

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Jess:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the members of this Assembly a group of grade 11 and 12's from Maymont School in the Speaker's gallery up here. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Mr. Austin Harpham; their chaperon, Margaret Thompson; and bus driver, Daryl Spence.

And I would like to ask the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The member may continue.

**Mr. Jess:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am fortunate also to have a friend of mine from Rabbit Lake, Mr. Norm Haryung. He's a former farmer and teacher from the Rabbit Lake district. And Norman is a regional park manager of Meeting Lake Regional Park, which is one of the finest regional parks in Saskatchewan. And Norm has the distinction of being the longest acting secretary-manager for regional parks in Saskatchewan, and he has served us up there very well for 28 years.

And I'd like to have you join with me in welcoming him here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Health, the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Regina Hillsdale, I take great pleasure in welcoming some very special guests to our Assembly here this afternoon. They are, Mr. Speaker, seated here on the floor of the Assembly. They are visitors from the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre who are involved in the rec therapy program. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce these guests by name: Len Marriott; Troy Marsh; Allan Ronald; Louis Labelle; James Dyczkowski; and Alynne Ferstl. I would ask all members to welcome these very special guests to our Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the official opposition would as well like to extend a special welcome to our guests here from Wascana Rehab Centre.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Draper:** — Mr. Speaker, sir, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House, a Mrs. Dianne Kessler, a constituent of mine from Assiniboia, sitting in the west gallery, and welcome

her to this House and our deliberations today. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Review of Crop Insurance Agents

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for Crop Insurance today. Mr. Speaker, with each passing day another piece of the iceberg is falling off the iceberg and coming to the surface. We have disturbing news from Melville, Mr. Minister. My question is this: is Crop Insurance, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance currently in the process of working to strip a large number of Crop Insurance marketing agents of their contracts, and can you confirm that this has been taking place over the past few days and is continuing to occur even as we speak here today?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to first of all indicate to the hon. member that in running the government of this province one of the key indications that we want is first of all deed and also competence. At the present time we are reviewing the activities throughout the province of any appointments that you have made. There is, I will assure you, not the witch-hunt of the past administration.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Minister, it is my understanding that Crop Insurance is in fact attempting to strip a number of its own marketing agents of their contracts. A number of agents have received a letter from Crop Insurance and immediately after the budget on the 19th this letter instructed them to appear at a hearing in Melville at a designated time to discuss termination of their contracts. Would you be able to explain this letter and why it was sent?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Mr. Speaker, hon. member, as I indicated to you, a number of agents are being assessed as to their performance and in respect to the information received from the farmers throughout Saskatchewan. That is the basis on which some of them are being reviewed. I want to assure you that the services to the farmers of Saskatchewan will not be decreased, in fact improved.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Minister, it is my understanding that at least 16 marketing agents received this letter. There may be more, we're just not sure who all. Could you provide me with the number of people who did receive this letter, the names of the people who received this letter, and the criteria upon which these people were singled out.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member, unlike their party, I am not going to be exposing names during the period of a review. And accordingly in due course, and in estimates of Agriculture, that information can specifically be provided. But I am not in the House going to be putting forward names where no decision has been made, only a review in respect to the performance.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, last summer the people of Saskatchewan received a questionnaire to answer on behalf of the agents to report to the minister about the value of the agents in their field.

Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, 85 per cent said the agent's knowledge of the program was good, excellent; 83 per cent, the agent had an ability to explain the program; 88 said the availability of the agent was good; 96 said that the agent is courteous; 87 per cent, they know when the deadlines are; they understand the program. And I could go on and on — 87 is the average of the kinds of things that the people said.

Mr. Minister, it is my understanding that when these agents arrive in Melville for their so-called hearings they are confronted with a series of false accusations and misinformation. And when they are instructed to sign a form resigning their contract with Crop Insurance in return for a small compensation payment from Crop Insurance, they are told that if they do not sign this form, Crop Insurance will take action to strip them of their contracts and they will receive no compensation.

Can you confirm that this is exactly what is taking place?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to indicate to the minister that unlike your government in the past, our approach in dealing with people that are working in respect to the public have to be, first of all, competent, have to be doing the job, and if they fulfil those requirements, they will retain their jobs. Fairness is a part of our policy and fairness will be a part of our policy in the future.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, 87.8 per cent are either satisfied or very satisfied when it comes to giving their agent an overall service rating — 87.8 per cent, Mr. Minister. That's what the farmers and all the people of the province . . . You sent it to more than just the farmers. You sent it to the rural and urban people. That's what they said, Mr. Minister.

Following the interrogation I have just described on the matters of these agents, these agents are told to sign the release form immediately. They are also told not to discuss this matter with anyone in an attempt to deny them access to the full acknowledge of their

options.

Mr. Minister, can you confirm that this process is occurring, and do you feel that using threats and coercion to systematically break these contracts and to deny them due access to the process of law is what the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation should be doing?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of problems dealing with the facts as put forward by the hon. member because I have absolutely no faith in the accuracy of your facts. And in fact, your facts are wrong.

There are a number of agents that are being reviewed only on the basis of whether or not they are fulfilling the duties within the confines of their commitment and service to the public. Fairness, as I indicated, will be done.

We didn't indicate and up and fire them. These individual agents have in fact been able to come forward to indicate their situation and their side of the facts. That is better than what you did, Mr. Minister. During your reign you walked into offices, led people out of the offices, closed the door. That was your approach. And, moreover, I want to tell the hon. member, that each and every one of them have a contract and within the contract they have rights which they can in fact protect.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, those agents were told to bring their computer, all of their files, all of the letters, details of all of their office, and bring them to the Melville office. To me, Mr. Minister, that does not mean that this is an ordinary kind of a review.

And I want to ask you this question. You are hiding behind the very fact that you have those people out there, you call them in for a training session, and you ask these 16 people to come back, and say: I want all of your things, bring them in to this office here and we will review them. And they are being asked, Mr. Minister, to sign a contract and releasing them from any . . . asking the Crop Insurance Corporation to release them of any responsibility to these individuals.

And, Mr. Minister, they are given time lines and date lines. You have to sign by 5 o'clock or 12 o'clock and you're done. That's what they're doing. Will you confirm that today?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, the member brings in a set of facts to suit himself and to put the worst possible case, as Tories usually do. The fact of the matter is there are a review of some in respect to their performance and that is a normal process that any responsible corporation . . . We cannot continue to run an operation like the members

opposite. Because running an operation like the members opposite put us into the financial debt that we are faced with.

Obviously what we want to do is to provide the best possible service to the people of Saskatchewan. And that will be achieved and it will be done with fairness and it is being done with fairness.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, 87.8 per cent of the farmers said that these people have an overall good service rating — excellent. The fact is that most of the agents involved with this which and have almost never, ever received a single complaint.

There is absolutely no basis for these actions, and since you won't provide an explanation for the witch-hunt, I'm going to suggest one. Mr. Minister, on May 1, 1992, Mr. Terry Tangjer, the hand-picked NDP (New Democratic Party) appointment, gave this explanation to the agents.

He said, he said this in a letter that he sent to all of them, and I have a copy of it here. He said:

You are not in a position to speak out against the corporation, government, or the program. As a corporation we are prepared to initiate appropriate action if this contractual obligation is not met. The action taken could include the termination of the agent contract.

That's what Mr. Terry Tangjer wrote to every one of the agents. The president of Crop Insurance told agents that they were not allowed to speak out against the government.

Mr. Minister, I want to know whether you authorized that letter. Do you agree with the threat contained in this letter? Do you agree with the Crop Insurance agents must never speak against the government? And is the witch-hunt that is occurring today the systematic breakdown of the contract that you have with the agents of the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — I want to indicate to the member that first of all, we require and expect, we expect that public employees will in fact carry out the policy of government. And while they are on duty, I would not expect them to be running against the policy which we are asking them to implement during their work. But where you people went, you terrorized civil servants during your reign that even when they were . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I would ask the members please not to interrupt. Let the minister be able to answer the question. And members then have an opportunity, I think, to ask a question.

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, we expect the civil servants to implement the programs and the policies of the government. I think any

government can expect that of their civil servants — no more, nor less than most governments.

But I'll tell you this, that outside of their government duties they have every freedom, and we have always expressed that — unlike what your party did in the past to totally terrorize and to hand-pick, by the way, Tory supporters for every possible jobs that you could.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I want to ask you this question: why are you asking the members of the crop insurance agents, why are you asking those individuals to bring all of their computers, all of their work, all of their whole office supplies to the city of Melville for them to deposit there? Why would you be doing that if you weren't going to fire them, if you weren't going to say that your work is done and terminated?

They are being coerced and pushed on every level that they possibly can. And, Mr. Minister, it is your intention to replace the marketing agents with who? — NDP supporters, as you have done in the Crop Insurance office already in the town of Melville. You've put NDP supporters . . . individuals who are the secretaries of the member from Melville are now in the Crop Insurance service office. You have put them in there. Will you tell this Assembly that you will not back-fill any of them with people who are NDP supporters?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier and this government is committed to restoring a professional civil service and independence of the civil service here in this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Unlike the past, we are going to restore an independent . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — We don't believe you, Murray.

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Well you don't have to because you didn't practice it so it's very difficult for you to believe.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — What I am saying here, the hon. member is drawing conclusions without even the knowledge of the outcome of . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. I ask the member from Estevan to please come to order.

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — As I said, the hon. member is coming to conclusions far before he knows the facts. And you can't come to conclusions. How can he hypothecate, before a single agent has been removed, that we're going to be filling them with NDP supporters?

**An Hon. Member:** — Because they wouldn't sign off

at 5 yesterday. They wouldn't sign at 5 o'clock.

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — I'll tell you . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. I will have to ask the Leader of the Opposition to please not get into a debate with the minister when he is trying to answer a question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If members don't wish to ask any more questions, we can simply take a little breather until question period is over. That's fine with me.

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have indicated, the hon. member is hypothecating the results of interviews with a number of agents who are under review. I indicate to you that they have contracts, they have legal rights within that contract, and therefore it's impossible for anyone to be derogated of their rights.

We intend to be fair. We will be fair. We will have a professional civil service, unlike the previous administration.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I don't believe that you will do that. I don't believe it at all. You haven't done it before, you aren't doing it now, and you won't do it in the future.

You wrote . . . and your minister responsible for relationships with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) wrote them a letter and said, you toe the line or else.

Now Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, the corporation for which you are responsible, is also threatening people. Bring all the stuff in here and then leave it here and we'll kick you out. And they stripped them of their livelihood.

Some of these people had given up an opportunity. Are SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) agents going to be next? If they don't toe the party line, are they going to be next?

Mr. Minister, are you going to take full responsibility and say to these people that they have legal . . . a right for legal counsel in those negotiations? Are you going to allow that to happen? And, Mr. Minister, will you commit to this Assembly that you will allow that to happen?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — The hon. member goes from the sublime to the ridiculous.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Obviously any individual has the right to seek counsel. Obviously anyone has that right. Also they have a contract which I believe that you renegotiated prior to your defeat. They have the protection within that contract. They have that right of legal counsel.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I stood in this House last year and voted against farmers being stripped of their rights. And you say you're going to keep these 16? Forget it. You don't consider any rights of any individuals. And I'm saying to you, these individuals need their rights maintained and we in the opposition will see that they get them maintained across the board, whether they're NDP, Liberal, or Conservative.

Mr. Minister, are you going to take full responsibility for the actions that you're taking by firing or forcing these individuals to be stripped of their rights in dealing with the kinds of things that they have to deal with at Crop Insurance?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — It would be far easier to deal with the question if you knew anybody that had been stripped of their rights. No one has been stripped of their rights. Individuals have contracts. Individuals have the right to counsel. Individuals have all of the legal rights within that contract, so don't stand here talking about a hypothetical stripping of anybody's rights. I'll indicate to you that what we will do is to be fairer to the civil servants than that past administration.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier, I want to ask you the question. As a lawyer and as a former attorney general, you must understand that due process must be followed and that people have rights that must be respected. Why . . . when the very government that is supposed to uphold the justice begins to run roughshod over people's rights and ignore the law, this is a really a dark day, just like the day that you voted for GRIP and no contracts were allowed.

Mr. Premier, is this the kind of government that you will lead? Will you give your commitment to this House today to personally investigate this matter and to report your findings to this House as quickly as possible, and take some appropriate action with those individuals who are carrying out this at the request of the minister? Will you provide that opportunity for us to see what you're going to do, by apologizing to those people that you've called into Melville?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — As I have said to the hon. member, due process is the entitlement of any individual. I indicate to you, each and every one had the rights within the contracts that you supplied them. Every individual has the right to legal counsel. Every government has the right to review the performance of individuals within the corporation.

And I'll say to this: fairness, I promise, will be the process with this, unlike the process under your

administration. I may say that we respect the civil service. We will respect the integrity of the individuals. But I'll tell you, we will not in fact tolerate incompetence or subversion of policies.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Post-Budget Consultations

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question's to the Premier. Mr. Premier, every day another level of your iceberg budget appears on the surface in Saskatchewan. Every day more and more people recognize the hurt and the betrayal that your NDP government has hidden below the surface of this budget.

Today my colleague from Morse uncovers an appalling example of the vindictive kind of government that you are running, Mr. Premier. But like an iceberg, it's all done underneath the surface. We understand, Mr. Premier, you've been out about the province trying to sell this budget. And it's revealing how an open and accountable Premier does that.

Sir, you've climbed back into your protective bubble, and we're wondering why your post-budget consultative process has to exclude the media and members of the public. Maybe you'd like to explain to us today why you're afraid to face the public of this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that question. I think at noon today I saw something on the podium which had these big letters called GX 94. I don't think it was an MLA's contraption, and I did see a very handsome visage of a person by the name of Kevin O'Connor, who for sure is not an NDP MLA.

And last night in Loon Lake I saw the television studios from Lloydminster and the local press, and the day before I saw the La Ronge people, and in Watson I saw CFQC TV, and I met the public in open forums at every one of these sessions — anybody who wanted to pay 7.50 for the lunch attended. Tonight we're having another meeting in Indian Head which is open to the public. We are meeting the people.

And I want to tell you that while there are questions about the individual budget, and people may dispute specific aspects of it, I tell you that the overwhelming reaction of the people of the province of Saskatchewan is that we are doing the right thing for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, we're fortunate in this province that at least the news media don't believe your rhetoric all the time. So they've been quietly following you around, trying to find out exactly what this closed-door

process is all about.

And in fact, Mr. Premier, you're right. You have met with some people around the province. And invariably after each one of those meetings someone goes out and voices concerns in the public because you wouldn't allow the media and the public in there. In fact, JoAnne Schulte of Watson said to you: why have you inflicted all of this pain on us with a 9 per cent sales tax and your other rate increases and your hidden budget, your hidden taxes, when you could have left it at 7 per cent and at least we knew what we were dealing with. It was out in the open.

But she had to go outside the room, Mr. Premier, in order to voice that concern to other people in the province because you would only meet behind closed doors. Why is that, Mr. Premier? Why won't you open the process up? Why won't you talk to people in public?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, what is incredible about these questions in question period is that the hon. members don't listen to their answers to the previous questions. I just finished telling the member for the entire meeting today at luncheon I had the news media there. I'm telling the member that has been the case every step of the way.

In Watson, CFQC television was there. There were ordinary members of the public there. At the Watson meeting, *The Watson Witness* had a reporter at that meeting from beginning to end, where JoAnne Schulte was at.

And when JoAnne Schulte asked me why did we put on the sales tax, do you know what I said to her, is what I've said to you in the legislature and what I've said to people of Saskatchewan: we are forced to put on these taxes because after nine years of profligacy and waste and debt management, this province has a crisis unparalleled in the history of the province.

The answer to JoAnne is we are forced to do the things that we have to do sensitively, compassionately for business because of your malfeasance, and I think people in Saskatchewan know that's the right answer and the right direction.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Twin Rivers Health District

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform this Assembly of another positive development in our province journey towards health reform.

I have just returned from Paradise Hill, a community just north-east of Lloydminster, where I took part in the signing ceremony establishing our province's second rural health district, the Twin Rivers Health

District.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — The district is made up of the communities of St. Walburg, Paradise Hill, Turtleford, Maidstone, Lashburn, Neilburg, Cut Knife, and the Little Pine, Poundmaker, Thunderchild, and Onion Lake Indian reserves, Mr. Speaker.

The district will have responsibility for the acute care, long-term care, ambulance home care, and public health needs for the area's approximately 16,800 people.

Formation of this district is another example of the growing commitment to health reform in our province which has become evident across our province.

I want to commend the local planning group for looking beyond individual services and facilities and focusing on meeting the health needs of the entire district today and in the years to come.

Their leadership in creating the second rural health district in our province provides both an example and an incentive to other communities across Saskatchewan as they come together to plan and form their own districts.

This is an important time in our health reform process. There will be many changes as we restructure our health system to place more emphasis on community-based services.

Having a health district during this time of transition means that local people have the opportunity to make informed decisions about their health services, decisions that are sensitive to the needs of the people who live within the district.

It's the local people who need and use their health services, so it is only right and proper and fair that they have a say in determining what those services should be. The community-driven establishment of a health district gives them that opportunity.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, today one of the individuals from the planning group came up to me and told me that he recognized that there were difficult decisions to be made in the future and that he wanted to thank me for the fact that we were giving communities an opportunity to make those decisions.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Simard:** — I am pleased to inform the Assembly that an interim district board has been appointed for the Twin Rivers Health District, chaired by Jim Loy of Neilburg. He will be assisted by Ernie How of Cut Knife; Don Young of Maidstone; Bob Schultz of Lashburn, Bob Hougham of Paradise Hill, Joseph Kurjata of St. Walburg, Henry Wooff of Turtleford, and Georgina Gallivan of Twin Rivers Home Care.

The local Indian bands have been invited to have a representative sit on the board. The board will not assume any fiscal responsibility until it has perfected its administrative procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the formation of the district and the appointment of the board are only the first steps towards health reform. The people of this district have demonstrated what can be accomplished when people come together to discuss issues and work together to meet the challenges head on. That is the Saskatchewan spirit that built this province and it will build the health system of tomorrow — people and communities working together. It is the spirit of cooperation that is key to meeting our goal of a health system based on wellness.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, the members of this Assembly to join with me in congratulating the people of St. Walburg, Paradise Hill, Turtleford, Maidstone, Lashburn, Neilburg, and Cut Knife, and of the Little Pine, Poundmaker, Thunderchild, and Onion Lake Indian reserves on the formation of the Twin Rivers Health District.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments regarding this presentation the Minister of Health has just given to us regarding her statement.

I'd just like to mention the fact that even though many people in Saskatchewan realize and recognize the fact that we have to look at ways in which we can rationalize and make our health system serve the public more fully, what has been happening of late, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that indeed what is taking place the people in Saskatchewan, specifically rural Saskatchewan, are finding that time and time again they were actually losing more than they are gaining. In fact it appears that another iceberg has risen in the sea, broad sea of Saskatchewan, and health care.

One has to wonder, in the regionalization of the services that we've just had announced here today, how many of these hospitals will be open in a few years. How many of the people that were appointed to the board will in two years time, as the effects of the offloading begin to take place, how many of them will be willing to stay on that board to administer the decisions or accept the decisions, make the decisions that the Minister of Health should have made? In fact, Mr. Speaker, we just have to look around and we find that there are many . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I ask the member from Rosetown-Elrose to please not interrupt when the member is responding to a minister's statement.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to bring out the point that a number of regional boards have already been facing a situation where members have resigned because of the problems they are beginning

to see cropping up within the health care system, this so-called wellness model.

And I just want to point out one thing . . . brought out a point that was raised by a member from . . . an administrator in the hospital of Wynyard who said, this isn't amputation, it's decapitation. And if he had been involved, had been invited to the meeting, he would have asked the Premier exactly what was going on.

In fact the closing paragraph in the statement he said, we'll become one of those wellness centres whatever the — I believe it's — h-e-l-l that is, he said. This budget helped urban areas at the demise of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's fine and dandy to have the Minister talk with glowing reports about how health is being helped in Saskatchewan, but what we are seeing on this side of the House and what people in Saskatchewan are seeing is that, in fact, rural health care is disappearing and at the end of the day, people will be certainly standing up to let their views be known. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, with leave I'd like to move a motion introducing the name of Mr. Jack Goohsen to the Crown Corporations Committee.

Leave granted.

## MOTIONS

### Membership of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Regina North West, that, by leave:

That the name of Mr. Jack Goohsen be substituted for that of Mr. Martens on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Motion agreed to.

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to question no. 90, I would request it be converted to motions for returns (debatable).

**The Speaker:** — Motions for returns (debatable).

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

### Unparliamentary Language

**The Speaker:** — Before I call special orders, I want to draw members' attention to two things. Number one, yesterday when I interrupted the member from Wilkie

on using unparliamentary language, I inadvertently referred to the wrong paragraph in 6th Edition of Beauchesne's. I said 463; I meant paragraph 486(3), so that correction can be made on page 587 in *Hansard*.

The second point that I want to raise is a concern that I have, and I wish members would pay attention to this very carefully. I have examined *Hansard* of recent days and have observed a development that is giving me some considerable concern. In debate, members have characterized each other as wolverines, rats, and dogs. I should not have to remind members that such language is inappropriate and causes a deterioration of the level of debate. I know that members are quite capable of finding better ways of expressing their views.

## SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance, and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Neudorf.

**Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today in the legislature and speak to the budget. There are literally thousands and thousands of people watching today across the province of Saskatchewan, particularly senior citizens watching this afternoon. And I want to address some very serious concerns that senior citizens, and farmers, pensioners, single parents, and others have about the budget. Because we are experiencing a great deal of pain and a great deal of suffering in the province of Saskatchewan, and people are asking: why do we have to go through this? Why are we experiencing one of the meanest if not the meanest budget in the history of Saskatchewan?

People in Estevan, people in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Yorkton, The Battlefords, are all saying the same thing: we are disappointed; we feel betrayed. There's absolutely fear out there with senior citizens. They're saying: what did you do? You took away my health care protection; you've taken away my medicare.

And I'm going to address that today, Mr. Speaker, because indeed the people of Saskatchewan deserve some answers.

There's absolutely no question that the NDP opposite would not get elected or re-elected on this budget. This, Mr. Speaker, this whole budget argument is now beyond politics. It's about suffering and fear and anxiety, the frustration experienced by Saskatchewan people. They didn't expect what they've received in this black, dark, Thursday budget that did the opposite to what they expected.

And I'm going to go back, Mr. Speaker, answer a series of questions that the people of Saskatchewan are raising — very, very, serious questions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it reminds me in good part about the uncaring nature of the NDP a decade ago when people were frightened. People needed help. The NDP said no. And the very man that was deputy premier at that time is Premier today and heads up the administration, and he is bringing down a budget like they did in 1982 that is absolutely heartless.

Seniors were frightened. Farmers were frightened. Other people needed help, and the NDP, under Allan Blakeney, and the current Premier here today, said no, no help. And I'll tell you, senior citizens and farmers and taxpayers across Saskatchewan, rural and urban, said no to them, and they're going to say no to them again. This is the very same man that orchestrated it in '82 and he's done it again in 1993, and it's heartless and it's cold.

I say, Mr. Speaker, beyond politics the fear and the anxiety and the frustration that senior citizens and our farmers and our families and our young people and the unemployed feel, in the province of Saskatchewan, is real. And in the non-partisan sense they are saying, why pick on them. That's what they're saying.

(1445)

So I'm going to address a series of questions, Mr. Speaker, because this really does remind me of a decade ago when the people of Saskatchewan rejected the NDP and said it's all talk. You don't care about people. You just care about the bankers and you care about other things in your own reputation, but you don't care about real families.

My objective today, Mr. Speaker, is to tell seniors and families that there are choices and there are better ways. You shouldn't be this frightened and you shouldn't be treated this way. There are better ways to provide the goods and services and health care in the province of Saskatchewan than to terrorize you, as you see today.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak today about optimism, because this great province of Saskatchewan can have optimism and should be optimistic, and we shouldn't have the Premier and cabinet ministers running around with doom and gloom saying how terrible it is in the province of Saskatchewan. There's no call for that.

Saskatchewan has great potential, a great deal of excitement in the future, if in fact the Government of Saskatchewan would in fact defend the province and stand up there and say, this is an exciting place to be. We can balance budgets. We can protect people. We can provide health care. But what are they doing? It's doom and gloom and you frighten people. You frighten investors. You've got the rating institutions now, and certainly the seniors are telling me and others are telling me, they say, well you give Saskatchewan a BBB because if the government feels

that badly about the province, I guess it must be true.

And it's not necessary. You can balance the budget. You can provide an attractive environment for people to come and invest, and I'm going to talk about that today. And I want to point out the alternatives, Mr. Speaker, because there are very clear alternatives to the people of Saskatchewan.

This Legislative Assembly is about alternatives. You can balance the budget. You can encourage people to come in the province. You can protect people in health care. You can provide schools and hospitals and alternatives for people without frightening them and without scaring them to death and without making sure that everybody in the country thinks this is the last place in North America that you should invest.

So the people of this province want to know, do we have alternatives to the fear and the offloading and the anxiety and the tax burden and the attack on health care and medicare that we see today under the NDP budget. And I'm going to say, yes, we have real alternatives. Real alternatives, and you can see them very clearly.

I'm going to briefly point out, Mr. Speaker, what people are saying today about the NDP budget. I'm going to ask them to seriously look at the 1993 budget here in Saskatchewan and what they did. Then I'm going to address, Mr. Speaker, what they promised they would do. Then I'm going to talk about the serious alternatives that are there.

And then I'm going to go back into a little bit of history and say the people of Saskatchewan have seen this before and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we know there are deep and real alternatives, and I hear about them every day from the people across the province.

Let me turn to those to start with. Here's what people are saying today. Today in question period, the Premier, the NDP leader, stood on his feet and says, oh we're having a great time across rural Saskatchewan. The meetings are really good, really positive. Well that's a joke.

Read the papers, listen to the news, and he's getting beat up on like you've never seen before. He would never go into an election with a budget like this.

Members from Regina are holding meetings. Regina Rosemont held a meeting and what did the people say? They come out, Mr. Speaker, and they condemn the budget. Mr. Ed Whelan, former cabinet minister, you heard what he said, Mr. Speaker, a colleague of yours at one time here in the legislature. And I quote:

"I'm going to suggest the people who put this budget together had mud for brains" . . .

This is an NDP colleague standing up in a public meeting and saying that this is the silliest, stupidest budget he's ever seen in his life. It goes on to say:



Whelan, who had been consumer affairs minister in the NDP government of the 1970s, said he hadn't talked to a single senior citizen since last week who had a favorable review of the budget.

Where's the Premier going where he's getting this great response? Ed Whelan, former cabinet minister, is telling the truth to the NDP. He hasn't talked to a single senior citizen since last week who had a favourable review of the budget. And I would suggest he's not talking to Tories who are senior citizens. He's talking to NDPers, and every single one of them is saying this is the dumbest budget, this is the meanest budget, this is terrible.

He goes on to say:

"What it's going to cost me, what it's going to cost everyone, is an outrage."

NDP cabinet ministers talking to their own and talking to back-benchers saying, this budget is an outrage. They've raised the deductible for seniors from \$50 to something like \$850. Senior citizens are saying, why pick on us. We support the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation). We've supported the NDP. We've supported medicare and you are picking on our people, on the very folks that got you elected.

Peter Susa, big time NDP supporter said look: "... the poor and the unemployed took the biggest hit." The poor and the unemployed took the biggest hit. NDP supporters.

"I'm really disenchanted with the backbenchers. If this thing doesn't turn around, you will not get elected again."

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier stands in here with bravado and false smiles and says, oh we're going across the province and it's really popular. Why don't you start right in downtown Regina. Right in downtown Regina the people are saying, this is the ugliest, silliest, muddiest, flop, fluke, mean-spirited, iceberg budget they've ever seen in their life. And these are NDPers. Imagine what the Tories are saying. Imagine what the right-wingers are saying. I wonder what the middle-of-the-road Liberals are saying. They're saying this is crazy, this is worse than 1982. And they lost every seat but eight, Mr. Speaker.

Ed is right, Susa is right. You will not get re-elected on this. You are listening to somebody who ... And I recall — and you can say, well it's history, and it is, but it's interesting political history — when seniors came to the NDP, at 22 per cent interest rates you said, nope, can't help you, lose your house, it's gone. Lose your house. And the people of Saskatchewan said, you lose your job, Mr. Leader of the NDP, Mr. Allan Blakeney. You're out of here. And that's what they're saying today. Only I haven't seen it this strong since the early 1980s. So what else do they say? Got a letter today from Betty McDonald from Ceylon, senior citizen: I'm having a terrible time making ends meet. (And she's a widow.) Also the medicare, putting the

prescription up — that is stupid (she says). We need some medicine and small hospitals as the cities have.

This is a senior citizen, a widow who says that she can't afford the NDP budget. I mean why are they taxing these people? Well this is what it says. The Premier comes back from his tour and do you know what the headline says? And the seniors that are watching here — you're not alone, senior citizens of Saskatchewan. People across the province are saying the same thing. It says and I quote, Mr. Speaker: Romanow blasted. That's what it says. He's blasted out there by senior citizens and by chambers of commerce and by health care workers and by senior citizens and farmers.

JoAnne Schulte, as raised in question period today, of Watson, says "why don't you just stay with the 7 cents? Why did you go to 9? We had the 7 all figured out." And when she asked the Premier that, this was the response: "I didn't get an answer." That's what she said.

In the House here, the NDP Premier says one thing in the House and another thing in the country. Hey, he's been doing that all his political life, Mr. Speaker. One thing in the country: he was out there; he didn't have any answers. He wouldn't answer the lady. And it's right here in the paper. In the House he stands here and says, oh well I told her all this stuff and it really went over well. That isn't what she says and that isn't what the paper says. He got blasted. He got hit right between the eyes with the political truth. This is the most unpopular budget in the history of Saskatchewan and it's the most mean-spirited.

And health care workers raised again today in Wynyard. Mr. Harrison said, that's not a 3 or 4 per cent reduction; that's a 75 per cent reduction. He expects his 17-bed hospital to become a 4-bed, will become one of those wellness centres, whatever in the h-e-l-l that is.

Well, well, well. Senior citizens of the province, I'm here to tell you today that you are not alone. The people of Saskatchewan in health care, in chambers of commerce, ordinary citizens who have not been able to speak up and who can't hide in the legislature, are speaking up.

Swift Current today, Mr. Speaker. "Budget has few fans." Well I want to say to farmers and seniors and people across this province: the lead paragraph says: "Critics are calling the NDP budget a monster" — a monster.

And the Premier stands up here joking and laughing as if this is really fun for people. He can have his seat mate gave \$800,000 and a brand-new empty department to play politics with, and you've got people who are senior citizens and single who need prescriptions and you're charging them up to \$800. And the public is saying, this budget is a monster.

He's getting blasted. He's getting booed. Well I say to the people of Saskatchewan: there are alternatives to

this. And I'm going to be talking about them today. There are alternatives to this pain and this silliness and this vindictive nature of the NDP budget.

Another one here says: The budget will hurt Swift Current. Teachers are laid off. The province's teachers are reeling after last week's announcement of a 4 per cent cut in operating programs which follows on the heels of an earlier 2 per cent cut.

Closing of schools. Yesterday schools closed in the city of Regina and the chairman of the school board said, we have no choice; it's the offloading. Right on CK62 Radio he says that it's because we're offloaded. We have no choice.

Teachers, pupils, families, men, women, seniors; that's what they're saying today.

The teachers' federation, Mr. Speaker. The public must realize that these are massive cuts to the school system. The next generation, Mr. Speaker, we know is education, high technology, the information age, information highways, and what do these people do? They're cutting education. Universities are saying, this is terrible. The president of the University of Saskatchewan. The president of the University of Regina: we're a small university and don't have the reserve funds to cope with these cuts.

I met with students at the University of Saskatchewan last night in Saskatoon and they say, there's no choice; the university's got to cut departments, raise tuition. They've got to pick on the very people who are the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, what the people are saying today from one end of the province to another is simply that the NDP didn't tell them the truth; the NDP are too arrogant to recognize that they could balance the budget much easier; the NDP are very, very vindictive. But more importantly, what's really bothering them, they say that the NDP have betrayed their own. The NDP have betrayed their own party, their own supporters, their own people.

And Ed Whelan is right. This is the dumbest thing that you could possibly see. This is the silliest political budget that you could have. But what's much, much worse and more relevant, it's the most painful and it's not necessary. There are alternatives, and that front bench knows it, which could be much more compassionate. And you could have economic activity. You could have balanced budgets.

But you know what? They're covering their political hide at all cost — all cost. Pain or no pain, they are going to cover and protect their political hide because they said that they would not do it with business and with private sector and allow this province to grow. They said they'd do it their way. And they couldn't find any other way so they're doing it in probably the silliest, most harmful fashion that you can devise.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a whole file here of newspaper clippings of people who are suffering and

in pain who said, this is not what the NDP promised. It has nothing to do with the deficit and the debt. This is just about choices. You have alternatives. You have alternatives.

Well what they say is not very flattering, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say to the people in the province of Saskatchewan and those that are watching today from whatever corner of the province you're in: you're not alone. There are alternatives and there are elections and there are opportunities. And I don't want you to take this sitting down. I don't want you to give up. I don't want you to be frightened and say, I guess there's nothing you can do. I don't want you to encourage the NDP to do more of it.

(1500)

I want you to write them and call them and write us and call us and say, there will be a federal election, there will be a provincial election, and we will send them a message. They can't betray the people of Saskatchewan like this and get away with it. And they won't. Absolutely.

So you rest assured — the people of Saskatchewan, senior citizens, farmers, and others — if you feel betrayed like thousands and tens of thousands of people do, that you will have allies. But I want you to have hope, and that's what's more important than anything else. There is hope and there is . . . and there will be an alternative.

Mr. Speaker, why are they so upset? Why are they so upset? I just want to briefly look at the 1993 budget which clearly demonstrates it's the most mean-spirited budget that you can image.

The 1993 budget has sales taxes in the province of Saskatchewan now up to 9 per cent, and it broadened it to include things like clothes.

**An Hon. Member:** — Twenty-six per cent in two years.

**Mr. Devine:** — In fact it's 29 per cent. From 7 to 9 per cent is a 29 per cent increase in the sales tax. And you have no choice; you've got to pay it. If you need clothes, if you need anything else that they're charging on, you have to pay a 29 per cent increase in the PST (provincial sales tax).

And if you're that single lady on a pension and you need prescription drugs, they're not only charging you \$800 now, they've raised your taxes from 7 to 9 per cent. And they promised you no PST. And that's what they did. They raised it. That's why, Mr. Speaker, when you look across there, there's hardly anybody in their seats because they're absolutely ashamed of it.

They promised senior citizens, NDP supporters, rural and urban and farmers and single parents that there would not be a PST. And they not only have it, but they increased it and they broadened it. They did not tell the truth. They betrayed the people. They misled the people. They said no tax increases. And I've got

quotes, all kinds of them, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure you're aware of them. And now they have really stuck it to them.

They increased the gas tax 2 cents a litre. They've increased resource taxes. They have gone and hit people so hard, without any alternatives, that we find them now reeling, Mr. Speaker, and they are extremely upset.

But look what this means, Mr. Speaker, just what they've done to ordinary people who they think they can fool. What the NDP budget does for your family — if you spend \$500 a year on clothes, you add \$45; add another \$300 for just general sales tax; you can add \$63 in gasoline — clothing, 45; sales tax, 300.

Health insurance. Right now the private sector — can you believe it — in the province of Saskatchewan, under the NDP-CCF, have encouraged the private sector to come in and provide prescription drug insurance. MCIC (Medical Care Insurance Commission), Blue Cross coming in here. And the senior citizen says: I can't afford it; I voted NDP so that they wouldn't do that, and now they've done it. That will cost an extra \$456 a year.

Children's dental insurance can cost \$840 a year; the gas tax, 63; pharmaceuticals alone, \$240; and in property taxes — we haven't even got it yet because the RMs (rural municipality) and the municipalities haven't raised them, but it's literally hundreds of dollars. You've got over \$2,000 in taxes per family, and we haven't even included the offload in property taxes.

Senior citizens, low income people . . . Now that doesn't include increases in utilities, Mr. Speaker, power rates, gas rates. Vehicle insurance has increased three and a half per cent and another four and a half per cent April 1. Registration is up 7.6 per cent; licence renewals up 20 per cent; energy rates up 4 per cent and then 2 per cent in '93. Surtax and personal income up 10 per cent. And they de-insured chiropractic services, optometric services, tripled the drug plan — a massive list of increases and target fees, all kinds of fees. And the people don't have a choice. They've got to pay their power bill. They've got to pay their telephone bill. They've got to have automobile insurance. These are all monopolies.

The people are saying: what did they do to me? They didn't give me any choice. I voted for less tax, they said. This budget is a betrayal, Mr. Speaker, for senior citizens, for low income, for farmers, for all the people in the province of Saskatchewan, particularly as Ed Whelan says, for the NDP who hoped that they would get some support.

They're looking back and saying, as a lady from Wynyard: wow, I'd take 7 cents any day. If I could just have what I had in 1991, '90, '89 — a prescription drug program, a pension program, protected program, health care, and my services — I'd pay 7 cents. Look what these people have done. They've cut all these programs, raised the taxes, raised the fees, raised

utilities, and you have no choice at all. And the ironic part is they've hit the people who really, really supported them.

Ed Whelan is right on the money — this is the dumbest thing that he's ever seen in terms of political document, and you'd never take this to the people in an election. But even worse than that, it is just the pain and the suffering that it's caused.

Well when we look at it we have fee increases for almost every agricultural activity, every business activity, cooperatives, all kinds — everything that you can image they've raised the fees on. People are genuinely upset and discouraged, taxed to death. And then we have it, our neighbouring province to Alberta rejects sales tax.

What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? If it's 9 per cent here and there's no sales tax in Alberta and there's less sales tax in North Dakota and Montana, what do you think the cross-border shopping is going to be like? What have you done? Ask the people of Maple Creek or Swift Current, Weyburn, Estevan, Saskatoon for that matter. Raise those interest rates up in Saskatchewan and if there's none in Alberta, and I quote they're not going to have a sales tax in Alberta, you have just driven business and consumers and all kinds of people into the United States to shop, or here over to the province of Alberta to shop.

So this budget, this budget, Mr. Speaker, has raised the taxes, has not balanced the budget. It's added to the deficit, it's ripped apart the people of Saskatchewan who supported the NDP, and it hasn't provided the optimism for investment.

In fact, the Premier runs around the province of Saskatchewan crying doom and gloom. He says we have no choice, we have to make it this way because there's doom and gloom. He preaches it and he preaches until people actually believe it. And the credit-rating institutions have now dropped Saskatchewan's credit rating from AA to BBB since he's been in power because they have made this decision that they have to preach doom and gloom to cover their political hide.

Well I want to say to people of Saskatchewan, and particularly to the low income and to the seniors that are watching today, this option of the NDP's, of preaching doom and gloom, is not necessary. It's a fake. It's a sham. It's a fraud. Saskatchewan is very, very strong. Saskatchewan can be any amount of things that we want it to be, but not under the NDP because they preach doom and gloom just to fool you.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, I want to just turn . . . because the people of Saskatchewan are saying they don't like this, they're saying that when you look at the budget it's taxes and they promised not. It's vicious. It's severe.

Now I'm going to ask the question and then I'm going to answer it. What did the NDP say they would do? What did they say they would do if they got elected?

This is what they said that they would do. This is Mr. Romanow and CKCK-TV, September 3, 1991: We think a four and a half billion dollar expenditure is roughly enough; it's what we now expend in the province of Saskatchewan. Is enough — four and a half billion is enough.

This is what he said in P.A. (Prince Albert): Tax increases are not needed to pay for the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs, says NDP Leader Roy Romanow. No taxes.

Then he said, no new taxes will be imposed. Instead, the NDP would cut wasteful spending and encourage new economic development.

**An Hon. Member:** — What development?

**Mr. Devine:** — Yes, where's the economic development? And he said no new taxes.

Then in the *Leader-Post* it says, and I quote: Romanow is promising a government that will live within its means, spend no more than current budget estimates of 4.5 billion annually. And the people of this province are fed up with taxes and we're going to change that, he says. He said the people of Saskatchewan are fed up with taxes and the NDP is going to change that. What have we got? Holy smokes.

They promised no PST and they promised no increase in taxes. They promised no increase in fees. They promised to balance the budget. They promised economic development. They promised cost of production for farmers. And they promised the end of food banks. They promised no more people in poverty.

But what have you got? You've got more people in pain, more people in poverty, more people leaving the province, more people shopping in Alberta, more deficits, accumulated debt going up, the credit rating going down. You've got a bigger, deeper, painful mess today than you've seen in the history of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a little bit of time here because it involves several quotes. My colleague in the legislature in 1991, Mr. Hepworth, put together a budget that would balance Saskatchewan's budget in 1993-94. And at that particular time the NDP leader got to his feet, the leader of the opposition, and he said several things. And I'm just going to read them back into the record and find out how he's doing.

This is what he said after the '91 budget, and this is on page 2716:

... rather than a credible plan to create jobs and economic activity, or to ease the tax burden on ordinary families, or cut waste at the top of government.

He is going to ease the tax burden on ordinary families

and cut waste at the top in government. He just gave \$800,000 and an expanded cabinet to the top and he increased taxes on ordinary families. He did exactly the opposite.

He said, we'll ease the tax burden on ordinary families. Did he do that? No; he raised taxes. Did he cut waste at the top? No; he expanded his cabinet by 80 per cent from 10 to 18 and then he gave the Deputy Premier — felt a little bit of sympathy for him — a nice job, \$800,000, and a brand-new package. For what? For ordinary Saskatchewan people? No, not at all. Do you know what's in there? No. That's what he said he'd do though.

Then he says:

In the light of the record of the massive out-migration and the huge deficit and the tax increases and the waste and mismanagement . . .

Well look at the size of the deficit today after two years of these people. It's up and growing, almost \$2 billion more than when they took office. And massive out-migration. People are going to the province of Alberta or B.C. (British Columbia) or other places.

And then he went on to talk about the biggest tax increase in our history and he would never do it. Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have today is the biggest tax — apparent on the tip of the iceberg. And then the hidden iceberg in offloading and fees and utilities is by far the largest tax burden ever inflicted on the people of Saskatchewan. And on top of that, he didn't come close to balancing the budget, he's added to the deficit, and his credit rating is going down.

And it says here that he doesn't believe in the policy of taking hundreds of millions of dollars from Crown corporations like SaskPower and SaskTel, on the same page. Well if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the budget, he is taking exactly hundreds of millions of dollars from the Crown corporations. But he stood here holier than thou and said he'd never do it. Well . . .

I'm going through this tirade of promises, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the people of Saskatchewan and the senior citizens that are watching today need to know that what the NDP Premier promised when he was opposition is the very opposite of what he's done since he's been here.

And he said that they would cut out millions of dollars in advertising and he would put money into transition houses and shelters for battered women and children. That's what he said. What about Myers House? What about the hospitals? What about Whitespruce? What about the people who have said, take care of battered women, people who have suffered from abuse, young people? He said he'd fix all that. And I'm going to send this to anybody that wants it. He said he would stick up for people like that.

(1515)

And today the Provincial Secretary, his sidekick, gets \$800,000, and at the same time they close Myers House. And they promised they wouldn't do it. He said we had a choice. You choose to ignore the people in support of big business. Well is he ever ignoring the people.

And then he went on to say:

... (you have a) choice to cut the jobs of 350 public servants (tonight) ...

And you did.

... at the same time your government has refused to cut one single cabinet minister from your bloated cabinet? What's equal about that?

Did you hear that, Mr. Speaker? The NDP Premier back in '91 says, you shouldn't have fired 350 civil servants; you should have cut your cabinet. That's what he said. On page 2717 of *Hansard* he said you shouldn't do that.

He's in power today and he cut crop insurance agents. He's fired them. He's fired civil servants. He's taken an axe to them in a very, very, political way. And then he's blown up his cabinet and he's added \$800,000 to a budget of a man who's got nothing to do with it but play politics.

Eat those words. He stood in here and said, oh he'd never do that. But he's doing it.

Then he said, Mr. Speaker, what's equal about this, to choose strict wage guidelines on people of the province, on hospitals and school boards. He said he wouldn't provide wage guidelines to hospitals and school boards. Well I guess not. He's firing them. He's closing schools, he's closing hospitals, he's laying them off. Offloading has made sure that they're closing hospitals in Weyburn, closing them all over the place. And he said he wouldn't do it. And it's here, Mr. Speaker, and I imagine you were in the House and you remember that day. He promised all that. I don't expect you to be converted yet, Mr. Speaker, but give you time.

And then he said, we plan to charge ordinary families for the provincial PST on the purchase of clothing. Well we — that is the PCs (Progressive Conservative) — were going to do that. And what did he do? He's turned around and he's raised the PST from 7 to 9 per cent and he's included clothing. Exactly the opposite to what he said — double standards.

He said he was concerned about fairness and double standards. And what we see in here today, and the people across the province of Saskatchewan, are double standards and hypocrisy. And as Ed Whelan said, the dumbest budget he's ever seen in his life. This is the most unfair betrayal that you can imagine, double-talk, double standards, betrayal. It's pathetic. It's unbelievable.

Then what is really interesting, Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say this on 2718:

Our plan is to do the following:

Now here is the NDP leader's plan if he gets into government.

- to really attack waste and mismanagement;

And he's just given his Deputy Premier \$800,000 to play with, with nobody in his department.

- secondly, to approach revenue where needed (on) the principle of fairness;

Fairness. We can read from senior citizens, from town councils, from chambers of commerce, from people all across this province, and they'll say there's nothing fair about this budget. It is unfair; it's silly. The people who designed it, said Ed Whelan, must have had mud for brains. But he said he would give fairness.

- thirdly, to rejuvenate our economy to create jobs;

Well how can they create jobs when they're running all over the province preaching gloom and doom? Gloom and doom, it's terrible, it's awful. And they want people to invest here. The sky is falling in and the NDP have to run and preach doom and gloom because that's all they've got. That's all they can say politically: we have to do this because of doom and gloom. And he promised he was going to create jobs; people were not going to leave the province.

Well the fourth, this is a great one, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP said:

- fourth, to stand behind farmers and rural Saskatchewan;

Well, well, well. And you know, some of them believed him. He said he'd stand behind farmers and the people of rural Saskatchewan. And some of the members on the front bench used to be farmers, stick up for farmers.

Well Mr. Romanow said this. People of Saskatchewan know what he said ...

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I know the member inadvertently used the name of the Premier. He knows he's to refer to him as the Premier or the member from Riversdale.

**Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was used to reading it here. It's the *Hansard* quote and it says his name. The NDP leader from Riversdale promised to stand behind farmers and rural people. Well if there are farmers watching tonight — or people who are related to farmers — or this afternoon across the province, they are betrayed. They were not told the truth.

Their GRIP program is cancelled, the insurance

program is cancelled, crop insurance agents are gone. They've raised their taxes, raised their fuel, they've cut their programs, their livestock programs — all kinds of support for rural people, it's gone.

And Mr. Leader of the NDP stood here and promised that he would back them with the cost of production and all kinds of support. He didn't tell them the truth. It's awful.

- fifth, to improve our quality of life, especially in the field of health and education.

Mr. Speaker, can you believe this? The NDP Premier stood in opposition and he said: we are going to attack waste and mismanagement at the top. They are going to get revenue on the basis of fairness. They're going to create economic activity. They're going to stand behind farmers. And they're going to improve the quality of life in health and education.

And we've just gone through this budget and they're getting the tar kicked out of them on every one of those issues. He didn't tell the truth on any of those. He didn't live up to them. It's a betrayal, it's false; it's the biggest falsehood perpetrated on the public in the province's history.

And he stood in this legislature and he wailed away about all the things he was going to do, and he's done exactly the opposite. And he says: we're going to cooperate with our neighbours and help friends, keep people coming together and achieve a common cause. Good luck!

He talks about young farmers. Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say he has pitted people against people, rural against urban, farmers against farmers, and families against families.

The members opposite don't like to hear it, Mr. Speaker, but in fact it's the truth. And they should listen to this, and that's why the member opposite is quitting. I'd quit too. And you won't get elected federally either. You don't deserve to. I think you're at 11 per cent in the polls and you've earned every inch of it, okay? Bless their heart.

And they laugh — they laugh. It's a big joke, taxing people and betraying the people and betraying seniors. And they sit over there and laugh. Big deal. They didn't know why they wanted to get elected. They just get elected to be there. What was the reason to be elected . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And he says, to get rid of the PCs. For what reason? For health care, for seniors. He said, well that's reason enough. Isn't that the truth. That's the whole thing, just to be there. Not to help in education; not to help in health care; not to help farmers; not for fairness. Just because they want to sit there.

Why did you get elected? To do what? What's your claim to fame? What have you done for the people of Regina? What have you done for the people of Swift Current? The people of Prince Albert, what have you done for them? Not a darn thing. You've taxed them,

betrayed them, closed their hospitals, closed their schools. And you laugh. You think it's funny.

I'll tell you the people out there are experiencing real pain. That's why they said, you must have had mud for brains to design this. It's silly. It's unfair. It's a betrayal. And what's more, it hurts people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And he says it's not true. It's not true. Well that's what the paper says, and that's what your colleague says. And anybody that had any courage to stand up and say, how do you defend this in caucus, has the front row got you absolutely buffaloed and baffled? Haven't you got any backbone? Can't you stand up and say, we can't do this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Jellyfish is right. You don't have any courage. You don't think about seniors, your parents or your grandparents, or low income people, or those on welfare, or the people in food banks, or those suffering from abuse. You don't care.

You sit there and laugh and chirp, make fun as you're being protected here in the legislature. Well I'll tell you, you won't be protected out in the streets, because you betrayed them. It's not right.

There's town hall meetings as late as last night. Hundreds of people say you don't care. You run roughshod over farmers, roughshod over native people, roughshod over seniors. You hide and you come in here.

I'm going to tell you what people say. And I'm reminding you of what you promised, because you betrayed them. And you couldn't win an election on this budget if you were paid to. You didn't have the courage to tell them the truth. Well the truth is coming out. And people are going to remember. They're going to remember you a long, long time. And you think you can fix this in two years? You think you're going to get this back? You can cut taxes or something? You're going to have any confidence in the economy?

I'll tell you, you've got a lot to learn about the people of Saskatchewan if you think that you can pull the wool over their eyes like this. Maybe once. You tried it in '82 and you got hit. And you tried it again in '91. And I'll tell you it's going to come back to meet you.

He goes on to say that they have some major objectives. They're going to point out that there's a deficit in the province of Saskatchewan and that's what opening the books will say. Well, well, well, we had a deficit. Of course. Every jurisdiction in Canada had a deficit. Do you know of anybody that balanced the budget in the '80s? Not one.

People needed help against 22 per cent interest rates and drought, and we were there.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll say quite clearly, they've accused me of sticking up for senior citizens, spending money on senior citizens. Well, Mr. Speaker,

I'm guilty of that.

They accuse me of protecting people against high interest rates that were 22 per cent. Well, Mr. Speaker, I plead guilty to that.

They accused me of sticking up for farmers and saving them from drought and the ravages of a trade war and spending money on them. Well, Mr. Speaker, I plead guilty to that.

People needed help and compassion, they needed protection because they were losing their homes. Seniors needed nursing homes and we built them; seniors needed hospitals, they need rehabilitation centres like Wascana Rehab; we needed new educational institutions, and people accused me of spending money on education and health care, and I plead guilty — because we cared.

In 1982 there was no compassion when people needed it in the worst interest rates in our history. And these people didn't care. And we accused them of not caring, and the people said you know what, you're right and they kicked them out. Well they're going to get kicked out again because they don't care.

Deficits are there. As Allan Blakeney says, you're going to have a deficit. What's it used for? Is it to help people, is it to diversify the economy, is it to stick up for senior citizens? Fair enough. If it's for boondoggles, granted, no way. And all administrations have their share of them, but when you start to deny people basic health care and protection and homes and protecting their farms and communities, you've made a serious, serious error. And that's what you've done here today and this last week with this budget.

The second thing the leader of the NDP said, we're going to introduce fair taxation for business and we are going to stick up for GRIP and NISA. We don't need money to fund it. We can do it with better management. We spent three weeks or longer in this legislature last year fighting over this and saying the farmers need protection. We changed the rules in here, we voted without the opposition, we did undemocratic procedures, we just kicked the farmers right in the head. We cancelled their contracts.

The Leader of the Opposition said: we will be fair. That's what he said when he was here, but he goes over there — there's no fairness. You don't find farmers out there really happy with the NDP approach. That's why they fired the NDP Crop Insurance minister and the Ag minister, the man from Rosetown. He got fired. They still give him a cabinet position to run around and do something, but they kicked him out, and rightfully so. And they should kick out the next one. They betrayed the farmers.

Then he went on to say you have no mandate to impose a massive new tax because it's unfair. Well where is his mandate, friends and neighbours, to raise taxes from 7 to 9 per cent, increase all the other taxes? Where's his mandate to do that?

He said he wasn't going to tax. Mr. Hepworth was very open and said, we need this harmonization for GRIP and NISA and to balance the budget. He said

that. You guys say: oh no you don't; just a little bit of mismanagement and we can clean it out without taxes. He was honest with the people of Saskatchewan and said, this is necessary to balance the budget.

What did you guys do? The Leader of the NDP said: no, you don't have to do that; we'll just have a little bit of better management and we'll have no tax increases and it'll all go away. Well he can eat those words today.

Mr. Speaker, that is the largest betrayal in the history of Saskatchewan in terms of budgets. And he wants to go on and talk about the GST (goods and services tax). And he says: I want to be mindful of the dislocation of businesses by preventing the harmonization. Mr. Speaker, we've got virtually every business in Saskatchewan who still wants harmonization. It still makes sense, to balance the budget.

He called it a regressive tax. The people in business who invest called it the right tax. It's the appropriate thing to do. It is progressive. It sees cooperation with the federal government, so it cuts our costs. It allows people to compete. You're sales tax-free for all businesses, so you're not charging them twice.

(1530)

And now what have you done? You've just raised it to 9 per cent. No relief except for this little nine-month experiment in harmonization because you think it just might be the thing to do. Couldn't raise the courage . . . screw up your courage to say: let's do it at 7 or at 6 and balance the budget. No. You've got to raise it to 9 and try it on a few things because you think you might be able to slip it in.

Well the provincial GST, he said, had a negative impact on all of Saskatchewan. Well if PST has a negative impact at 7 per cent, imagine the negative impact of 9 per cent when it isn't harmonized and you don't get any of it back. It makes no sense, and that's why people are reacting today.

Because what the NDP said in this legislature and what they said on the campaign trail was absolutely false, and they knew it. They knew that they couldn't live up to it. They knew they'd have to betray their supporters. They knew they'd have to betray because any indication at all was they would have to have higher taxes and they'd have to offload and they'd have to cut health and education if they didn't do what Mr. Hepworth recommended.

And he talks about Maple Creek and Canora and he says: where are all the back-benchers? Listen to this. This is the Leader of the NDP, the now Premier of Saskatchewan, saying where are all the back-benchers when it comes to GST?

Have you not had the courage to stand up to the Minister of Finance and speak for the interests of your communities or have you abandoned your communities as I think you have — this

hurts the economy in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. He said, where is the courage of the back-benchers? Well can't we just throw that out today? When they're raising the sales tax to 9 per cent, my colleagues here in the legislature, did you think that was fun, it was a good idea?

When they cut the drug program, when they cut the dental program, when they raised the taxes, and when they put people in jeopardy and closed their hospitals and schools, didn't you stand up and say, this is nonsense?

I can say as sure as I'm standing here, Mr. Speaker, this budget that you have right here today would not have passed my cabinet or my caucus. It wouldn't have. Deputy premiers, whether it's Pat Smith, George McLeod, Eric Berntson, people like that would have said, this would not pass. We would not do this. And they didn't.

Seven per cent sales tax to balance the budget means much more sense than this 9 per cent with no relief, and pain and suffering and more and more debt. And where's the courage of the back-benchers? There is none. They follow like sheep; no backbone. And you're not going to get re-elected because you stood there and you supported this bunch with the silliest budget, the dumbest budget, the most largest betrayal in the history of Saskatchewan.

And you think you're doing the public a service. For what? Have you balanced the budget? No. Have you added to the debt? Yes. Have you raised taxes? Yes. Have you increased confidence? No. Is your credit rating up? No, it's down. And you're proud of this. Are farmers happy, seniors happy, health care workers happy, public service happy? No. What are you doing? You say, well is this for the banks? The rating institutions, the rating institutions gave harmonization a better rating than they give your plan. Look it up. I'll quote if for you.

The speech that the NDP leader gave in here, that he said that he would provide fairness, that he would stick up for communities, that he wouldn't raise taxes, was all a betrayal. It was not accurate. It wasn't honest. And what's more, Mr. Speaker, the really damaging part of it is that he has betrayed the people of Saskatchewan, not just NDPers, but betrayed the people of Saskatchewan in a way that they will never, ever forget like they didn't forget when he tried it before in the late '70s and early '80s.

And then he goes on to say:

... Saskatchewan has been ... victimized by bad fiscal policies generated by Ottawa. High interest rates and a high Canadian dollar are intertwined and they've been kept high purposely by Ottawa.

Imagine. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the people of Saskatchewan, the new NDP Premier has

got 5 and 6 per cent interest rates to deal with — try 22. The new NDP Premier has virtually no inflation to deal with — try 15 per cent inflation. The new NDP Premier has a very positive exchange rate, like 80 per cent — try it the other way when it was above the U.S. (United States).

Those are the kinds of conditions that we fought and we stuck up for Saskatchewan people. And he's got 6 per cent interest, he's got no inflation, he's got a very positive exchange rate, and he betrays them. He says: oh, I can't do it; it's too tough for me. I'm going to have to go after the seniors, go after the farmers, go after the poor, go after the people that I thought supported me — because I have no choice, because it's doom and gloom.

Doom and gloom, doom and gloom. Try doom and gloom at 22 per cent interest rates, try doom and gloom in an exchange rate that is in favour of Americans, and try doom and gloom at 15 per cent inflation. He doesn't know what tough times are. That's cowardly. He stood in this legislature and said: oh, but look at those high interest rates.

I'll tell you what happened. Under good Conservative government across Canada interest rates are now at a 35-year low, inflation is down to a 30-year low, the exchange rates are very positive so we're winning in exports. Even the member from Elphinstone says: absolutely, free trade can really benefit the province of Saskatchewan, particularly in Mexico. Well finally some of them have figured it out.

That Conservative policy has got 6 per cent interest rates. The old Liberal policy under Trudeau generated the worst havoc in the history of Saskatchewan and Canada.

And the NDP — oh they love Mr. Chretien, they love Mr. Trudeau, and they hugged them all, and they all got kicked out of office. Well I'll tell you they're going to get kicked out and stay out federally and provincially, because it makes no economic sense.

We have now got 5 per cent interest, 6 per cent interest. I just renewed my mortgage on our home and I think it was five and three-quarters per cent. And they're complaining over there. They've got more reason to be optimistic and buoyant and telling Saskatchewan people to get up. But it's doom and gloom all over the province because they have to do it their way. They couldn't do it at 7 cents because it didn't make any sense, so they're going to do it at 9 without any relief. And they are fighting 6 per cent interest? Imagine.

Well he went on to say that he would do all these wonderful things, Mr. Speaker, in terms of providing protection. He's going to make the pie grow bigger. He's going to make the pie grow bigger, he says on page 2721.

Well Professor Anderson and others are saying, I don't see it, Mr. NDP Premier. How are you going to make the pie grow bigger? With doom and gloom you're



making it grow smaller. You talk to business people in Saskatoon and Regina and they're saying, why can't he say something positive about the future. We can't do CANDUs (Canadian deuterium uranium) because there's no money. We can't do this because interest rates are too high. We've got to worry about an exchange rate. Oh my gosh, there's deficits and across the country we can't do anything.

He's going to make the pie bigger? He talked about making the pie but he has no idea about making the pie bigger. When he was in office before and he had some money, he didn't make it bigger; he just bought what was here. He nationalized the potash mines; he bought farm land; he did all these dumb things that come back to haunt us for years and years.

And then he says his fourth goal — and this is a dandy, Mr. Speaker — the fourth goal of the NDP in '91 was to protect our rural way of life. And he said, we suggest a moratorium on farm foreclosures. Well there's still signs up along the No. 11 Highway. Where's the moratorium, Mr. NDP Premier? Where is it? Where's the cost of production? Where's the help? Where's the compassion? Well for heaven sakes, all the objectives and all those opportunities, Mr. Speaker, are for naught.

And fourth, he said he is going to stabilize farm income and finally he's going to improve GRIP and NISA and he's going to have a cost-of-production formula — on page 2722. And any farmers that want it that are watching, we'll send him the new NDP cost of production; it's called zero — no help, abandonment.

This man stood in this legislature right there and he talked about all the great things he was going to do. Complained about the deficit, but he's going to do them anyway. And we've got the biggest betrayal on rural Saskatchewan and farm people in the history of the province. And that's why he gets booed. That why he's secretly goes out, until the media catch him, and tries to sell this budget. He'll never sell it; they're not going to buy it. They are not going to buy it. And we'll send them this. Anybody that wants this speech of the NDP Premier when he was opposition, we'll send it to you and you can just read it. Page after paper it's full of betrayals, false information. It's just a joke. It's a façade.

And then he went on to say: and I want to really end up talking about health care and how we are going to improve health care. What in the world's gone wrong with medicare and health care, he said. One hundred nine-seventy beds, 197 people, 113 beds in Saskatoon, 200 in Moose Jaw, Yorkton closed down. He said he'd never do it. He complained about us and we never closed hospitals; we opened them. And he is talking about fewer beds and fewer hospitals and he would never, ever do it.

Well to the public let me say, this document is quite interesting political history. He campaigned in '91, saying Mr. Hepworth's opportunity to balance the budget and have health care and pension plans and stick up for farmers with GRIP and NISA is nonsense.

We can fund all those without doing any of this. And he promised better health, better education, sticking up for farmers, sticking up for seniors. And today we see what we get, Mr. Speaker; we get the betrayal.

And that's why people are watching television today and saying, right on. I am angry, I am frustrated, I'm upset. Well I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, they had a choice. And the reason that he's gone to these terrible, terrible ends is simply because he's ornery.

And the NDP cabinet have one thing in mind and that is protect their political hide. They promised they wouldn't do harmonization at 7 cents and they got to stick with it as best they can and do it some other way. And they do it at 9 with no relief. And he still tries to tell you that people wouldn't want to see harmonization. Well I'll tell you, at 7 cents or 6 cents, in fact if it's broad enough you can do it at 5 cents and you can balance the budget. And provinces like Quebec are figuring it out and other jurisdictions are talking about it.

And the public now is seriously asking, as the lady did today in the newspaper: heaven sakes, we're getting used to 7 but you put it up to 9. And you haven't done a thing to balance the budget.

But let me just remind the hon. member. Here are the groups that supported harmonization because it meant economic growth and tax relief compared to Americans and other jurisdictions: the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan, and they still support it; the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; Society of Management Accountants; the Consumers' Association of Canada; the Regina Chamber of Commerce; the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce; the Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association; cooperatives; the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association; Wheat Pool directors; the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Institute of Chartered Accountants; Investment Dealers Association of Canada; Yanke Transfer; Philom Bios; Flexi-Coil; Saskoil; Cameco; Sask Sport; International Outfitters; International Minerals and Chemical Corporation Ltd., and on and on. They said it makes eminent sense to them. What have they got now? It makes no sense. You've raised it, your debt's up, your deficit's up, people are leaving. It's up to 9 per cent and there's no relief and you haven't done anything to balance the budget at all. You've added \$1.5 billion to the debt and it's still going up, and no relief.

And the business community said, as the students say, why didn't you just do it at 7 and balance the budget and leave the seniors alone; leave the pensions alone; leave the drug program alone. You could have a good farm program, and business supports it. Imagine. They support it, the co-ops support it and business support it, and you can balance your budget, and you don't have to pick on all these little people — the little people you said that you went to the wall for.

Well if you look at the harmonization that was put together by Mr. Hepworth and the family tax credit for

low income people, boy would they like that back. Ho. Rather than hitting them on health care and diabetic problems, insulin costs, drug costs up to 800 bucks, we had a family tax credit and still balanced it, and helped those low income people. They said, oh, if I could only have that back. And they had their pension. And they had hospitals and schools, and supported by the private sector. And why didn't they get it? Because the member opposite stood up in this legislature, and stood up on the campaign, and he says, no, we can do it without any tax increases and we can balance the budget.

And he knew that was false. And he went town hall to town hall, and riding to riding and he said to senior citizens, I can make it better for you. Just trust me. Just trust me, we'll make it better for you. And he was speaking with a forked tongue because he took away the family tax credit, he took away the pension plan, he took away the drug plan, he took away senior citizens' accommodations, he took away hospitals, he's closed schools, he's raised taxes, he's preaching doom and gloom, and the people of Saskatchewan said we're not open for business, we're closing up shop.

(1545)

We're leaving the province because the NDP are back in just like they're in in Ontario, just like they're in in B.C., and if you find them you'll see doom and gloom. And that's the truth. And they're not going to get elected, they're not going to get elected again federally, they're not going to get elected in Ontario, they're not going to get elected in Saskatchewan — for the same reason. They don't know what they're doing. They don't know business and they admit that. They don't know business. They're not in business, they're in politics. They admit . . . (inaudible) . . . that's something, you know, the other guys do. So all they know is politics and all they're doing to the people of Saskatchewan is saying well if we really pitch doom and gloom because Grant Devine spent money on seniors and farmers and others — and I say yes, I did — then they'll be sure to win again and do something else.

Well what is it they want to do? It isn't business. It isn't creating economic activity. It's just to be there. And people see through it. They see through it in Bob Rae, they see through it in Harcourt, and they see it through this fellow sitting here. Because what he said in the legislature is the exact opposite of what he's doing today.

And the alternative is so evident. The alternative is there — 7 cents. And they got it, plus support for lower income people, payments of \$245 each quarter, \$980 a year, almost a thousand dollars a year for low income people. Plus they had health care, drug programs, senior citizen accommodations; utilities weren't going up through the roof.

And, Mr. Speaker, isn't it interesting . . . and people have said it. Senior citizens say it today. Under the 7 cents harmonization they had a choice. They could

shop for this or shop for that. If they didn't want to pay 7 cents on a hamburger, they could make it themselves. But you try 7 per cent increase in utility rates, you don't have a choice. No choices. You just hit them, you cut them off.

You take away their pension. What do they do without pensions? What do you do without insurance, and health care? You're taxing the sick. Those that have prescription drug needs have no choice. And you're proud of this? Is this what you got . . . this is . . . I mean it's unbelievable. It's unbelievable that you would do this to yourself and do it to the people of Saskatchewan.

You gave seniors no choice. Raised their utilities, power rates, telephones, insurance, drugs, cut them off, kicked them out of homes — no choice — and you said 7 cents on a hamburger was so evil. Compared to what you're doing? They could at least have a choice; they could make the food at home. Unbelievable!

Bless your hearts. Boy oh boy, have you got something to do to look into your conscience if you think you're helping people of Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, or any place else. You couldn't look in the mirror and logically say that you were doing the right thing. You'd say, well 7 cents was so mean, right, isn't it terrible? We put it on clothes. And you've got 9 on clothes. Do you think clothes are a luxury? No, you've kind of got to have them.

Senior citizens have no choice. They don't get any rebates, no heritage program. You just hit them and hit them and you've got to do it your way, which is silly, because you promised you wouldn't do it our way. And that's your claim to fame. That's it. That's the whole election and the whole reason Saskatchewan is in pain and suffering and doom and gloom today. Because you said you wouldn't do it at 7; there must be a better way. And obviously there isn't because now you're doing it at 9 and you're kind of harmonizing because you know it's the right thing to do and you've got to go around preaching doom and gloom so people can't ask you real questions.

Even in the House we stand up and we ask the Minister of Social Services, or pardon me, the minister of seniors, we say, when we raised it to \$50 deductible for seniors, you said it was drugs or food. That's what she said in her riding. Was she lying? Can't say that. Was she not telling the truth? Was she not telling the truth when she said, seniors in my riding will have to choose food over prescription drugs? Was she making it up or was it the truth?

Well if it was the truth, how in the world could she raise it to \$800 for the senior citizens and then say that they're going to get by? And they say, well it's because that there was . . . we couldn't do it with 7 cents because we promised we wouldn't.

People see through that. You're not fooling them. You're not fooling them at all. You know that you can balance the budget with cooperating with the federal government who has all the money. Harmonize,

cooperate, call it whatever you like, put your own wrinkles on it, but you can do it at 6 per cent, 7 per cent, and the business community would be happy and you wouldn't have to pick on senior citizens. My goodness, how can you do this?

If that minister, Roy Atkinson's daughter — who stuck up for the CCF and I've been in lots of platforms with him and I have respect for the man, have been out there, don't agree with him all the time, but I'll tell you he believes in it — if his daughter can say in this House that if you raise the deductible from 50 . . . to \$50 on seniors in her riding they're going to have to choose food or drugs, then how in the world can his daughter raise it to \$800 and look at herself in the mirror? Unbelievable.

Why are you doing this to people? Is it that you have such a dislike for people on the other side of the political spectrum that campaign and whose grandfathers and grandparents came to this province and homesteaded? Do you think that we don't care about people? Do you think that we haven't stuck up for farmers and stuck up for seniors and tried to diversify this province, fought 22 per cent interest rates and drought and all kinds of things? Are you that warped that you don't think that anybody in this legislature can care for people?

Let's put it this way. I would think folks in this legislature genuinely do care. What I'm asking you is how can you live with what you've just done? How do you live with yourself given the promise that you are the party that does care? You are the socialists. This is on the history in the back of Tommy Douglas.

This is the socialist party who is going to rip seniors and rip other people when there's clearly an alternative. You could have optimism. You could have a balanced budget. You can cooperate with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point. I think the NDP would say, well we had no choice. The rating institutions say we've got to do this or we're going to get a CCC. Well let me point out what they did do — gave them a BBB.

When we brought in harmonization, Mr. Speaker, the rating institutions looked at us and said we demonstrated a willingness to make the hard decisions, and kept our credit rating at a AA to a AAA. Because we said to the people, look it's difficult, but 7 cents across the board in cooperation with the federal government is necessary to balance the budget. And the rating institution says, right, AA. And we made the hard decisions.

Look in May of '91, what the business community says about harmonization. Saskatchewan gets an A for economic growth. The rating institution says this makes much more sense than what you are doing.

And you're running around the country and saying, oh we have to do it and we have to do it our way. You don't have to do it your way at all. There are

alternatives. There are choices you could make. And you have chosen this mean-spirited, flip-flop, contrary — as Ed Whelan says — probably the silliest, dumbest thing he's ever seen in his life.

And the business community is upset. The business community doesn't see any hope. You don't get any headline: Saskatchewan gets an A for economic growth, after your budget. Nothing there. Seniors aren't happy. Business isn't happy. The rating institutions say, well they did cut but oh it's painful. I wonder if they can sustain it, that's what they say. Are there growth figures there? I'll tell you a lot of people don't think the growth figures are here.

And you've been given every instrument of growth — 6 per cent interest rates; great exchange rates; no inflation; free trade agreements that open up markets. And you're given everything and you're preaching doom and gloom and doom and gloom. And I'll tell you, you have an alternative.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I point out this alternative. Because it's important to remember, if you're a senior citizen or a farmer or somebody that's unemployed watching television today, don't believe the NDP argument that they couldn't do it another way. They didn't have to pick on the poor. They didn't have to pick on farmers or those with low income or the senior citizens or health care. They could have done it another way.

And the only reason that they're doing it this mean-spirited way is to cover their political hide because they just couldn't do it the way we did, because then they'd have to admit they were wrong. And if that's the case, then you might as well vote for us.

So they've got to force the public to see it their way. So if they can preach enough doom and gloom, they think they might just survive the next election.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Speaker — I didn't mean to demote you there — let's just look at the comparisons because the choice is very real, and the people are going to talk about this choice. And, Mr. Speaker, in fact if the budget debate could go on — and I'm sure it will when it comes in estimates — we could talk about it for days. Let's just look at the budget alternatives. And for the people that are watching on television, I want you . . . if you want to, you can write them down. This is the 1991 budget versus the 1993 budget.

What was the provincial sales tax in 1991? Under Mr. Hepworth's budget it was 7 cents with a low-income tax credit harmonized with the federal government. What is it under the NDP? It's 9 cents; up 29 per cent.

The 7 cents harmonization provides a balanced budget in 1993-94. We absolutely hit the target at 365 the year before, 265 that year, and the next year balanced budget. What does the NDP . . . balanced budget in '96-97. Four more years of debt. The deficit then was \$13 billion. And you can look it up; got it in here in terms of the budgets. And today it's 14.9

billion, and another billion to add in four more years. So they've added almost 2 billion already, and they haven't balanced it. So it's going from \$13 billion deficit to a \$15 billion deficit, and a \$16 billion deficit by 1996-97, just because they're ornery.

What was the credit rating in 1991? Under the harmonized budget of Mr. Hepworth it was a AA. What is it after the NDP took over? Today in 1993, BBB — BBB, Mr. Speaker. And they ran down there and said, look, it's just doom and gloom, and we've got to tell you how ugly it is.

What about safety nets in 1991? You got a pension plan for senior citizens. You've got a drug plan for all kinds of people. You've got a seniors' heritage program. You've got GRIP and safety nets for farmers. You've got health care and education expansion. What about 1993 under the NDP? They're gone. They're all gone.

Is the business community happy with this budget? No. You get A for economic activity and growth in Saskatchewan in 1991. Today you get doom and gloom all over Saskatchewan, the business community, the commerce students, and others saying: why don't you harmonize? Admit your mistakes, admit your error, and have some economic growth. Why charge them twice?

You look at choices in 1991 versus choices in '93. There were lots of choices in '91. People had an alternative. They had low utility rates. They had the confidence and security of pension plans. They had a great prescription drug protection plan. They had opportunities, Mr. Speaker, to grow, to protect, to build, and they had choices. They didn't have to pay the sales tax if they wanted to shop in various ways. And the business community was sales tax free. How's that for an economic incentive to build in the province of Saskatchewan? There's no sales tax in Alberta. Saskatchewan is now up to 9 cents and no relief.

Well if you look at the NDP today, under 1993 budget, what do you see? No choice. You got to pay the utilities. If you're sick you got to pay up to \$800 in prescription drugs. You got to go to the private sector to get insurance. If you want a pension plan you got to go some place else. If you want some farm support program, none there. You have no choices, and if you're broke and down and out, you got to pay your power bill that's gone up, your utility bills, your telephone bill, your insurance bill, and now your health bill. And then on top of that you have no choice because your provincial tax, municipal tax, is going to go up because there's \$450 million of hidden iceberg tax that is underneath this budget that comes in the next four years and you have no choice. You got to pay it.

(1600)

So if you look at it, Mr. Speaker, 7 cents versus 9, harmonization versus none, the accumulated debt, the credit rating, the optimism in the business

community, the safety nets that have been taken away, the choices that people have, I would ask, Mr. Leader of the NDP, to go any place else and just take those comparisons and look at them, provide them to the people of Saskatchewan and tell them why 7 cents . . . and cooperating with the federal government — I know it's a Conservative government — but cooperating with them didn't make economic sense, social sense, and much less pain than this boondoggle that you've put together that you're trying to shove onto the people of Saskatchewan. And that's why they call it a boondoggle, a major boondoggle.

The hon. members are still hung up on water projects.

I want to point out to the hon. members, and onto the public here, the NDP government, the new NDP government, is absolutely responsible, and I've got the quotes here, absolutely responsible for the decline in their own credit rating in the province of Saskatchewan. Shortly after the NDP was elected in October the government drastically increased the province's deficit projections to 960 million from 265 million for the fiscal year 1991-92 because they didn't harmonize and they didn't provide share offering. Quote:

The new government and the uncertainty as to what the budget is going to say is why we put the debt on credit watch, says the rating institution.

They knew they were a bunch of socialist radicals. The new government which didn't implement the policies and had to backtrack, postponed everything for a year, ran up the deficit another \$900 million, has just got the rating institutions a tad worried. And so they give them a BBB. And they said you'd better watch it because I'm not so sure that you've got a plan to replace that. And if you don't, you're in big trouble. Because all the things you said in the legislature and you said on the campaign trail can't come true. What will you do? What will you do? Well now we know.

And I'll tell you you're going to stay on watch given this attitude, and given the ornery and stubborn nature of the fact that you won't admit there was a better way to do it. And then it goes on to say:

Moody's Investors Service, also reviewing its rating of Saskatchewan debt, said Saskatchewan is the second provincial NDP government to see its ratings slashed by credit ratings. Last May it was Ontario.

Well guess who it's happening to? NDP in Ontario. They promised the moon, only difference was they didn't think they'd even get elected. NDP here thought they might if they promised, knowing they can't deliver, but the people might believe us because we have some roots here. The CCF used to be believable, and they promised. But the NDP in Ontario, they can give them a bit of a benefit of the doubt. They never thought they'd get elected, but as soon as they get elected the credit rating just falls apart. And right after that the NDP gets elected here

and down goes the credit rating because they don't have a plan.

They have no economic interest and they're going to just raise taxes, and now they're going to betray the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

And then it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, if you go on and look at how they put together their deficit and they try to frighten people. They try to frighten people. It's really quite interesting how they've managed to put together some of the things that were just not quite up to snuff. You've got to remember that the debt they're running around talking about is in good part in utilities. And we know, we know that in good part the debt is in the utilities and what that means is it's self-liquidating debt.

So I want the people of Saskatchewan and the public and the senior citizens that are worried to hear this. Don't be afraid of the doom and gloom because so much of the provincial debt in Ontario or in Saskatchewan, particularly in Saskatchewan, is in the utilities. SaskPower pays for that debt to build power projects; the same with SaskTel. And on top of that, if you look at the asset value of those utilities, it's huge.

Secondly, if you look at guarantees that the provincial government makes, there's no interest on the guarantees. In fact in many of them you get paid for the guarantees. It's a commercial transaction. You guarantee a debt at Saskferco, you get paid for that. You don't pay interest on it. You get paid for that, plus you're going to get about 20 per cent return on your investment.

Now you don't go around and tell the people of Saskatchewan, well this is a big amount of debt that we have to pay interest on. But that's what you do because we hear you saying that. And it's absolutely unfair and untrue. You make money on those guarantees. That's a financial transaction. They don't understand that, but they will.

And if you want to look at the asset value, the asset value of utilities, the conventional business evaluation technique is the discounted cash value of anticipated cash flow. And if you do that to SaskPower, SaskTel, and SGI, you have in the neighbourhood of 10 billion-plus in terms of asset value, and that's in any organization and institutions.

And if you look at the profit and retained earnings that are saved, you don't have to run around and tell people of Saskatchewan the sky is falling in. You can take any organization and any utility, and you can provide that net worth and that real value because you have a monopoly, and you have raised the rates. Lord knows people understand that. And they have no choice. And you can pay. And if you take seven times the cash flow of a utility, you'll get something in terms of what it's worth, and that is billions and billions of dollars.

Now you should be telling the people of Saskatchewan that that's the case. Don't frighten

them. Don't say that SaskTel and SaskPower and SGI can't pay their bills. They have and they will. In fact the asset value of that is worth more than the combined debt, an awful lot more. And if you look in your budget today, you'll find that it's only a modest amount compared to that asset value.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact I've got the numbers right here. SaskTel, if you look at its cash flow, is \$568 million; a multiple of seven is 3.98 billion. Not a bad company. Do you talk about that out there in the business community — the strength of the utility?

SaskEnergy, 318 million times seven — that's their cash flow — is over \$2 billion. That's a good company. SGI, 491 million times seven is \$3.44 billion, a major source of economic foundation to the people of Saskatchewan — not, not a problem. SaskPower, 674 million in cash flow times seven is \$4.7 billion. That's \$14 billion plus, Mr. Speaker, just in the four utilities.

That, Mr. Speaker, shows you . . . I just want you to quit preaching doom and gloom. Be fair to the people of Saskatchewan. Say look, look at the debt that's in these four Crowns. These four Crowns can build power projects and water projects, telecommunication projects, insurance projects, and it's there and it's on solid ground. And you would expect them to go in to the market to build those things. You don't have to frighten people with it.

Who do you think you're fooling? I'll tell you you're not going to fool the seniors any longer. You're not going to fool the farmers any longer.

And with that kind of strength in those utilities, you go attack Ed Whelan's neighbours. You attack senior citizens; you attack your own; you attack farmers. You've cut out the health care. You charge him for all the things you said you never would.

Well that's one more reason why the NDP are down at 11 per cent in the polls, and they're going to stay down whether it's in Ontario or here. And the public are saying that they have no heart. In fact they haven't got any real political head.

And on top of that I want the public to know that they added \$750 million to the deficit because of accrual accounting. Now they were nice enough to admit it. They put it in the budget, but they just topped it up by three-quarters of a billion because they changed the accounting mechanisms. But they didn't tell you that loan guarantees are not something you should be all that concerned about if you're getting paid for them. They didn't tell you that. So if you have several hundred million dollars in loan guarantees which are . . . it's a personal financial transaction, that you get paid for them, then it's not interest on that you're paying.

In fact I have some serious questions about the interest on the debt that they say we're paying on an annual basis. And I think they've bloated it up and before the end of this session we'll find out for sure. Well I point

that out because the students of commerce point it out. They say there are alternatives. We have real alternatives in this province to putting together a budget.

They don't like to hear this. Well I'll tell you, the people don't like to hear what you're doing to them. You might not like to stand or sit in the legislature and hear about the pain and the suffering, but somebody's got to stick up for them. You're not. You've betrayed them.

And you can chirp from your seats and say the seniors will be okay; the farmers will be okay; the rural communities will be okay; they won't need the hospitals. The member from Weyburn or the member from wherever else . . . oh the hospital's going to eventually close but we'll open up a new one some place else. You'll be fine, thanks very much — probably somewhere that you don't live and you'll have to move there if you retire.

The new wellness program, they just call it a joke. It's mean-spirited. You might not like to hear about it, but somebody has to stick up for these people. They know there's not a provincial election this year but by George, they're going to be waiting. And then there's a federal election this year. Well just see how many NDPers get elected across Canada and in the province of Saskatchewan on your great promise to the people, on your compassion and your understanding and your intelligence about business.

So you might not like to hear it, but I'll tell you it's the truth. People out there in the newspaper today said: it is a monster budget; it's terrible; it's disloyal; it must have been mud for brains, and on and on and on and on. And I'm saying to the people of Saskatchewan that are watching on television, you're absolutely right. These people knew that they were going to do this to you but it didn't matter. They promised to get elected. And now they're sitting over there, they've got nothing to say. They don't like to hear about it, but some of us are going to stick up for real people.

And they laugh. Well let them laugh. They don't laugh . . . you go talk to the seniors in my riding and you won't be laughing. Just get out there and defend it. Go talk to them. Go talk to them.

**An Hon. Member:** — Go talk to Ed Whelan's neighbours.

**Mr. Devine:** — He couldn't find one senior citizen who thought this was a good idea.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the alternatives that are here, there's only one thing that becomes very clear. The NDP under this NDP leader don't have the courage to look at the people of Saskatchewan and say, we can provide you some protection and some relief and some diversification; we can provide you that but we're going to have to eat a little political crow; we might have to cooperate with the federal government and do it at 7 cents. They couldn't do that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that you realize the people of Saskatchewan even under difficult circumstances respected the fact that the people on this side of the House would protect them. And I just want to point out to the people of Saskatchewan, if we face this again, if we face 22 per cent interest rates again, if we face the kind of pain that they've experienced, that people in Saskatchewan will have the compassion to help you, will have the compassion to help you. And we have been there before.

And again I will say, people have accused me and my colleagues for spending money defending farmers in drought and in \$2 wheat. And all I can say is we are guilty as charged.

And we have been accused of sticking up for seniors when interest rates were 22 per cent and it was going to cost us. And we'd said that, I'll put the treasury up to protect farmers and seniors from losing their homes. We were accused of that, and I say: guilty as accused.

Sticking up for young people who had bought mortgages and into mortgages locked in, two or three kids, going to lose their home. They said, somebody help me. The NDP: no, not at all. They've accused us of sticking up for those young people. And I say: guilty. We stuck up for them.

And the same applies for all kinds of situations in the province of Saskatchewan that needed to be addressed with 22 per cent interest rates, 15 per cent inflation, an exchange rate that was going against it, drought and commodity wars, difficult economic conditions. And we were there, thank goodness. And we are accused of spending money for those people.

Well I say to the hon. members: what have you got to show today for the money that you've taken from the people of Saskatchewan? What have you got to show for it? Any protection, any new hospitals, any enthusiasm, a better credit rating? Have you decreased the total debt? What have you got to show for it? Not a thing but pain, misery, and betrayal.

(1615)

Your debt has gone from 13 billion to 15 billion and it'll soon be 16 billion. And you might, you say, balance the budget by 1997. You have nothing to show for it. You don't have new hospitals. You don't have an agriculture college. You don't have farm protection. You don't have new nursing homes. You don't have a drug plan, a pension plan. You don't have protection for people. You don't have a senior citizens' program.

For heaven sakes, can you imagine trying to defend this on live television debates or town hall meetings? What have you got to show for this? Any growth? Any excitement? No. You've got nothing to show for it.

And what you left us, as the former Finance minister said — and he acknowledged it, finally went at it; he's sitting there — and it was \$3.7 billion at 22 per cent

interest rates, for heaven sakes. If you take three and a half billion at 15 per cent for 10 years, it's \$14 billion if you did nothing with it. Absolutely nothing. And they think it's a joke.

Lookit, I finally got their attention. They've been hiding . . . come on, come on. Mr. Speaker . . . You get your pencil out. You ask the people of Saskatchewan, okay, what you did for the province of Saskatchewan. Let me give you an example. I finally got the Premier's attention.

Let me give you an example. When he had a little bit of money he purchased \$250 million worth of loans from the United States; he borrowed in New York in 1971. The terms were sixteen and two-thirds per cent for 16 years, and this is to buy SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation). You try \$200 million at sixteen and three-quarters per cent for 15 years and see how you do, and pay too much for it. And that's here. That's what you've done. That's already recorded.

And the exchange rate was the wrong way; interest rates were high and went up; inflation was high. And you did the same with potash mines; you did the same with land bank. You bought all kinds of land way too high. And that's what we inherited from you people. Three and a half billion dollars at 15 per cent for 10 years is \$14 billion, and then on top of that you speculated like finance companies. You bought land and speculated.

I finally got the member's attention from Quill Lakes. Look, you speculated with farm land, Mr. Member, and you're paying the price. Why did you speculate on farm land and buy at the high? Why did you do it in potash mines? You paid way too much. Why did you do it in uranium mines? You paid way too much. And then interest rates went to 22 per cent and just like finance companies and banks, the people of Saskatchewan had to take the hit because of your mistakes.

That's what we deal with in the province of Saskatchewan. Then when people really need help what do you provide? Absolutely nothing but speculation in farm land and speculation in mines, no new jobs. And when interest rates go right through the roof, you duck. And that's the kind of thing that people asked us to deal with and that's real. Those numbers are real.

You had alternatives in 1982 and you've had alternatives in 1993. What I've pointed out today that your choices today hurt Saskatchewan people something fierce. Your choices today have betrayed them. You have economic alternatives, and there are many. And people have pointed them out over and over and over again — that hidden deficit, that speculation, that predicament that you put Saskatchewan people in. You were bragging about all the things you were going to buy and own, and then whoops, the interest rates go to 22 per cent. And you say, take it, take it away.

Well we got it all right. The people of Saskatchewan said, whew. Farm land fell in half; potash mines fell in half; uranium mines fell in half. And you guys were all the big speculators. You think you knew something about business. You didn't know a darn thing about business, and you still don't.

I mean even, even the unions, the union leaders are saying, you're going about it all wrong. So you've got union leaders, you've got seniors, you've got former cabinet ministers, you've got farm supporters, you've got people all across the province are saying, hey you're doing it all wrong.

Don't tell us it's beyond repair. Don't tell us we can't fix this. Don't frighten us. Don't give us this bunch of malarkey. You could do it. Tommy Douglas did it. You can do it without hurting people. And that's the argument today.

I want you to go tell the seniors, and the low income, and the farmers, and the single parents, and the young people getting into business, those that want an education, all those people that want health care protection and other protection, I want you to tell them why you think you're helping them today by hitting them so hard. Please tell them. Go out to the town halls and tell them.

You have a choice. You could have done 7 cents on a hamburger, and harmonize, and you could have had the same thing, but you wouldn't. You promised you never would. So you haven't the political courage to look at the alternatives. No, you've got to hit them right between the eyes.

And it makes no economic sense. It makes no political sense. And that's why you're going down in the polls. And that's why federally you're at rock bottom. Well you're not at rock bottom; it's a free fall. You have no alternative, no play with it, and particularly in the province of Saskatchewan. And your Liberal colleagues are on the same boat, exactly the same boat.

You and Trudeau and Chrétien used to waltz around together and say, isn't this nice, all this fancy stuff we're doing. We're nationalizing things. We have all this going for us. And you had nothing going for you.

The only leader in Canada, the only political leader in Canada — Mr. Chrétien is the only guy in Canada that we can find that wants an elected Senate and an appointed House of Commons. He said, well appoint the MPs (Member of Parliament), eh? And the Liberal leader here in the legislature supports him. And you are in the same boats.

You have no idea what the Saskatchewan and the Canadian people really see in the future . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you wouldn't be at 11 per cent in the polls if they did . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm talking about it. I'm talking about it all the time and you don't like to hear about it.

You've added \$2 billion to the deficit; your credit

rating is going down; and you left us with a legacy of spending and speculation like we've never seen before. It was a joke. Absolute joke — 22 per cent interest rates and a bunch of mines that were empty and you paid way too much for them. And you said, oh we were doing really good, really, really, really good. And the people said, give me a break.

And now what I'm asking is that you go out into the town halls, into the communities, and you take it on the chin like the Premier was doing today.

We finally caught him out there. He wasn't hiding any more, the media was after him . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes they did. I talked to the media and they said the Premier's office didn't release any information about where he's going. He's sneaking out there to sell the budget behind closed doors. Then they finally caught up with him . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He's out there now, and we got people watching him.

So they're going to watch what he says in the country, watch what he says in here. He's an old fox at that, eh? He's an old fox at that. We know. He'd say one thing in town and one thing in the country. He's been doing it for years. He'd say Fair Share is okay over here, but not here, right? He did that. We got you on record all over the place. I won't cancel Fair Share. Then you come back in here and talk to the union leader: oh for heaven's sakes, no, no, I'd cancel and it's okay. He's done that on record times and occasions, and we're just pointing it out today and the people of Saskatchewan can know.

We've caught him one too many times, one too many times so he's on the record. What you said in this House in '91, what you said in the campaign, and now what you're saying out in the country will be watched.

And we're encouraging you. You get out there in the town halls, you get out there and talk to people. We'll be inviting you out to town hall meetings or on debates and say, you explain this to the seniors and to the farmers and to the other people why this is a really good idea.

You'll hear about that because the Liberals won't show up because they don't have any alternative. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are watching television today, are going to recognize that indeed there's an alternative . . .

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

**Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to sit in here and look at these faces that are so ashamed of what they've done, and all they can do when you mention the fact that people are suffering is laugh. I just want the television cameras to know if you could see their faces — they laugh at the pensioners, they laugh at the farmers, they laugh at the taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, those people out there in Saskatchewan who believed the NDP would do the right thing and

will have been betrayed will know today and they'll know the next day and the next day, by the time we finish this session, that you had an alternative. You could have provided reasonable taxation; you could've supported pensioners, health care, senior citizens, farmers, but you chose not to just to protect your political hide. And that's the very reason.

Can't admit, can't admit that there was another way to do it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that's a good question. How in the world are you explaining that to your back-benchers and to the health . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well then, you tell me, you tell me and the public . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. I believe the member from Saskatoon Broadway has been in this debate and I ask her to let the member from Estevan have his day.

**Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very good to engage the members opposite in debate because I believe out in the country and in the town halls and in the streets and the coffee shops of this province, there's going to be considerable debate of whether you knew what you were doing or not and whether it was the right thing to do.

I am providing some ammunition to ordinary Saskatchewan people who want somebody to stick up for them and speak for them because they don't believe that you are thinking about them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, no, no, no, no. What they did my friend, they believed you, they believed you.

Mr. Speaker, there's the whole reason, the whole reason that we're in this debate today is because these people said we can say whatever it is and get elected. Well the public and the province of Saskatchewan knows, Mr. Speaker, that their day of reckoning will come.

The promises made in here to farmers and to seniors and to pensioners and those that need help and support are not going to be forgotten, and there will be people like me and my colleagues in here who will speak for those people, who will stand up and say there are alternatives and we'll make sure that we challenge you to come to the homes and to the coffee shops and to the town halls to defend yourself in public because we know you can't.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I've made myself very clear and make it be well known that the people of Saskatchewan don't like this budget. I don't like this budget. I'm not going to support this budget. There are very clear alternatives, Mr. Speaker, and I won't be voting for this piece of legislation.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I often wondered what it would be like to stand under a broiling sun to listen to a speech by Fidel Castro for five hours and I never did



have that pleasure. But I've got to admit, Mr. Speaker, that after having listened to two hours by the former premier of Saskatchewan, I never want to hear Fidel Castro or anybody else speak in this context.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I say to the former premier that I hope he feels better after two hours. First, because he finally got to deliver the speech that he wanted to deliver in 1982 and that he practised so hard from the Speaker's gallery to deliver in 1982 but never could deliver. So I hope he feels better in that context.

And secondly, I hope the former premier feels better at making the same old speech that I've actually come to looking forward to and liking, the same old speech about why he shouldn't have lost the election in 1991.

He keeps on telling us why he is right on harmonization, why he is right on privatization, and why the people of Saskatchewan are wrong. I get so soothed in hearing that message over and over again from the former premier, I feel a little bit better about it; I hope you do, sir. But I've got to tell you, no matter how you think you are right — something which with the greatest of respect I submit you should accept — in a democracy the people are always right and you are wrong.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1630)

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — But if it makes your soul feel good to get the 1982 speech off and to justify 1991, I guess we all benefit by that. I think that it's perhaps time and money well spent.

I would say one last point before I leave the remarks of the former premier aside and address the substance of the debate that we've had here over the last several days. I think that he would be well advised in adjusting to the defeat in October of 1991 to begin by publicly or perhaps, if I may say so, privately acknowledging that he was wrong. I'm not going to belabour him because — no I'm not, not today — and I say this very genuinely, I respect the person as a former premier who has contributed and worked hard in the province of Saskatchewan, although I oppose the policies.

And I'm not going to for a number of reasons talk about the period from '82 to 1991; that I think has been debated enough.

But I would simply say to the hon. member that there is good advice in outside editorialists and others who say the following, February 25, 1992, after the election, in the *Star-Phoenix*, a columnist writes: PCs blame disgrace on everyone but themselves. I think that essential truth remains as blindingly true today, after the former premier's address, as it did at the time of the article.

And I would say finally, in this context, that while it is true in my judgement that the disgrace cannot be blamed on anyone else but themselves, this is my advice to him and to the party opposite. The way to get out of this situation, for you, is to do what other editorialists and people have been saying, as they did in the *Leader-Post* on May 2, 1992: admit your past. And if you admit your past and admit your mistakes and don't berate us for two hours about why the people are wrong, don't in effect say that they'll learn to love your policies, admit the mistakes, there is no shame in this.

I've been defeated in 1982. I admit the mistakes that we made. I repeat, again, those mistakes were made in 1982. There's nothing wrong in serving and doing the best that you can and eventually losing an election. That's the way democracy works. And if you lose an election, it doesn't matter whether you think you are right or wrong. You are wrong; the people are right.

And I say to the member from Estevan and I say to the official opposition opposite, we would all be better ahead in the debate that is facing us for the 1990s and the year 2000 if we began with that fundamental proposition.

Mr. Member from Estevan, I commend you to that comment. And I really believe that your credibility and your role and contribution to Saskatchewan life will be enhanced not by an apologia or by a lengthy address, but by in fact that acknowledgement.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move to the substance of the debate as I have been following it over the last several days. I want to begin, first of all, by outlining to the people of Saskatchewan what this budget is all about. And I'll be very brief this afternoon, within 15, 20 minutes I hope to wrap up.

What this budget is all about, from our point of view, is to secure the future of our province. That is the objective. In securing the future of our province we have to achieve an objective of getting the fiscal house in order. It's not our only objective, but I think any fair-minded person would admit that this is surely a primary or overarching consideration of a government — any government, regardless of its ideology today.

I think that we have unveiled a budget for '93-94 and a plan to 1996-97 which by external analysis indicates that we've got a chance in doing exactly that — securing our future by putting this fiscal house in order.

This is the first time probably in the history of any government anywhere in Canada, but for sure in Saskatchewan, that there is this plan. It's possible that it could be derailed by events beyond our circumstances. But the estimates are fair, they have been judged to be reasonable, and it provides daylight at the end of the tunnel for those Saskatchewan people who have been forced to labour as the consequence of nine years of the accumulation of the largest debt in the history of our province.

This budget is also about not only a plan showing light at the end of the tunnel, it is also priorities and choices. As tough as it's been for us to find extra cash, Mr. Speaker, this government I am proud to say, this Minister of Finance, has been able to find money which shows compassion and concern for those of us in our society who cannot sacrifice any more, who've taken it too harshly and in a difficult way in the last nine years, whether that is in the food banks or the poverty situation or in question of social assistance or job retraining, the compassion package is set out. I'm very proud of that.

Today in one of my open sessions, somebody asked me in Fort Qu'Appelle: Mr. Premier, is there ever a time when governments can't concern themselves about compassion because we simply can't afford it? And I said to that person, in answer to that question, what I'm going to say to this House now: so long as I'm Premier and so long as this party is in government it will never be thus that there will not be room for compassion. We will always make way for compassion as best as we can under circumstances . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — We've endeavoured to recognize the small-business community. I won't go through the various tax incentives that we have provided for our local Main Street people. That is well documented.

We're attempting to restructure the delivery of services in wellness. I think this is going to prove to be a revolution in health care. It's going to be difficult. There will be changes and dislocations which will affect families and communities. But when we succeed as Saskatchewan people, as we surely will, we will look back on this — mark my words, one or two or three years from now — as one of the great accomplishments and achievements of a government that had the foresight and the wisdom to effect change in order to improve the lot of people in this province.

It is always the case that you never make a mistake if you do nothing. I've never seen an armchair quarterback throw an interception yet anywhere. But if you're determined to improve, if you're determined to build, if you're determined to secure our future in the areas of health care, then it is incumbent upon you, using government as the positive force, to build for our families and our communities.

Wellness is going to do that. And it'll be difficult and it'll be controversial and the members opposite will make it political, but I want to remind the members opposite, be careful in your political attacks on us as we launch this game plan because we will succeed. Be careful lest, when we do succeed, your credibility will be destroyed and the people of this province will remember and re-elect again a government that had the courage and the guts and the determination to build the finest health care system in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Agriculture is another dimension. I'm not going to talk about this at length because it's been discussed. You know our view. GRIP is fundamentally flawed. I think the majority of Saskatchewan farmers also share that view now. Member from Estevan, if I may return to him for a moment, is absolutely hung up on this plan. Most do not agree with him, independent observers.

We know we have limited dollars in this province and this country. We've got to fashion a program which stands behind our family farmers in a way which is doable and in a way which recognizes the cost of productions, which is aimed and focused at those who need it.

There are a variety of ideas kicking around. I like the concept of the first 8,000 bushels being guaranteed in accordance with some target price. Take the United States target price, big or small, every farmer would be guaranteed that. And it wouldn't be open-ended and it wouldn't be like GRIP where a large proportion of the public money ends up in the hands of few people. This would be a plan which would be predictable, would be logical, would be simplified, would be permanent, and would be paid at the elevator.

And I think that our review committee — I'm not trying to tie their hands; they're going to have to make their recommendations — but our review committee, working in consultation with the farmers and working in cooperation with Mr. Mayer or whomever should be the next minister of Agriculture, are going to come up with that restructured, solid agricultural program, again an example of a party and a government that's got the courage to stand behind the farmers and secure our future.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I could talk about government reorganization. I won't, other than to say that it's in the same mode. We are reorganizing and we are attempting to reduce expenditures and to make things more efficient, but not for the sake of efficiency. We are also doing this because we want to fashion government to be meaningful for the 1990s and the year 2000.

If you do not believe in the worth of government, all you do is attack it. That is not our mission. It is because we believe in government as an agency, as an instrument of the ordinary men and women of this province, that we seek to improve its credibility. We know that when people are suffering in their individual lives, they have to be demonstrated and we have to show to them that we too are capable of change.

No institution, no government, no configuration of departments is permanent. That is the one essential, immutable law of life; it is change. And it is because we want to preserve and protect the efficacy, because we want to restore the trust of our people in government — a trust which was badly damaged as a

result of nine years of attack willy-nilly — it is that reason that we're reorganizing.

Because we are going to end up, also when it comes at election time, with the finest civil service, dedicated, sensitive, and committed to delivering and restoring confidence in government right from the top to the bottom.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — And all of these plans have been laid out in writing. They're there. That's what this budget's about, Mr. Speaker. It is securing our future in the face of the devastation. It is to provide hope and opportunity to the greatest province and the greatest people in all of Canada. It is to provide that sense of hope and optimism.

It's not going to be achieved overnight because we did not get into this mess overnight. But I say to you, Mr. Speaker, as I say to the Conservative official opposition and the Liberal third party, and as I say to all the people of Saskatchewan, join us, join us in pursuit of those goals and those objectives. And as difficult as the task will be, we shall rise and, if I may say, we shall overcome and we shall prosper and be more compassionate and more fair-minded than ever before in Saskatchewan . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, you do not have to accept my words for it. This budget has been analysed by many people, and there are comments ranging from ordinary men and women who are voters to organizations about how this budget addresses the right issues and the right priorities — sensitivity for those who are least capable of fighting the problems, opportunity for small business.

I have them here. Culture, sports groups expected worse. People talking about cooperation. The development of the districts under the wellness model are examples of people cooperating. They're pulling together. That's what's being said. What's being said outside our borders is the same. The Liberal Premier in New Brunswick — I draw this to the specific attention of the leader of the third party — quote in the *Leader-Post*, March 20, says:

New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna added his voice to a chorus of hurrahs Friday for the tough budgets brought down by the two hard-pressed provinces.

"We as Canadians should all applaud the courage and commitment that Premier Roy Romanow of Saskatchewan . . . (has exhibited) . . ."

I don't normally cite Liberals in support, but I say that this is a person who is a Canadian, even though we differ in policies and we do have our differences. That is what the Liberal Party is saying there. I wish the leader of the third party in Saskatchewan would join

her colleague and her friend in saying the same thing, because it is the truth. This is the situation.

I have others. I'm not particularly proud of some of these quotations but none the less they're coming in from all over that we have put together a budget which is blended, a proper mix of cuts and unfortunately tax increases where necessary, and yet sensitivity to go about it in the right way. That's what they're saying outside of this province in addition to saying inside.

And what about the people that we borrow from? Unfortunately the people that we also have to pay attention to. The former premier kept on talking in his address that we took a credit rating drop. Well we did. We took it within about three weeks after we assumed office, based on the fact of this budget. But there hasn't been any since.

Canadian Bond Rating Service, quote: the province of Saskatchewan has taken stern but positive measures. Rating outlook, stable. Wood Gundy, I can give the quotation in the Wood Gundy prediction: balanced budget plan is a credible effort to come to grips with the rising debt problem. Balanced budget effort sends a strong, positive signal to financial markets. Burns Fry:

For a second consecutive year the Saskatchewan government has taken a major step towards stabilizing the provinces unsustainable debt growth. The Romanow government has taken aggressive steps to deal with the budget mess which it inherited.

(1645)

These are not Roy Romanow's words, or my words, Mr. Speaker; these are the words of Burns Fry — taken aggressive steps to deal with the budget mess which it inherited.

Bond rating analysts call Saskatchewan budget very positive steps — Standard and Poor's. Toronto Dominion Bank: this year's tough budget measures provide a good starting point for improving the province's fiscal situation. And on and on it goes. And that's what they're saying outside.

What in the world is it that motivates the Leader of the Conservative Party, the official opposition leader, and the leader of the third party in this House to presume — I say this with the greatest of respect — to say to the people and to this legislature that they know better than all of these independent analysts, none of whom are our political friends but with whom we all make business because we have to do business, all of whom have analysed and said this budget is a budget of compassion, hope, stimulation of the economy, the right way to go, a model for all the countries and all the provinces . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Why do you differ? On what basis do you differ? You have a right to differ, of

course. But on what independent analysis is there a differing?

Now that's what they're saying inside the province. That's what they're saying outside the province, in Canada. The Prime Minister, the retiring Prime Minister, I don't quote him often either, but even he doesn't agree with the former premier. He thinks the budget is good. The Liberal leader in New Brunswick thinks it's good. Everybody inside thinks it's a positive — bond rating agencies.

So what's wrong with the official opposition, Mr. Speaker? So what's wrong with the leader of the third party? Why can't they catch on on this? Why? What's wrong?

Well let's take a look at the Conservatives for a moment. The former premier got up in his remarks a few moments ago and he said: you know, I'm going to talk about alternatives. Well in his Castro-like lengthy speech, one hour and 50 minutes in the address, I think he talked about the alternatives. And I decided to myself, well maybe let's take a look at his alternatives to see if they match the alternatives of the official Leader of the Opposition. That would be an interesting test.

The official Leader of the Opposition, the member from Thunder Creek, says: you didn't cut enough. Estevan says, you cut too much, too mean. By the way I'd like the idea of the former premier somehow squared the circle in his mind that we were on the one hand just lacing on the hurt — as he would describe it to the people — but immediately thereafter in the same breath said, but this budget was designed to save our political hides.

How in the world putting on the hurt is saving our political hide I don't know, but perhaps in the former premier's mind there is some rationalization or logical connection in this context.

But what is the alternative in the face of all of this overwhelming evidence? What is the alternative of the Conservative Party and the Leader of the Opposition opposite? Simply put, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time, it's boiled down to two things. Number one, harmonization; they still say harmonize. And number two, they say privatization.

The two hallmarks of nine years of selling off Crown corporations at huge losses, giving away money to GigaTexts and Supercarts and all of the various litany of hugely spectacular bad investments. Nine, ten years later, the alternative is privatization and harmonization.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in question period one day, if that is the sum total of the Progressive Conservative alternative to a budget, they are like the Bourbons — they have learned nothing, and they remember nothing, and like the Bourbons and when their reign is done, as their reign is done those men and women will never return to the front benches because the people of Saskatchewan reject those fundamental

approaches.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — We do not want to sell them out. We want to build. We want to preserve our heritage and we want to do it in the context of our values in the face of the difficulties which have been imposed upon us by the administration opposite. And you know, the now new Leader of the Opposition, the member from Thunder Creek, talks about somehow trying to distance himself.

Again, time doesn't permit me but I've quotations here, 1987, March 23: Thunder Creek MLA, Rick Swenson, applauds Saskatchewan Finance minister Gary Lane's recently released economic and financial report, Moose Jaw *Times-Herald*.

Moose Jaw *Times-Herald*, March 23, 1987: Swenson says the report showed the provincial government is determined to get the deficit under control and manage public spending.

Moose Jaw *Times-Herald*, March 23, 1987: It takes political courage to wrestle government deficits and manage public spending, Swenson said.

By the way it was okay when his government tried to do it with all the wrong priorities, but not okay when our government tries to do it. March 23: Swenson welcomes this strategy to control government spending.

March 23: Swenson believes Premier Grant Devine's government has sound priorities in 1987.

I might stop there to say about the priorities of GigaText and the like. Of course we argued against the dismantlement of the drug plan. Of course we said all those things the former premier said. Because what we were saying is, you didn't have to do it because you didn't have to divert the money to all of those schemes. You didn't have to get involved in the privatizations and bankrupt the province. You could have directed that money to preserve our health care system. And we're here today because of your actions, yours and yours and yours and yours.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — And then there is the mock budget of the University of Saskatchewan. That's the other alternative, privatization and harmonization.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is going to be . . . the Premier, the former premier says, get out there and tell the people. Yes I'm going to tell the people. Here's what the mock budget that they endorsed: freeze on any hospital special care home construction, page 4; \$15 million cut in special care funding; user fees; lab services; health care premiums, health care premiums.

Now the Leader of the Opposition is piping up, health care premiums. And the former premier said, you

know lookit we have a sales tax, in Alberta they don't have a sales tax. That's right, they don't have a sales tax in Alberta. But in Alberta they have a health care premium of \$640 which we do not have. Roughly this is the approximate amount that we would pay for a certain level of income family in Saskatchewan. They have a health care premium in British Columbia, it goes to 840. In Manitoba the Conservatives have a payroll tax, and that's what the official opposition wants us to adopt. In fact they'd probably have us impose deterrent fees if they had their way.

Well this is the mock alternative plan. Delivery of social services by charity groups, Mr. Speaker. Well that's exactly what the Premier in Manitoba did. He cut off 57 NGO (non-governmental organization) social services because those were his budget priorities in a deficit. It isn't ours because we support people who are trying to help people through NGO agencies. But that's the alternative.

Eliminate crop support for agriculture. Now that's one. Because one thing I do give the former premier credit, he was a strong defender — I think misplaced in his priorities — but he was a strong defender for farmers.

But this alternative package — I don't think he's even read it — said eliminate crop support; change the method of payment of Crow. You endorse that now, Mr. Leader of the Opposition. Eliminate field services in Department of Education; advanced education, eliminate; higher tuition fees; and of course that good old fashioned harmonization of the GST.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if those are the alternatives, you doggone right I'm going to ask the people of Saskatchewan to examine those alternatives. Because I want to tell them, and I believe this firmly to be the case, I don't think the people are ever going to go back to the days when the programs of 1991 were stopped dead in their tracks. They're never going to accept harmonization and privatization as those people have advocated it, nor are they going to accept this alternative budget, because that is exactly what created this mess. They're going to support the government and the people that are defending and cleaning up the mess, that is, this side, Mr. Speaker, the people on this side.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Just a word about the member from Greystone, the Leader of the Liberal Party and what her alternatives are. I read her speech of March 22 in *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. The line is that her cuts are not enough. Now she points out to what her cuts should be. I asked the Finance department people to document what the total cuts would amount to. You know what they'd amount to, Mr. Speaker? Just slightly over \$4 million. You know, Mr. Speaker, what that amount to? One-half a day's daily interest on the interest charges of the public debt that we pay, \$840 million.

One-tenth of 1 per cent of the total budget, that is the

position of the Leader of the Liberal Party. She says the cuts are not enough. Well I'll tell you, at 4 million they're not enough.

I believe, Madam Leader of the Liberal Party, you're going to have to tell us precisely what you're going to cut to get that deficit balanced off because you could find the \$840 million. How are you going to do it? Tell me precisely what you're going to cut.

And if the argument is you're going to trim the MLAs and the number of MLAs — something that perhaps we should debate — I can tell you, you can shut down the entire legislature, you can fire every one of us and all the pay and all the offices tied into it, and what would we save? Eight or nine million? A day and a half's interest.

If that is the extent of your economic policy, Madam MLA, I tell you the Liberal Party has got to go right back to square one and economics 101 because it is incredible.

And not only that, if you're saying that that's the extent of the cuts and that you're not going to increase taxes — in fact you're going to decrease taxes — I say you won't even be back in the legislature because it is totally dishonest and unacceptable as far as the people of Saskatchewan are concerned. Not back in the legislature.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Of course, there's maybe something else the Liberal Party would advocate. Liberal Premier Ross Thatcher had deterrent fees. It was only \$2.50 a day back in those good old days. Maybe you'd like to make them \$20.50 a day; maybe you'd like them \$20.50 a day for a stay in the hospital. That's a Liberal plan.

Maybe another Liberal plan would be the way that Quebec is handling its civil service — not only freeze but roll back and slash. Maybe that's another Liberal plan that you have up your sleeves. And by the way, you're going to do all of this while building a CANDU 3 nuclear reactor at \$1.2 billion.

Now you try to square those circles as an alternative and it's clearly one — with the greatest respect to an MLA who I think is making a contribution, trying to make a contribution to public life; I say that genuinely . . . but it is incredible. It simply doesn't total up and you know that to be the case. So I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, what is it when the people in Saskatchewan say, as Mr. Lazar said in the chamber of commerce in Meadow Lake as quoted in the article that everybody quotes today, he said I don't think anybody liked the budget but he said, quote, they're on the right track. That's what they're saying inside.

And Mr. McKenna says it: they're on the right track; I applaud the courage. That's what they're saying on the outside. And the rating agencies are saying that this is the right thing to do, to finally get a hold of this. They're saying that on the further outside. What is it

with the official opposition parties that they cannot join us in building Saskatchewan? What is it?

You know the Minister of Finance on our side wrote to the Leader of the Official Opposition and to the leader of the third party and said, look — well before the budget was being built — come down and take a look at the figures, can we talk about some ideas. Both wrote back and said, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, we're not interested, not interested.

In the case of one, the Leader of the Official Opposition, he said, your budget's in the can so I'm not even talking to you any more about it. In the case of the Liberal leader, her position was simple: I disagree with you philosophically. This is the new politics, the new politics of sharing. I disagree with you philosophically, that's the end of the issue. Full stop, period. What is it ends philosophically, politically, philosophically, Madam MLA, I think so. That is the new politics.

I tell you if that's the new politics, it is about as new as the politics of appointing Georgette Sheridan contrary to a democratic nomination convention, the good old Liberal. And it's about as new politics as the election of Ralph Goodale and the pizza politics that your party practised, and the people of Saskatchewan know that totally and completely.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Totally and completely. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, there is no difference because they have no plans between the Conservatives and Liberals, it's either Tweedledee or tweedledummer, one way or the other. As Tommy Douglas used to say, the Liberals and the Conservatives are like a chicken standing in the snow; one foot's in the snow and the other foot's up trying to keep warm. That's the foot that's in government. And then of course it gets a little bit too cold and the cold foot goes up and the warm one goes down in the snow. Two different feet. Two different parties. Same old chicken and same old lack of policies.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1700)

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to close. I want to close by saying to you, sir, and to the members of the Legislative Assembly and to the public of Saskatchewan, this has been for us a challenging and, frankly speaking, trying time. As I travel around rural Saskatchewan I have people genuinely saying to me, you shouldn't have cut the children's dental plan. I say, what should have I cut? They say, well you should have cut the ag centres. I say, we have, unfortunately. I go to another community; they say, you shouldn't have cut the ag centres, you should have cut the children's plan. I say, unfortunately, I've done them both.

Forty-seven thousand letters is what I got in the Premier's office last year, Mr. Speaker. That's a huge

amount of letters — and by the way it shows the awareness of Saskatchewan people — and by far the largest number of letters start off something like this: Dear Mr. Premier, sometimes even Dear Roy, sometimes even a little more colourful. And it goes like this. We know that you inherited a mess and we know that you have to do something about it and you're doing the right effort. And then the letter says, but, but . . . and fill in your blank. And as you listen to the blank — don't make the change to the ag centres, don't make the change to the business centres, don't make the change to the drug plan, don't do this, don't tax, don't do this, don't do this, if you did all the butts, each one individually, meritorious in their own view, you'd be back in the jackpot that we are in that we have to desperately get out of.

And when you write back to the people and say, look I'm asking you, as we're trying to do ourselves, to look beyond the lean horizons of our years; to look beyond, as important as it is, our individual objectives and goals to the larger, common weal.

We'll have made mistakes in this budget — I admit that frankly. But overall, the budget is strong because it is looking to the common weal. As externally, externally/internationally, and nationally, and even domestically, people reluctantly have to agree, and are agreeing, to say they know this can't be saved overnight because we didn't get here overnight.

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful challenge, to look to try to see beyond the lean horizon of our years. Sometimes I tend to, as a practising politician, look in the day-to-day problems. You wake up every day and you see this deficit and you wonder what in the world you can do with it.

But what is encouraging is you look beyond the lean horizon of your years and you know when you're out there in rural Saskatchewan that the ethic of cooperation and community and understanding and compassion and understanding of the facts is as great as it ever was. It's as great as it was during Tommy Douglas's era. And his problems, as severe as they were, are nowhere near by comparison as severe as ours. It is there because this province is our home and the people of Saskatchewan want to make it a strong home.

And it is a strong home. Our foundations are strong — potash, oil, natural gas, wheat, the best farmers, the most innovative people, uranium. We have a number of options and opportunities. We are innovating. We are producing jobs. Of course it's not fast enough. We are pulling together as communities, and we're rationalizing, and we're cooperating, and we will be making mistakes, and it will not be easy.

But we ask you, the ladies and the gentlemen of the opposition, to join us in that task. Don't stand back and say, for partisan and political reasons, that you're simply not going to do it. Look beyond the lean horizons of your years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close by saying, by giving

you two quotations which kind of give me motivation in some ways. One is from the late former American President John F. Kennedy, who said this — and I think it's applicable to this budget — Kennedy said about America: divided there is little we can do, for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder. United, he said, there is much we can do in a host of cooperative ventures.

Ladies and gentlemen of this Assembly, let's not forget this. United in cooperative venture, under our values of compassion and decency and opportunity, there is much we can do. And that's what this budget's all about.

And finally I'd say this, Mr. Speaker, of all the correspondence that I've received, there's one letter which really touched me personally. One of my colleagues referred to it — I think it was the member from Kelsey-Tisdale — the letter from Mrs. Irma Douglas, the widow of the former premier, Tommy Douglas, which if I read in its detail I don't think the member from Estevan would particularly like, because she described our situation so astutely at her advanced age as she watches Saskatchewan politics and the love of this country. Her words lastly to me were: Roy, some day the sun will shine again on the greatest people in all of Canada. And she said, you'll be there to see it. I don't know if I'll be there to see it or not; that's another issue.

This is from a spirit and a soul and a wise person who lived it, who practised it, who was a partner, who exemplifies what this mission in 1993 is all about. Are we going to let her down? Are we going to let down the people? Are we going to let down our pioneers? Are we going to give up?

We're not going to do that. We are building a brand-new Saskatchewan. We're going to do it. The better day is dawning now. I feel it and I see it and I say one more time to the official opposition, in the vote that's going to take place momentarily, join us, join us. We cannot be beaten if you do. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to close the debate on the budget. It's also a very difficult act to follow here.

I want first of all to thank the constituents in Saskatoon Westmount for giving me the privilege of representing them in the House. And I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Saskatchewan who provided so much input into our pre- and post-budget meetings around the province.

I also want to speak briefly about the process by which this government arrived at our budget. It was very much a team effort. I want to pay tribute to the wonderful foundation for this budget laid by the former minister of Finance, the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — The member from Regina Dewdney worked very hard this year and last to begin the process of rebuilding Saskatchewan. Our Premier as usual played an invaluable leadership role at all levels, particularly in meeting with Saskatchewan people and helping them to come to understand the magnitude of our problems. Treasury Board members, especially the Minister of Labour and my colleague, the member from Swift Current, spent many long hours sifting through the difficult choices.

But I want to say a special word about our caucus. What pleased me so much was the open and honest approach that we took to this budget. I want the people of this province to know that all members of this government spent long hours looking critically at our situation. We all asked the tough questions. Is our situation really as difficult as we're being told? Have we looked at all of the options? And we all asked those questions because we all have to go back to our constituents and explain this budget in the context of the problems we faced.

The input of the caucus into this budget was absolutely invaluable. When I stand to vote for this budget, I will stand with confidence because I know that I have standing with me 54 of the most decent and capable men and women that this province has ever seen in this Assembly.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Life is not about the hand that one is dealt. We have little control over that. It's about how one plays the hand they've been dealt. That's what historians and our children will judge us by. They will judge us by how we, as a government, played the hand that we were dealt. No one in this province would deny that we were dealt a very difficult hand. Anyone who thinks our job is easy probably also believes that Elvis Presley is still alive.

I don't want to dwell on the mess that we inherited except to say this: some day some historian is going to sit down and chronicle what happened to this province in the 1980s — the bad deals, the reckless spending, the lack of accountability — and the tale will be one unprecedented in the whole annals of Canadian history.

When confronted with such a mess our government could have sought an easy way out, a way to kind of muddle through the next four years and try to keep the voters happy. But that would not have been the responsible thing to do. And so, Mr. Speaker, this government played the hand that it was dealt. We took the situation in hand. We acted boldly, decisively, with compassion and vision, to lay out a plan to turn around this province and to secure our children's future.

We said the era of the 1980s is over in this province; welcome to the '90s and the 21st century. First, we showed the people of Saskatchewan how we can

develop jobs and stimulate the economy without bankrupting the treasury. We said the era of megabucks for megaprojects is over. We ushered in a new era of working with co-ops and small businesses to create jobs, the new era of community-based economic development, the new era of building on our strengths and working together.

Secondly, we said to the people of Saskatchewan, we're going to have to change the way that we operate in this province. The world is changing around us and either we adjust and ride the waves of change or change will bowl us over like a tidal wave. We're going to have to change the way we deliver services in health care, education, economic development. We're going to have to integrate service delivery to make the services more affordable and more effective. What the wellness model will show in health care is that what one community cannot achieve alone is attainable if a whole district combines its energies and resources and works together.

The members opposite feed into a gloom and doom scenario when they talk about offloading onto local governments and predict huge increases in taxes at the local level. What they fail to do is to give the people of this province the credit they deserve for being imaginative and innovative. I notice that the mayor of Regina, who I believe runs an exemplary administration, said about reductions to municipalities: if we're going to see an end to cuts to grants, we first have to see an end to the increases to the provincial deficit.

And I noticed the mayor of Prince Albert says that in his community he will not be increasing taxes. Last night I was visiting with some people in Strasbourg who talked about the need for rural municipalities to sit down with each other, to set aside their old historic rivalries and differences, and begin to share administrative services so as to cut costs.

Mr. Speaker, across this province people are rising to the challenge. They are changing. They are being imaginative. They are working together at the community level to play their part in turning around this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm amazed as I listen to the members opposite. They seem, for example, to be unhappy with our move to accrual accounting — funny numbers, they say.

I say to them, accrual accounting is the way of the future, supported by the auditor, the Gass Commission, professional accounting associations. It's already used by many businesses and farmers in the province.

What accrual accounting means is getting rid of our credit card, the very credit card that the members opposite used with such gay abandon to rack up a huge debt in this province.

From now on governments will have to tell taxpayers each and every year what their level of indebtedness

is. Accrual accounting is just one of the many steps that this government has taken to make government open, honest, and accountable.

The members opposite have been speaking out of both sides of their mouths. They want the cost of government cut, yet they howl like wounded wolves when anyone loses their jobs or a facility is closed. So they want government cuts with no job losses and no facilities closed, and they want to balance the books without increasing taxes. I say to them, Alice in Wonderland would enjoy their budget.

(1715)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — When the members opposite say they want more cuts and no tax increases, if you read between the lines I think what they're really saying is that they would remove all of the safety nets which we have put in place in this budget. They would get their cuts and balance their books on the backs of some of the most vulnerable people in our province.

Let's not forget what happened to the poor in this province in the 1980s. In that era of reckless spending, as the number of children living in poverty increased dramatically, Grant Schmidt, the then minister of Social Services, denied that there were even hungry children in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that era has ended in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — This is a new era. Despite our financial problems we are not cutting funding to the most vulnerable, and in fact we're providing for small but targeted increases. We're increasing benefits to low income families, we're increasing our support for single parents and troubled families, we're establishing an aboriginal court worker program, and in 1994 we're developing a new child benefit program to help support working poor families.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Because of our financial circumstances, we cannot move as quickly as we would like to remove some of the inequities in our society. The time frame has changed; the principles haven't. Make no mistake about it, this government and the New Democratic Party remain firmly committed to the ideal of equality.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is a budget of hope. It's a budget of hope because of the economic forecasts upon which it's based — economic forecasts, by the way, which do not come from within the province but come from agencies outside the province. What they're saying is that the next four years are going to be years of economic growth and new job creation.

What these numbers reflect is what the Premier has already referred to. Saskatchewan, the house that we



live in, yes, it's mortgaged to the hilt, but the underlying structure of the house, the economy of the house, is sound and it's growing. The good news then is once we get the mortgage under control, we will be left with a structurally sound and very beautiful house.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — It's also a budget of hope because we now have a comprehensive plan for the future of this province. We have said to the people of the province, the era of spending recklessly today and leaving the bills to be paid by our children tomorrow is over. We've entered a new era in Saskatchewan, the era of living within our means and planning for our future.

As the Premier has said, our balanced-budget plan is the first in Canada and it's receiving significant attention from other parts of Canada and from around the world. Other provinces are calling and asking about our plan. And just this week I participated in a conference call with financial agencies from across North America and Europe. They were keenly interested in hearing about our balanced-budget plan and what it means for the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, they understand that Saskatchewan and Canada are in a tough spot. All governments in Canada have a problem with debt. What matters is how they are dealing with their problem.

The problem common to all of us, ironically, is driving us closer together. Partisan petty politics is beginning to take a back seat as we grapple together with our debt problem and struggle to present a united front to the outside world.

Our Premier mentioned the remarks made by the Prime Minister. I would just like to quote what he said. The Prime Minister of Canada said about this budget: there has been overspending in the province, and the Premier has begun to deal with it.

The Liberal Premier also made remarks about our budget which the Premier did not quote. Liberal Premier of New Brunswick said about our budget: I believe their strong leadership signals to the international world that Canada is going to get its act together.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, Canada is going to get its act together and Saskatchewan is leading the way.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — At this time, when provincial budgets are being so carefully scrutinized, we acted first. We took the tough measures. We laid out a plan for the future. We have charted a course for others to follow. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in this legislature and to say that I will be joining with my colleagues and supporting this

budget, because it's the plan that will secure our future.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 5:22 p.m. until 5:24 p.m.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 10**

Swenson	Toth
Devine	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	Haverstock

**Nays — 53**

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

The division bells rang from 5:27 p.m. until 5:28 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 53**

Romanow	Lautermilch
Van Mulligen	Calvert
Thompson	Murray
Wiens	Hamilton
Simard	Johnson
Tchorzewski	Trew
Lingenfelter	Draper
Teichrob	Serby
Shillington	Whitmore
Koskie	Sonntag
Anguish	Flavel
Solomon	Roy
Goulet	Cline

Atkinson	Scott
Kowalsky	McPherson
Carson	Wormsbecker
Mitchell	Kujawa
MacKinnon	Crofford
Penner	Stanger
Cunningham	Knezacek
Upshall	Harper
Hagel	Keeping
Bradley	Kluz
Koenker	Renaud
Lorje	Langford
Lyons	Jess
Pringle	

**Nays — 10**

Swenson	Toth
Devine	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	Haverstock

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**General Revenue Fund  
Energy and Mines — Vote 23**

The Committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:32 p.m.