabilities of SaskCOMP into the WESTBRIDGE Computer Corporation. Eventually these assets were part of the assets that formed ISM (Information Systems Management) Corporation. Since that time SaskCOMP has remained inactive, has had no financial transactions to report.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, because The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Act no longer governs an active corporation, I move second reading of Bill No. 26, An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak again in this Assembly, speaking to this Bill No. 26. Certainly I can appreciate the fact that the member from Regina Churchill Downs would like to call the question but I think it's imperative that we take a moment to at least peruse the Bill and make some comments.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us, as well, has a great deal in common with the previous Bill that we have been discussing today and I think you will find that at the end of the day, the members on this side of the House and my colleagues in most part will be in agreement with this Bill. It is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, and appropriate in my view, that we are proceeding first to repeal the SMDC Act and now, Mr. Speaker, in

tandem we are moving to repeal the government computer company Bill.

Mr. Speaker, this government and its previous incarnation when the member from Riversdale was the minister of communications as well as the minister of nationalization, are today writing off some of the worst aspects of their tragic legacy in this province. The concept of the government creating and operating a computer service business had some very Orwellian aspects to it, Mr. Speaker.

And lest anyone forget exactly how far the now Premier was prepared to go in making use of technology for narrowly partisan purposes, I remind everyone that while he was building up a government computer corporation to monitor government records, in tandem he was trying to build a government-owned and operated cable television system that would distribute his political message to those he was tracking with his centralized computer agency.

Let me quote a cabinet document, Mr. Speaker, in which the plans of the member from Riversdale were made public, now long since forgotten by the media but very much a case of big brother watching over the people who could not be trusted to make their own decisions. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote a memo signed by two people on the now Premier's planning bureau. The memo is dated September 22, 1980 and it's signed by Sheldon Zelitt and a Marvin Blauer, and we have never been successful . . . And I quote. And we have never been successful in having the member from Riversdale called to account for this memo. But let me read it into the record as we discuss repealing this Bill because, Mr. Speaker, repealing the Bill does not repeal the attitude that gave rise to the Bill. And I'd like to quote the memo:

The principle cause of concern is that the technology planning has far outstripped utilization planning. The political opportunity side of the BBN is a chance to grossly expand access to cultural, educational, entertainment and service programming, at a time when cultural policy is a public issue, and in a province where the Premier has a strong interest in solidifying and promulgating the Saskatchewan identity.

The memo continues, Mr. Speaker:

The problem side is that with or without government intervention, in policy and control, the expanded network will still be utilized. Two developmental potholes to watch for are, first that we will forego an unparalleled opportunity to influence media, leaving established and aggressive media firms to fill the gap with less desirable programming.

(2130)

Now listen to the next part, Mr. Speaker. It is critical, and I continue quoting:

A hush tri-ministerial committee has been struck with Romanow, Cody and Cowley, to handle control of the BBN.

They have produced a limited distribution report which suggests as potential control devices another Crown corporation.

They have good conceptual skills, but have been kept unapprised of the control-gaining process, the control-acquisition moves.

Now, Mr. Speaker I'd like to skip a paragraph just to wrap up the quote with the final paragraph of the memo:

BBN will pervade every members constituency, and in that, in the near term, what goes out over it and how, is politically vulnerable in the extreme.

That's the end of my quoting of that memo, Mr. Speaker, but look at the emphasis of this hushed tri-ministerial committee which the now Premier was party to. The key focus was to gain control, and the use of a new Crown corporation would be used to ensure full political exploitation.

And that Crown corporation could very well have been the Saskatchewan computer utility, Mr. Speaker. Because the policy was being written by the same people who designed the computer utility.

Now imagine, Mr. Speaker, combining a centralized government computer operation with a secretive, in the words of the memo, a hush-hush effort to control communications in this province. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't get much more reprehensible than that.

Just look at the memo, Mr. Speaker, and you will see repeated references to control, control, control. Political opportunity represented in the chance to control what the people hear and see, and perhaps to design that through a computer utility that tracks who knows what kind of information.

Well, Mr. Speaker, given this Premier's history on the matter, I have to say and I'm very pleased indeed that the old computer corporation legislation will not be used to give birth to a new version of these plans.

Mr. Speaker, the government has no business in the computer business. And the fact that this Premier so avidly wanted the government in the computer business is reflected throughout his career.

And, Mr. Speaker, related to this Bill, I'd like to observe that when the NDP members talk about GigaText, I ask them to at the same time talk about Nabu.

You know, Nabu, Mr. Speaker, was not a Saskatchewan firm and had no plans to invest in Saskatchewan. Nabu was an Ontario computer

manufacturer that the member from Riversdale invested \$5 million in the 1980s; 1980 dollars into and lost lock, stock, and barrel. In current dollar terms, the member from Riversdale lost a great deal more money investing in Nabu than the previous government did investing in GigaText.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we could have a long, raging debate just discussing those two computer utilities. Both were unfortunate losses for the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. But at least the previous government did deliver a major victory for the people when it created WESTBRIDGE, which is what gives rise to the Bill we have before us today. WESTBRIDGE, now ISM, Mr. Speaker, has already contributed dramatically to our provincial economy and to our opportunities.

The switch from a government computer bureau to a major private sector computer services firm has witnessed major increases in employment, new global partnerships, and technological development for the province of Saskatchewan that is the envy of jurisdictions around the world. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what should be happening.

Mr. Speaker, the law being repealed today should never have ever existed. If the NDP government of the 1970s had used the tremendous resources available to it to grow a private sector computer industry instead of pathologically trying to create another government empire — if they had done that, Mr. Speaker — we would be light-years ahead today.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think of the recent trip that Mr. McKnight, the federal Minister of Energy and Mines, took over to China. And I'm sure the technology that would be available today . . . that Saskatchewan could be a major player in this technology and distribution of computer technology around the globe.

Even in the face of the failure of the NDP government to husband the province's resources wisely and to generate our own local, high technology sector, in spite of that, Mr. Speaker, we still managed to transform SaskCOMP — as the member from Riversdale liked to call it — we managed to transform SaskCOMP into a major success story.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, there are many members sitting on the government benches that just cannot stand the thought that now in Saskatchewan we have a major corporation that is a partnership involving a true multinational, one of the world's great corporations: IBM. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that many members find it difficult to realize, that as we look around Saskatchewan, we have more than one major multinational corporation involved in this province creating jobs. And certainly it is an attribute to this province to see IBM involved in the computer technology. IBM now calls Saskatchewan home for the headquarters of one of its most significant business interests.

And that is why this Bill is on the blues today, Mr. Speaker. It is there because SaskCOMP is no longer

relevant and probably will only warrant a footnote in the history books as one of those things in which the NDP government of the '70s wasted the public treasury — absolutely wasted, Mr. Speaker.

But what a sight it is to see the NDP members embracing IBM — International Business Machines. And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that ISM-WESTBRIDGE is in fact a highly significant component of IBM's corporate plan.

IBM has recognized that the future is not in its hardware business, not in selling the actual machines. The future, Mr. Speaker, is in providing computer services. And I believe the minister acknowledged that. And you see, Mr. Speaker, the successor to SaskCOMP, ISM-WESTBRIDGE, being expanded by its private owners while at the same time those owners are downsizing their other businesses. IBM finds itself in the difficult position of laying off several thousand people around the world in its mainline business of manufacturing, while at the same time it is expanding its new firm headquartered here in Regina. And we can be proud of it.

And while that restructuring is very difficult and even tragic for those families around the world who are experiencing the loss of their employment, it is a mark of the wisdom of the previous government; that is, it is one instance where international restructuring is benefiting this province and its people.

Mr. Speaker, this would not and could not have been possible if SaskCOMP was still the creature of government, used to control information resources as the former government or the government of the '70s once intended.

But I believe the facts are before us, Mr. Speaker. The facts are that restructuring is going on and will continue to go on. And certainly as we go into the late 1990s and into the year 2000, we will continue to see major restructuring going on in the computer business. And with a little foresight and a little wisdom and a willingness to let the market be the main determinant in which direction development will go, with those things, restructuring can in fact be a major benefit to this province, much more so than others.

And, Mr. Speaker, in considering this Bill to erase the error that was SaskCOMP, to erase that error from the law books, we should learn the lessons that are so clearly being provided to us. The lessons of this repeal Act are not difficult to understand if one only wants to learn them, Mr. Speaker. And I believe it is incumbent on me and my colleagues to try to help members opposite learn those lessons.

The fact that under the NDP government of the '70s this province saw no diversification, which has been the primary harm to our people — and I talked about diversification earlier on, Mr. Speaker, as well — the fact that we must . . . and we must continue to diversify our economy in order to build for our young people and to build for our children and to build for the future.

But, Mr. Speaker, there was always a silver cloud, as they say. And the silver cloud and the NDP's mismanagement to our economy is a fact that we have few or no factories left to fall victim to restructuring. Indeed the industrial efforts of the government of the '70s never even survived that decade, so it was a kind of made-in-Saskatchewan restructuring where government ownership wreaked its own havoc. And then in the '80s, as a new government laid down a policy foundation that was responsive to change and sensitive to technological advance, Mr. Speaker, it was able to privatize WESTBRIDGE and out of that came ISM.

And now the lesson is that if we are wise, if we are observant, we can ensure that we have policies in place that make Saskatchewan an attractive place to invest, a good place for new businesses fleeing the business terrorism of governments in other parts of our country. And certainly we know of the difficulties and the businesses that want to leave places like Ontario and British Columbia. And why not come and settle in this province.

So I say to members opposite, take the lessons of this Bill and recognize that as firms are forced to close in Ontario they will be looking for new places to invest. Let's build a climate for them to invest in this province. I believe we can make Saskatchewan one of those places.

The opportunities, Mr. Speaker, are real, as is demonstrated by WESTBRIDGE-ISM. I believe, Mr. Speaker, the NDP would never have believed that it would be possible to have IBM join in a partnership in Saskatchewan headquartered in Regina on our own university campus. They would never have believed and they would have been shocked to even contemplate the concept. And I believe the introduction of the previous Bill is a good indication of where the NDP find themselves changing in the mid-stream and deciding that certainly there is nothing wrong with technological advancement.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that it was true, and is true and the proof is the Bill before us now. We can attract the biggest and the best in the world to share their investment, their technology, their knowledge, their marketing systems, their economic growth skills. We can attract them here, Mr. Speaker, and we are debating the proof of the pudding.

And why would the government not accept this Bill of proof of that simple principle? Now, Mr. Speaker, you see self-contradictory arguments coming out of the NDP on this issue of SaskCOMP and WESTBRIDGE. On the one hand, when right after the shares were issued, the share price increased, the NDP, and in particular the member from Riversdale, shouted that this was proof that the shares were offered at too low a price and that the privatization amounted to a give away.

And then, Mr. Speaker, remember the debate when the share value fell? You had the very same NDP

members arguing quite loudly that that was proof that it was a bad deal and people were being ripped off.

So it's shows the kind of schizophrenia that exists in the government benches, Mr. Speaker. It's no good if share prices go up and it's no good if share prices go down. I'm confident that if share prices had stayed exactly the same they would have shouted that that was no good either.

So it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, if tonight we might hear whether the government has come to a conclusion about share prices for the former SaskCOMP. Have they decided whether they would like those prices moving up or down, and which means what to this government. What's good or bad, or do they even understand the question, Mr. Speaker? I suspect they do not understand the question. I suspect not.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that this Bill is coming forward early in the session and very pleased to have an opportunity to expound on the benefits that a major, private sector computer firm holds for our people. There can be no disputing that the future of the world economy does in fact lay with computer systems and information — what they call the information economy, Mr. Speaker.

And as the world moves increasingly into the information age, here in Saskatchewan we will stand as one of the great beneficiaries through the value our economy achieves with ISM-WESTBRIDGE, and it is truly an exciting industry.

(2145)

When you go over to the University of Regina and have a look at what is going on in this major firm, you see that they have very, very talented people working with them, people with a sense of the future — even a vision, Mr. Speaker. They see great opportunities in improving the collection, processing, and retrieval of information in major systems that are almost entirely dependent on information for the success. And of course, they are extremely active in serving the telecommunications market, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a list of all the telephone corporations with which they have contracts, but I do believe that the British Columbia telephone system is one of their customers, and I believe that so too are Alberta and Manitoba phone companies.

Now I stand to be corrected on that, Mr. Speaker, but whatever the detail, I do know that the firm has a number of service contracts with major telecommunications corporations, and these are stable, secure clients based on the very high quality of work that the firm does on their behalf. They're not simply little patronage assignments such as always went to the companies owned by the government. They are genuine, private sector, competitive contracts.

If ISM does not successfully deliver the services their

clients require and expect, they will lose the business. And so it is a highly competitive, highly service-oriented firm and it is recognized as one of the very best in the world, right here in Saskatchewan.

And I think that, Mr. Speaker, is a credit to every employee of ISM-WESTBRIDGE. I know that those employees are interested in the emerging technologies in computer software in telecommunications.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal going on, even at the level of computer operating systems. The move is on away from mainframes and minis to personal computers and workstations, to local area networks and wide area networks connecting smaller computers. And those smaller computers, Mr. Speaker, have nearly the same power as the mainframes today.

I am told, Mr. Speaker, that the University of Saskatchewan in the 1960s operated its entire system on a computer with 16K of RAM (random-access memory), Mr. Speaker. A "K" is 1,000 bytes or about 1,000 characters of information, so at one time the entire university operated on 16K. Today, Mr. Speaker, you cannot even buy a toy computer with that little memory. Now the average computer sold for home use has 4 megabytes, which is 4 million characters-worth of memory.

That's what is going into the homes of people today — machines dramatically, almost unimaginably more powerful than what was used to run an entire university two short decades ago. And ISM-WESTBRIDGE is on the cutting edge of squeezing the greatest performance out of these technological enhancements, Mr. Speaker.

Because the hardware keeps getting more and more powerful, and more and more sophisticated, it is up to people like the employees at ISM-WESTBRIDGE to write the software that will take advantage of that power and sophistication. And it is apparent, Mr. Speaker, that they are well able to do so or they would not be continually obtaining new contracts and new clients.

So while we applaud the end of the SaskCOMP law, we should also applaud the employees of the firm that replaced it, for it is those employees who have made the great success of this firm possible. Naturally they could not have done this had the NDP managed to have their way and forced SaskCOMP to continue as a government agency. All of the successes we have been discussing would not have happened, could not have happened if the NDP Party had had its way.

But, Mr. Speaker, as this Bill so eloquently shows, the government did not have its way and ISM-WESTBRIDGE is a reality — a reality, Mr. Speaker, that contributes to the provincial economy every day. Rather than simply consuming tax resources as the Saskatchewan Computer Utility did, WESTBRIDGE contributes taxes and resources to the government and the economy as a whole.

Surely the government can see this as a role model. Surely the government can see the implications for repeating these successes through making a public share offering in SaskEnergy and SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Why wouldn't the government do that, Mr. Speaker? Why wouldn't they make a public share offering in SaskEnergy and SGI?

Surely as we discuss this Bill, we should be discussing the principle it embraces, which is the principle of getting the government out of the way of development and diversification, and letting the people themselves make a go of the opportunities that present themselves.

And just as this Bill is a testament to the success of WESTBRIDGE, Mr. Speaker, so too we could be discussing the success of a private sector SaskEnergy. Just as the privatization of SaskCOMP saw the firm diversify and move onto the cutting edge, so too could SaskEnergy in the private sector move into marketing environmentally friendly appliances and all manner of things that we cannot now imagine, because that is how the market works.

Creativity is rewarded. Innovation brings profits. Private incentive leads to diversification. I believe that is the reality of what this Bill is proclaiming, Mr. Speaker. And it is a lesson that current government would do well to apply in many other areas as it tries to wake itself up and get some job creation going in this province. And we're all aware of the demand by the public and the expectations for job creation.

And as I've been speaking about ISM-WESTBRIDGE, Mr. Speaker, it is a good example of the type of job creation that has been created in this province with the technological abilities and advancements that have taken place and the availability of people in this province applying the learning and applying their gifts and abilities in developing technology.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is why I've so proudly stood in support of computer technology and ISM-WESTBRIDGE. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Bill as it's presented to this House today.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues have also further comments to bring to the floor before we bring this Bill to committee. So at this time, I just want to thank you for your indulgence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope that I can be as convincing speaking to Bill 26 as I was earlier this evening speaking to Bill 25. I want to assure the Legislative Assembly that I will not be recycling old ministerial speeches, but rather I will be dealing with 1993 issues, that being the year that we're in.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 26, An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Act, is

very similar to Bill 25 in that it has three sections. Section 1 which says:

This Act may be cited as *The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Repeal Act*.

Section 2 which says:

The Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation Act is repealed.

On the day that this Act comes into force, the assets and liabilities of the Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation are transferred at their book value to the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan.

And section 3 — now this is a real long Bill — section 3 says:

This Act comes into force on a day to be fixed by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor.

End of Bill 26.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has nothing to do with Orwell's book, *1984*. It does nothing to change the course of history. It is not about GigaText or Nabu or George Armstrong being the first man to set foot on the moon.

This Bill does two things: it repeals the SaskCOMP Utility Corporation Act, and it transfers the assets of SaskCOMP at book value to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan.

This Bill is done, Mr. Speaker, to clean up some of the carnage that has taken place by the PC Conservative Party over the past nine and a half years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — And by their former leader who said, Saskatchewan has so much going for it, you can afford to mismanage it and still break even — he said that. We're now witnessing the proof.

Previously, Mr. Speaker, in 1978, SaskCOMP was set up — why? — because the government of the day believed that we in Saskatchewan could control some of the dealings of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — We could run a computer operation to take care of some of the computer needs of the government and of the Crown corporations, not IBM, a multinational. We could do it here in Saskatchewan ourselves, and we could do it at significant savings to Saskatchewan taxpayers.

But, Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill that we're talking about tonight has nothing to do with one party's faith in the people of Saskatchewan and another party's lack of faith in the people of Saskatchewan. It has everything to do with two things: repealing the Saskatchewan Comp Utility Corporation Act repeal

and at the same time transfers the remaining, the residual assets after the give-aways of the former government. It deals with the residual assets, transfers them to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan, full stop, period. That's what Bill 26 does and it does nothing more, Mr. Speaker.

I will be supporting Bill 26 because it's the only logical thing to do and I urge members to quit filibustering, let's get on and talk about the important things that affect people in this legislature. Mr. Speaker, I support Bill 26.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to speak on this Bill today because the story behind the repeal of the Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation is truly a Saskatchewan success story — not only the success story of a computer company but a perfect example of how well public participation works.

The privatization of this corporation, the allowing of people as individuals to participate in the corporation is indeed a 1993 concept. This is an example of what the people of Saskatchewan wish to be able to do in this province. They wish to be able to participate as individuals in the economic activities of this province.

The member from Regina Albert North brings forward a very simplistic view of what this corporation is all about.

It's very important, we believe, Mr. Speaker, that people have the ability to be part of the corporation; to be part of the direct ownership of the corporation, not simply through a tax base.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — People believe in the privatization of the public corporations and their own personal ownership of that because it does work, Mr. Speaker. Bill 26 is proof that public participation works because it is dissolving what was once the Crown-owned SaskCOMP.

In 1988, SaskCOMP became WESTBRIDGE Computers through a merger involving two public sector and two private sector companies — the merger between Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation, Mercury Graphics, and Leasecorp Western which formed WESTBRIDGE Computers. They showed a profit of \$5.5 million on revenues of 127.5 million in its first year of operation. In just two years, the company had expanded to the United States and to eastern Canada. Saskatchewan had the leading edge in Air Canada high-tech ticket sales, NFL tickets, computer leasing to Gulf and Shell oil companies, and with North America automobile dealership programs.

SaskCOMP employed about 300 people before the merger. Today WESTBRIDGE is named ISM — Information Systems Management Corporation — and employs over 3,000 people across Canada, Mr.

Speaker. What is notable, Mr. Speaker, is that the rapid growth of the employee base benefits many. This benefits many people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not talking about just the owners and the employees who own shares in WESTBRIDGE. I am talking about Regina and Saskatchewan as a whole. ISM contributes to children and families by supporting the Saskatchewan Science Centre, the Regina General Hospital neonatal unit, and Jeux Canada Games . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. It now being 10 o'clock this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.