

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of some citizens in the province of Saskatchewan, regarding a proposed 230,000 volt power line from Condie, near Regina, to the Queen Elizabeth power station in Saskatoon, which they deem unnecessary:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to do the following:

1. Order SaskPower to facilitate the production of non-utility generated power in areas of increased demand, namely Lloydminster and Meadow Lake. Several companies in this area have applied to generate power. Allowing non-utility generation of power in this area will make the construction of the power line and its attendant 42 million dollar expenditure unnecessary.
2. Order the Minister of the Environment to undertake a complete environmental assessment including public hearings.
3. Order SaskPower to ensure that there is a full and complete compensation package for all affected land-owners, with increased emphasis on compensation for the loss of property value experienced by owners of small holdings on or near the proposed route;
4. Order SaskPower to table, in the Legislature, a complete economic analysis by an independent auditor that proves the economic benefits of the proposed line exceed the economic benefits of non-utility generated power or conservation.
5. Order SaskPower to table, in the Legislature, a review of all national and international studies on the effects of electric and magnetic fields on humans.
6. Further, order SaskPower to cease and desist all planning, surveying, or preparation for construction of the Condie to Queen Elizabeth 230,000 volt power line on any of the proposed routes until all other points of this petition are honored.

And, as in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there are signatures here from Saskatoon, from Ontario, from Insinger, from Loon Lake, from Allan, Saskatchewan.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Regarding the planning committees and district health boards set up in response to the government's wellness initiative: (1) how many persons have resigned in the last year from such committees; (2) how many of those resigning offered reasons for their resignations and; (3) how many of those resigning cited philosophical differences with the approach taken by the minister as a reason for resigning?

The Speaker: — Order. Will the member from Regina Rosemont please come to order.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure today to introduce the Member of Parliament for Regina-Lumsden seated in the back of the legislature, Les Benjamin. He's in Regina doing some constituency work. In fact I picked him up at his constituency . . . or riding office and brought him down here that I might introduce him to you and all members.

This past weekend we had a retirement gala for Mr. Benjamin who's been the MP (Member of Parliament) for 25 years, and we treated him so good on Saturday that we just can't seem to get him to leave Regina and head back to Ottawa. But I can assure everyone he's been doing diligent work in his time here. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Les to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly Vonda Kosloski and a group of people in your gallery wearing white ribbons. They're here to observe the procedures of the House and the white ribbons are to express their concerns with Bill 38. I'd ask the House to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you today and through you to the members of the Assembly the Hon. Howard Hampton, the Minister of Natural Resources for the province of Ontario who's seated behind the bar in the Chamber.

I have known Howie for a number of years — 15 years or more — going back to associations we had in the province of Saskatchewan many years ago. Howie was first elected to the Ontario provincial legislature for the riding of Kenora Rainy River in 1987 and he became the first New Democrat attorney general for the province of Ontario in the fall of 1990 and served

in that capacity until he recently assumed the responsibility for Natural Resources ministry earlier this year, a ministry that parallels many of the duties that I have here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Instead of boring you with further stories of Howie's feats outside of politics that he and I would both be familiar with, I'd simply ask him to stand so that we can tell who Les Benjamin and who Howard is behind the bar, and that members of the Assembly should welcome the minister from Ontario to be here this afternoon. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 21 grade 12 students from Kelliher High School which is located in the south end of the constituency of Kelvington-Wadena.

They're accompanied by a teacher, Cameron Mitchell, and a bus driver, Lorne Harman. I will be meeting with the students after question period and I ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to extend my wishes to Mr. Mitchell and his class today. Mr. Mitchell comes from a community a little bit to the south of me and we had the opportunity to join in the celebration of the 80th birthday of his uncle last summer, who was a member of this Legislative Assembly for two or three terms, Mr. Alex Mitchell. And I'd just like to say welcome, Cameron.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Invoking Closure on Bill No. 3

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, thanks to you, rural health care in this province is a very, very sick patient. And today you give notice that you will be cutting off its life-support systems once and for all, that you will be cutting off debate on Bill No. 3, that you will be using the heavy hand of government to ram this Bill through this legislature without the opportunity for proper debate.

Madam Minister, you are aware of the ground swell in rural Saskatchewan against your wellness model. People all over Saskatchewan are asking for more time, more information, more input. And how do you respond? You shut down debate by asking for the most brutal tactic you can find — closure. Madam Minister, how can you justify this hypocrisy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, there are people

across this province who are asking us to move with the district Act legislation. We have received correspondence from organizations that represent 400 to 500 agencies throughout the province . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before we begin the same thing as yesterday, I ask members, please, there was no interruption when the question was asked, not to interrupt when the minister is answering her question.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are trying to portray a situation in Saskatchewan that simply is not there. There was a meeting at Brock last night and from that meeting one individual for example said, there's a lot of rumour and a lot of fearmongering, and we know where it's coming from, Mr. Speaker. And this was said by a farmer's wife and a casual nurse in the Kindersley Union Hospital. She says, I'm resigned to the fact that there are going to be cut-backs.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, is that there is health reform taking place throughout the province. We do need to get communities into districts so that we can provide a higher-quality health care services, and change the role of some of our facilities and protect these small communities with enhanced community-based services and enhanced therapies and other preventative and health promotion services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, if people aren't concerned as you say, then how come we find hospital workers questioning your wellness plan? Why are people asking to meet with you? Why are you introducing closure into this Assembly? And let me remind you of the position you took regarding closure in the debate on August 7, 1989. Madam Minister, you said this about closure:

. . . (closure) is about muzzling the opposition . . . something that this government is not reluctant to do because we've seen repeated examples of how they've muzzled other people who have effectively spoken out against their policies, their cut-backs, and their harsh and cruel tactics . . .

Those were your words, Madam Minister, and they couldn't be more appropriate today. People all over Saskatchewan are starting to speak out against your policies, your cut-backs, and your harsh and cruel tactics. So you had to muzzle the debate. Madam Minister, isn't that what your introduction of closure is really about? Muzzling those who object to your government's systematic destruction of health care in this province? Isn't that so?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact is that something like 52.3 per cent of the population that were surveyed in an omnibus poll support the establishment of health districts. That is, those people

who are aware of what is occurring.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have one single intent. The district Act legislation, they know is essential for communities to get organized on districts. In fact their own commission, the Murray Commission, recommended that, Mr. Speaker. They recommended the role change of health care facilities as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have one intent. The member from Kindersley said at the meeting in Eatonia: we cannot allow this Bill to go through. We will hold it up as long as possible. It simply must be stopped.

Their intent, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The intent of the members opposite is to prevent the establishment of health districts in the province which health care stakeholders and communities throughout this province recognize is necessary.

There are also budgetary decisions that have been made by the government and will result in funding reductions to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister, the people of Saskatchewan are seeing through your hypocrisy. They don't really believe that poll. Why don't you conduct a poll today?

I would like to ask the Associate Minister of Health to own up to his part in this betrayal as well. Mr. Minister, I'd like to remind you of your comments about closure, the question we've been trying to get an answer from the minister from, your comments from August 7, 1989. And you stood in this House and said:

I'll put my name on record against this limiting of free speech in the Saskatchewan legislature. And when that day comes and I no longer have a right to sit in this legislature and to speak here, when that day comes, I will at least not go away with the shame of knowing that I was part of a group of men and women who sought to limit those rights in this House.

Are you feeling that shame today, Mr. Minister? Are you feeling that shame or were your words of August 7, 1989, as hollow as your party's commitment to protect health care in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite do not want health reform to work. Why don't they want it to work? Because they want to destroy medicare in this province. Why did they support the federal government when they offloaded

to the tune of \$540 million this year? Why? Because they want to destroy medicare and health care programs in our province.

Why did they support Brian Mulroney and his drug patent legislation that is increasing health care costs by \$10 million? Because they want to destroy medicare in this province.

Why do they want to remove the hospital revenue tax when there's no other alternate funding in place? Because they want to cut the institutions off . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Before we proceed to the next question, there's a chorus of interruption when the minister is answering the question. That has simply got to stop. Next question.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the minister really wants to see health reform and allow it to work, why introduce closure? Why introduce closure into this Assembly? Why be so hypocritical? Why stand up and defend the Associate Minister of Health? Is she going to stand up and defend the Premier today, Mr. Speaker?

Even your leader, the Premier, as the former leader on August 4, '89, said this about closure, you said that closure was heavy-handed, undemocratic, unprecedented, and unwarranted. Your words, Mr. Premier. But now that you're sitting in the Premier's chair you seem to have changed your tune. You say that it doesn't matter that people are concerned and fearful of your plan to close rural hospitals because, in your words, the train has left the station.

So, Mr. Premier, now that you're driving the train you're not quite so concerned about who you will run over, are you? Mr. Premier, how can you justify your hypocrisy after everything you've said? How can you lead a government that runs roughshod over democratic principles and freedom of speech?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I think the members opposite should justify their hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker — their hypocrisy of saddling this province with a \$15 billion debt, destroying . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Will the member from Arm River please come to order. Member from Arm River, please come to order.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder how the members opposite, as I was saying, including the member from Arm River, can justify their hypocrisy in creating a \$15 billion debt in this province that makes it almost impossible for us to continue health care programs and other social programs. How can they justify their hypocrisy on sitting on their hands for 10 years and doing nothing, nothing to move the health care system in a direction that will preserve medicare for future generations? Instead they implemented a scorched earth policy, a scorched earth . . . the member from Souris-Cannington, Mr. Berntson . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, the destructive agenda hidden below the surface of your iceberg budget has now been exposed. Your hypocrisy is out in the open and it is clear to everyone that your political agenda takes precedence over the rights of people in this province. Madam Minister, I don't believe the plan is about the wellness of people. It's about the political wellness of the NDP government.

Madam Minister, there've been many public meetings over the past few weeks. Had you bothered to attend even one of them you would know the people are very concerned and that they want more. Madam Minister, if you really cared you would give people more time and you would attend some of the public meetings that are being held.

Madam Minister, will you withdraw your plan to invoke closure on this Bill until a full public debate can be held? And will you attend some of the meetings to hear what people have to say?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk about many meetings. We're talking about a meeting in Eatonia and one in Brock. Last night the Minister of Social Services was at Brock, and guess what? When she arrived there they were not expecting a political person from the government at that meeting. In fact what they said, what they said . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The members in the opposition are simply taking up their own time of question period. Order.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the people at Brock said is they did not want this to be a political meeting. They did not expect a political person at this meeting. A Health department official was sent; the Minister of Social Services was there. When she realized that they didn't want a political person there, she said, we won't make it political. So she stayed out of the discussion. The member from Kindersley decided to keep quiet at that meeting too, I understand, unlike Eatonia.

The fact is, is that there are meetings throughout the province which you are trying to use for your own political agenda. It's quite clear. And your political agenda is not to preserve medicare for future generations with a rational formula that will ensure high-quality health care services for people, but your agenda . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Minister of Health, I'll give her a few seconds to wrap up her answer.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Your agenda is to destroy medicare for future generations. And that's why you're trying to prevent the passage of the district Act, because you don't want medicare being preserved for future generations. Because everyone recognizes that

this is the formula to preserve health care for future generations, and you want to destroy it. That's your agenda.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the hospitals around the province have been waiting for their individual operating budgets. Ever since the budget was read on March 18 the release of this information has been repeatedly postponed.

And at the meeting in Brock last night, Madam Minister, Mr. Borody from your department said that hospitals will have to wait at least another two weeks due to technical difficulties.

Madam Minister, the only technical difficulty is the bad reception your plan is getting from the people of Saskatchewan. This information has clearly been delayed in order to fit in with your political agenda. You have no intention of releasing hospital budgets until you can ram Bill 3 through the legislature. And once again, your NDP political wellness is more important than the wellness of Saskatchewan people.

Will you confirm, Madam Minister, that this indeed is your hidden political agenda? If not, will you commit to announce the '93-94 hospital budgets before you proceed any further with Bill No. 3?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the hospital budgets will be announced in due course, when the department has had an opportunity to do all the calculations and put the figures together which I hope will be within a matter of days. And then they will meet with people to make these announcements.

The members opposite have to begin to realize that communities and health care stakeholders throughout this province recognize the need and the value in getting organized on a district basis in order that needs assessments can be done on a district basis and the very smallest of our communities can be protected. By trying to delay the passage of this Bill you are making it more difficult for people to get organized on a district basis. And when you make it more difficult, you are doing the smallest communities in this province a disservice — a disservice.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister . . .

The Speaker: — Last question to the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Minister, the information we've received is that between 60 and 70 small rural hospitals are scheduled to receive no acute bed funding for '92, '93. Is that true, Madam Minister? If not, why not release the budgets, bring your plan into the open and delay passage of this destructive legislation until all the cards are on the table so people

know exactly where they sit. Will you do that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the government will be asking some rural facilities to change the role of their facility, to look at options such as emergency acute care, expanded therapy services, more community-based services and home-based services. The details of this will become available in future days, Mr. Speaker. But there will be facilities and we will be asking for role changes because it's the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, it is important however for communities to get organized on a district basis so that they can also receive services from other communities within the district. Therefore the legislation is urgent and organization on a district basis is . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone, I would like to ask the member from Morse . . . He just simply can't constantly utter from his chair. You just don't stop.

Health Care Planning Committees

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions, too, are directed to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, like most people in Saskatchewan I agree that our health care system needs to be overhauled. And I also agree that changes must be based on a vision that promotes community wellness. I do not agree, however, with the approach that your government is taking.

And I must admit that I'm very troubled by what I hear throughout the communities in Saskatchewan. And if I thought that your health care reform was working, I'd stand up in this House and I would applaud you for it. But I see the wheels falling off. And I'm going to ask some questions of you which I believe merit honest and direct answers.

When you began promoting the NDP (New Democratic Party) model of wellness, you went into Saskatchewan communities to seek out individuals to participate in health care committees. Can you explain the qualifications and the commitment required of people who were asked or volunteered to participate? And how many of the 12 individuals who were named to the Swift Current health care planning committee, when it was first established, met the criteria that you are going to outline?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, in communities, we did not go out and appoint planning groups. This was a community developmental process whereby people in the community who were interested in health reform came forward and wanted to be part of the process. They included people like hospital administrators. They included home care people. They included public health nurses. They included other people working in the health care area and some community people.

The Department of Health did not go out and appoint

planning groups. Some places we've had excellent planning groups; other places there has been some difficulty, and I know that Swift Current is one of them. We chose a community developmental process, asking the grass roots to get organized and talk about what health reform means, what kind of district they'd like to be in.

Mr. Speaker, I want to juxtapose this to McKenna's way of doing health care . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I think that you would agree, Madam Minister, that the people who were sitting as the initial people on the first established planning committee in Swift Current were highly credible individuals. They met for 10 months of meetings; they worked on average five hours a day to develop what they believed was the kind of plan that would work in their area. And suddenly they hit a brick wall.

Now can you explain to this Assembly, Madam Minister, why 9 people out of the original 12 resigned from the Swift Current health care committee and why the two doctors who remained on the committee actually walked out of the meeting called to nominate the new committee members?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, what I'm not going to do is on the floor of this Assembly talk about personal problems that maybe arise as a result of what is happening in one particular community. I'm not going to get into that and I don't think it's appropriate for the member to get into that in this particular forum.

If she wants to meet with me and the department to review this in further detail, if the information is not of a confidential nature I'm prepared to do that, but I won't get into personalities on the floor of this legislature.

Now what we chose in Saskatchewan was a community development process, unlike the Liberal process in other jurisdictions in this country where they came forward with a map that defined everything, which wiped out boards overnight, which went so far as to take over hospitals without any input from them. Bang, there it was! Overnight — wham! — boards wiped out, boundaries defined — everything. And I ask the member opposite, is that her approach or does she choose to have communities working together — yes with difficulties, because when people work together there are always difficulties and differences but we can overcome those.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Haverstock: — Madam Minister, I had no intention nor would I have intention of speaking about personalities, but I think that you should be in the position of talking about why 9 out of 12 people resigned, the reasons for, not the individuals, but the

reasons for.

And if you'd like me to talk to you about how I would approach this, you have set deadlines of August 17 for local committees to establish their boundaries; 120 days later you're expecting interim boards to make agreements with hospitals.

Now you say that people are telling you to hurry up. I say that when community leaders who have invested hundreds of hours of volunteer time working on these projects decide that they would rather resign than to be held responsible for your wellness approach, you'd better believe that people are telling me in . . .

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

I want the member to put her question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Will you explain, Madam Minister, what the hurry is on the part of your government, and why you will not allow people the time that they need to feel secure? Put forward some pilot projects, put forward some pilot projects. Explain to us.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, we've allowed more time than McKenna, let me tell you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Which is the Liberal approach.

Communities will have a year by August 17 to come together and get organized. They have also told me repeatedly throughout the province at meetings in the fall that they wanted to move more quickly and they wanted the district legislation there quickly. I've been told that in virtually every community I've been in in this province, in the fall.

So to the member opposite, to the hon. member opposite, Mr. Speaker, she may be hearing from some individuals, but I believe by far that people throughout Saskatchewan want the legislation passed and they want to get on with the health reform. It also makes it easier to deal with the budgetary decisions that have been taken by our government.

And the member opposite should understand that as we change roles of health care facilities in rural Saskatchewan, it is important for them to be supported by a broader community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Madam Minister, it has taken an extraordinarily long time to put in place the medicare system, and what you're suggesting is that in 365 days you can completely change this. Not unlike testing a new drug, one must select a control group and monitor the effects.

When will you acknowledge the visible protests of people throughout the province, people who would accept a pilot project and would willingly accept this

to implement and to study the changes that you propose? These are people who support health care reform.

What they want from you is to slow the process down. Will you agree to slow this whole exercise and to implement pilot projects to measure the effects of this reform before proceeding further?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Health, for permitting me to take this question. And what I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, to the leader of the third party, is that her suggestion is the typical, traditional, no-change, 35 years stance of the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan.

Because when in 1962 Woodrow Lloyd and Tommy Douglas introduced medicare, the Liberals of that day stood up in their place in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and said exactly the same thing. Don't rush it; get the Keep Our Doctors committee, of which the Liberals and the Conservatives were behind; put in a pilot project. Whatever you do, do not implement the reform.

I am saying to the member of Greystone, the leader of the third party, Mr. Speaker, is this. That a Liberal in 1993 is like a Liberal in 1963, like a Conservative in 1963, in 1883. They are always opposed to reform. The people know that we're trying to change in the sense of saving our health care system, and that's what we're about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sale of Pork to Cuba

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform the Assembly of an international sale that will benefit our farmers and rural communities, and especially the pork industry in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, later today I'll be addressing the 10th annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Pork International Marketing Group, an industry umbrella group. One of the things we will be talking about, Mr. Speaker, is how the government-industry partnership encouraged under the province's economic strategy has led to the sale of pork to Cuba to the extent of \$2.35 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this sale is composed of two separate parts: first, a sale of \$750,000 deal finalized shortly after my January ministerial trade mission to Cuba; and a second deal that has just been finalized which totals \$1.6 million. This announcement provides an example of what

Saskatchewan companies can accomplish in the international market-place.

Most export development activity is a patient step-by-step process that goes on largely behind the scenes in confidential negotiations. Trade missions play an important role, but most of the work and most of the national and international Saskatchewan success stories occur with little fanfare or public notice.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Sask Pork International's general manager, Jim Morris, for his skills and hard work in arranging sales of this magnitude, Mr. Speaker.

Sask Pork International is exactly the kind of aggressive grass roots organization envisioned in the *Partnership for Renewal* economic strategy. I especially welcome their emphasis on developing value added opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, this is further evidence that the Partnership for Progress is working. Not megaprojects, but Saskatchewan producers and Saskatchewan industry marketing efforts in a partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan, have made this success possible.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Saskatchewan pork industry on this significant sale and achievement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to extend my congratulations to the Saskatchewan pork industry for their untiring work in dealing with the international trade scene.

I know that they have been working hard to develop markets all over the world. They've done some innovative things in Russia. They've done innovative things now in Cuba. And we want to compliment the pork industry for doing that.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, whether in fact this is a beginning of a change of attitude as it relates to North American free trade, or whether this is a change in attitude of free trade in Canada and the United States, or whether this is a policy statement.

I also want to say that Mr. Morris has done a lot of good work in relation to the pork industry. I want to compliment him and the board for the innovative activity that they have provided to the people of the international scene, and for the benefit of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that the pork industry is going to do more in spite of this government. And, Mr. Speaker, they will, they will in spite of the members' opposite narrow-mindedness in relation to the North American trade agreement and the trade agreement that we're proposing to have with United States and with Mexico.

And this is only a beginning of the opportunities that can exist for the pork industry, the beef industry, the wheat industry, the durum, oats, all of those kinds of things in the North American limelight. And this is only the beginning, when people are allowed to do it themselves. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 44 — An Act respecting the Inspection of Gas Installations and Gas Equipment

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the Inspection of Gas Installations and Gas Equipment be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 45 — An Act respecting the Inspection of Electrical Equipment, Installations and Materials

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the Inspection of Electrical Equipment, Installations and Materials be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 46 — An Act to amend and repeal The Farm Purchase Program Act

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend and repeal The Farm Purchase Program Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Bill No. 47 — An Act to amend The Farm Financial Stability Act

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Farm Financial Stability Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend An Act to Incorporate Aldersgate College

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the member I do want to draw the members' attention to rule 54 of the *Rules and Procedures*. Rule 54 states —and I will read for the members — Rule 54 states:

No bills shall be read a second time, unless it has been printed and distributed to the Members at least one day previous and has been subsequently marked "PRINTED" on the Orders of the Day.

Now this is no fault of any member but the House adjourned last night at 10 to 5 and the Bills did not arrive until 5 minutes to 5. Therefore I need leave. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move on behalf of the petitioners An Act to amend An Act to Incorporate Aldersgate College, an Act, Mr. Speaker, to further amend this Act of incorporation for the purpose of empowering the corporation to grant certificates, degrees, and diplomas; and further for the purpose of empowering the corporation to own real property without limit as to the use, annual value, and length of time of ownership thereof.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 01, An Act to amend An Act to Incorporate Aldersgate College be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

(1445)

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Tabling of Security Reports Relating to GTECH and VLT

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, at the conclusion of my remarks, will have this motion presented before the Assembly:

That this Assembly demand the government to be truly open and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan by tabling the security reports clearing its gambling partners, GTECH and VLT, as well as contracts, correspondence, and other documentation relating to the government's dealing with these organizations which stand accused of criminal activity.

Mr. Speaker, I will move this motion at the conclusion of my remarks. I want to point out to you and to this Assembly . . . I would like to say that this would not be debated here today, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, had the opposition . . . or the members opposite done their homework, nor would . . . I should say, if the members opposite would have read their homework and found out what was going on. I understand that the minister responsible for gaming has not even read the security report. I wonder if anyone has read the security report over on that side of the House.

Is there, for example, Mr. Speaker, a reason why we

should begin questioning about an expenditure of \$20 million-plus — \$20 million-plus. And actually in the budget book it says \$23 million, Mr. Speaker, is going to be spent on gambling machines in the province of Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we raise the question. If they had done their homework and due diligence, it's my belief that we would not be talking about this issue here today.

Now that in itself, had the public and the official opposition had the opportunity to get some answers from the NDP government, the deal probably would not have been put together.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking here about companies that are interested in this deal. We're talking about companies that are interested right in the province of Saskatchewan. I guess the members opposite must think the Saskatchewan economy is healthier than it is in the United States.

And I want to point out to members of the Assembly the headline that read in the *Leader-Post* on April 3: "Video deal puzzles Manitoba". Because there is a video lottery company in Manitoba that already supplies these kinds of options and makes them available to the people in the province of Saskatchewan. I want to point out that the 20 million is, I guess in the minds of the people opposite, better spent in the United States, better spent in Montana, it's better spent in Rhode Island, it's better spent in New York, than it is spent in Saskatchewan or Manitoba. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what the problem . . . and we have seen this as evidenced by the people opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposite have had four ministers. In 15 months they've had four ministers responsible for this, and we're not even sure whether they took that responsibility serious. And as an observation, I think if the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission would have been doing his due diligence, it would have in fact been appropriate for him to read the reports supplied by the security people in relation to the report that was submitted to him supposedly somewhere before February 5.

Mr. Speaker, one excuse was that there was no contract. Well, Mr. Speaker, in a news release that he gave to the people of the province of Saskatchewan he said, we have spent \$20 million in buying a thousand video lottery terminals from one company, a thousand from another, and we're working on a deal with them for another 500 each. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what makes this a ridiculous kind of a commitment by the government.

As we have seen here today, Mr. Speaker, we have seen here today in question period where the Minister of Health has said that she is very likely going to close down — because she doesn't want to go out and spend the time in talking to small rural hospitals — where she is likely going to close between 50 and 60 hospitals from doing any acute care beds or having acute care beds. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a very, very serious problem in rural Saskatchewan. Needless to

say, I believe that any hospital that has a bed component of 10 or less is going to have that hospital closed down for acute care.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly why the member opposite will not go out into the rural Saskatchewan and talk about the things that she should be talking to them about, and yet they have the time, without any of them taking a serious look at the gambling and gaming, they will go out and spend \$20 million of the people's money. And \$20 million is going to be spent in gambling when people's lives are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, in my part of the province there is serious risk if you have to drive 120 miles to get to a hospital with acute care where there is a doctor that is going to look after you. Mr. Speaker, this is very serious business; \$20 million would go a long way in providing services to these people. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what this resolution is all about; it's about choices those people made and the wrong choices that they made without any due diligence, Mr. Speaker.

Cabinet made a decision based on a recommendation from the minister responsible for gaming. He made that decision not even to read the security report. Why, Mr. Speaker? Why would he say to his cabinet colleagues that I will not read this? Would it incriminate him if he did? That's a question everybody's asking.

Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission would not consider the security report made by Mr. Egan as a valid document, to have him begin to understand what the real dealings of the people around United States and other parts of Canada have had with these people.

Mr. Speaker, I have piles and piles of news releases from all over United States — from West Virginia, from Connecticut, from Rhode Island, from New York, from Montana, from Oregon, from Washington, from California — all over the United States, Mr. Speaker, and there's one common thread. There's one common thread that goes through this whole scenario that we have as it relates to video lottery terminals. And that is that there has been corruption, Mr. Speaker, there has been corruption, improprieties on the part of individuals in direct involvement, from governors to staff and aides of governors across these states.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are saying to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, by bringing forward this resolution, that the people in the province have a right to know what is in that security report. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the reason why we raise this issue. And, Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission hasn't even taken the time to read that report. And there, Mr. Speaker, are hundreds of newspaper articles condemning these people over and over and over again for their incompetence in relation to these terminals.

I want to point out to the minister responsible that

there are other alternatives. There was a project from the people of Saskatchewan that would have been willing to become involved in this video lottery terminal business venture. There were people in Manitoba who have a proven track record about the things that they've been doing, and they have a proven record in Manitoba. And the headline says: "Video deal puzzles Manitoba." Questions about firms. And that, Mr. Speaker, are the same questions we have of that minister. And, Mr. Speaker, will he get up and say to us that he has gone back and read the report? Will he state unequivocally that he feels that the improprieties as outlined in that report, that they are not valid? Will he say that the court action in different states throughout the United States, that they're not valid, that they shouldn't be considered?

Mr. Speaker, there are headlines across the United States that talk about involvement of corruption by governors, by aides of governors, legal counsel of governors. There are even people, Mr. Speaker, who were given \$80,000 a year for 10 years in relation to the contribution that they made to the decision making as it relates to the video lottery terminals being placed in that state or that province.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a part of what we are concerned about on this side. And that's why we say that you need to table the security report clearing its gambling partners. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we bring forward this rule 16 today. We want to have the government stand on their feet and say we have done due diligence, Mr. Speaker, in spite of all of the things that have been involving the kinds of things that they have done in the U.S. (United States).

Mr. Speaker, in the paper that the individual has presented to us from that side of the House, there is one glaring omission in that statement. They have reports from Iowa's Gaming Commission. They have reports from the Rhode Island, New York, but they have . . . nowhere do they have a report from the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

Mr. Speaker, they are doing those kinds of investigations across the United States, and that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we question, why we question the activities of this minister, of the previous ministers as they've gone about and done their work in the Gaming Commission. Have they done due diligence in relation to the process?

Mr. Speaker, if they had, why don't they stand here and tell us. If they had done the due diligence and gone and said these companies are clean, then they would have no reason to hold back tabling that document, Mr. Speaker, and that's the reason why we are bringing forward this motion.

This motion asks the government to put that report on the Table, the security report. Mr. Speaker, this Gaming Commission in this province has been run first of all by the Minister of Labour. It's been run by the Minister of Justice. It's been run by the Minister of Finance, and now the minister responsible for

gambling and for liquor is the minister responsible for Natural Resources in the province and he's going to deal with this in an equitable way.

There is a history, Mr. Speaker, throughout this government that they have pushed this off, and we begin to wonder why. Why have they put the head bagman for the NDP Party as a responsible individual to put him in the Gaming Commission as its chief executive officer? We have to ask all kinds of questions, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the evidence that we have before us.

And, Mr. Speaker, it all, it all begins to sound as if there is something smelly in here. It's beginning to smell, Mr. Speaker, and that is why this opposition has been focusing their attention on this problem that the NDP government has.

Mr. Speaker, as a part of my observations I will move:

That this Assembly demand the government to be truly open and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan by tabling the security reports clearing its gambling partners, GTECH and VLT, as well as contracts, correspondence and other documentation relating to the government's dealing with these organizations which stand accused of criminal activity.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I may add, they in some places have been convicted of criminal activity, and that is even more substantial in the evidence that we've provided to this Assembly and to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

We want to, Mr. Speaker, move this motion so that the people of the province know that these people are making choices — \$20 million to gambling, and nothing to the hospitals. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we lay this motion before this Assembly here today.

I so move.

(1500)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The need for this motion calling on the government to provide documents related to their gambling partners is terribly unfortunate. But we feel so strongly about this matter that we are using the rule 16 opportunity to ensure that the record shows what is going on.

The first point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is the absolute and unacceptable arrogance of a minister and a government that tries to undo one of the most basic principles of parliamentary democracy, and that is the principle that MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) shall have access to information in the House itself. It was never intended and it was never accepted that MLAs must go through the freedom of information Act to exercise their duty to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I say to the Premier, how dare you, how dare you try to subvert the access to information of MLAs in this

way? It's bizarre that a minister of the Crown can stand in his place and with utter arrogance and contempt fling out a form and say to this Assembly, use my bureaucracy to try and get your answers. And at the same time saying to himself, and then when you don't get the answers, you'll have to blame the information officer, the bureaucrat, and I will escape the blame.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know where the blame for the lack of information lies. It lies with the minister. And it's this arrogant, deceptive, and cowardly line of the minister of gaming and liquor.

Well we will not set a precedent by trying to gain access through the freedom of information Act. We will insist on our right as members of this Assembly, elected to a duty to the people to hold this government accountable and under an oath to do so. We will insist that ministers also be held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, this government is doing business with outfits that are alleged to have Mafia connections — Mafia connections, Mr. Speaker. This GTECH makes Guy Montpetit look like a kindergarten kid, a piker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot take refuge in saying that the information this Assembly wants and needs is protected by intergovernmental confidences. He has not even asked those governments whether or not they would object to the release of information. So I can tell you for a fact that he is simply using this provision as an excuse or a cover-up.

I know this, Mr. Speaker, because we have been briefed by one of the governments and they had no problems in telling us the extent of this government's investigation as far as they were concerned. And I'll tell it; it wasn't very much, Mr. Speaker.

But look at this resolution, Mr. Speaker, and imagine what it means that the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly is being put in the position of having to get answers from other governments because its own government refuses to be accountable to the people. It's truly bizarre.

And I want this minister to know, Mr. Speaker, that we are going down the list of governments for which he claims immunity, and we will be asking them — each and everyone — two things.

First, has this NDP government even bothered to ask if release of information is acceptable; and secondly, will they, the other government, give us the same information?

Because you know, Mr. Speaker, there is no commercial excuse for withholding this information. The government has a monopoly on gambling and it's ready to use force to back up that claim. They certainly proved that to the people of Souris-Cannington and White Bear. It has a monopoly so there is no competitive threat in releasing information.

There are only two reasons for refusal. The first is that

the Premier does not want the criminal allegations and the extent of criminal background in his gambling partners to become known. That is a possibility. The second possibility is that no real security checks have been done at all.

Mr. Speaker, look at the nature of the GTECH organization. What's its track record? What are the charges for which it stands accused? It stands accused of kickbacks to politicians. It stands accused of illegal political contributions. It stands accused of pay-offs to officials and elected politicians.

Those are part and parcel of the entire record of GTECH. And now we have the NDP government appointing their chief bagman for the province to run the gambling commission which overlooks the VLTs (video lottery terminal) which will be dealing with GTECH.

Mr. Speaker, what's wrong with this picture? The NDP's key fund-raiser takes over the reins of a partnership involving an organization with a track record of political bribery and kickback. So you don't have to be very cynical to say there is something compelling about putting the two together, Mr. Speaker.

And as Hamlet said: something is rotten in the state of Denmark. Mr. Speaker, now something is rotten in Saskatchewan when it comes to the government's dealings with GTECH.

So I say to the Premier, if there is nothing to all of this, if it is purely innocent and the only reason you've ended up in bed with those questionable people is that others have done it, and you didn't know any better, if that's the case, then release the information.

And do not use the business of exemptions under FOI (freedom of information) because the Premier knows, Mr. Speaker, those exemptions are at his discretion. He's not forced to use those exemptions. He can, under the law, release anything in this Assembly that he chooses. So he's being cute by half by hiding behind a law meant to increase access to information, hiding behind it to keep the information secret.

As long as the refusal to provide the information continues and we have NDP affiliates, fund-raisers, and political operatives in charge of gambling in this province, then the opposition will not let this issue go. And the stench of the government's actions will continue to spread across this province.

The deal is packed with NDP hacks and now the NDP treasurer is sitting at the till waiting for GTECH to come calling. And this is despicable, Mr. Speaker. I say, simply table the documents.

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, at the end of my brief comments I will be moving a motion along the following lines:

By removing all the words after Assembly and replacing it with:

Commend the government and the Gaming Commission for their open, honest, and thorough approach to the introduction of video lottery terminals into the Saskatchewan market.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving that amendment at the end of my remarks because I want to put straight the record in this House as it has been put straight by the minister many times in question period to the deaf ears of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, a process was set up that was followed very stringently. There are a number of people who came forward to try to supply, who wanted to supply video lottery terminals to Saskatchewan. Those companies were reviewed by the government people, by Mr. Egan and two people from Property Management Corporation. There was a short list, Mr. Speaker, and from that short list two companies, GTECH and VLT (Video Lottery Technologies Inc.), were chosen to . . . which the government would negotiate a contract.

Now I hear the members opposite standing in their place and talking about Mafia connections with GTECH. Well the credibility of the member who says that, Mr. Speaker, ought to be called to question. Because I will remind the members opposite, it was in 1982 under the direction of the minister, Paul Schoenhals, that GTECH was given a contract to control the western Canadian lotteries.

They signed the original contract with GTECH 10 years ago. And now they stand in their place and say: well this corporation has Mafia connections, alleged Mafia connections. Well talk about credibility, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe they have a short memory, but I ask the question, what is the purpose of this? What is the purpose of this type of fearmongering? It's very similar to what they do in health care, Mr. Speaker — fearmongering, trying to whip up the public.

The member from Souris-Cannington also talked about the government using force to shut down White Bear. Well what would the member have us do — not have us do it, by the way — have the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) do? Have something operating outside the rules of this province, outside the legislation that's been put in place? Because that's what he was saying, we should let this operation continue. Mr. Speaker, that is totally . . . has no credibility. But the member stands in his place and spews out this garbage.

Mr. Speaker, this government has followed a process that is very open and accountable. Security reports on the company were submitted and the two corporations were chosen. Security report was prepared using information obtained in confidence from a number of law-enforcement agencies. And the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission has received a legal opinion from the Department of Justice, confirming the view that because it was in

confidence this should not be public information.

So therefore the minister said to the member opposite in question period: if you want this information or think that you can get this information or should have this information, put forward a freedom of information request. The freedom of information request has a process to follow. The head of the organization, meaning the chairman of the board in this case, would decide whether it's possible to release that. If they're still not satisfied with that, if it can't be released — in fact a summary has been released — if it can't be released, then they have an appeal process.

Mr. Speaker, the rules, the guidelines, have all been set forward. And the members opposite know that. But what do they do? They stand in their places and try to slander the RCMP, the Gaming Commission, and this government for political purposes — strictly political purposes.

Mr. Speaker, we have . . .

An Hon. Member: — Got the last one right.

Mr. Upshall: — And the member says, we got the last one right, meaning that they're standing in their places trying to slander the government. Well I guess that's typical, Mr. Speaker, of the 10 sorry Tories opposite.

An Hon. Member: — That's our job.

Mr. Upshall: — He says that's their job. Well I think that is not their job. I think their job and the people of Saskatchewan would be behind me saying that their job is to try to make sure that this government gets this economy moving and to make sure that this government, as we govern this province, are accountable to the people. And in this situation we have time and time again laid out the process, the rules, the regulations, the accountability process that all the people of Saskatchewan have access to.

And, Mr. Speaker, this venture, this venture with VLT and GTECH is simply a fee-for-service venture. When the contract has been established they will supply video lottery terminals; we will supply them money for those video lottery terminals. Mr. Speaker, there is no long-term contract; it's simply purchasing VLTs.

But the members opposite, it would appear, aren't happy with that. Well I'll tell you, if you read the reports from the people who have VLTs, like the hotel operator in Langenburg who is very happy with this process, talk to the people around the areas on the east side who had to go to Russell, Manitoba — this is all well documented, Mr. Speaker — who say they are happy that they now have the opportunity to spend their money in local establishments because it helps the local economy.

And what are the members opposite trying to do? They're trying to delay or scrap the whole process, and I ask why? Why would they want to stand in their places and try to undermine an economic activity that will return to this province megadollars from the

people of this province and I would say, Mr. Speaker, from other people coming into this province to gamble and to entertain themselves in other ways. That's what they're trying to undermine or trying to stop.

(1515)

Now I can understand why the members opposite might want to do that. Because for 10 years in this province they undermined the whole economic base of this province, drove the people out, built up a \$15 billion debt. But my question is: why can't you change? Why can't you change . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member says, they're too old. Well I know they're an old, tired lot of Tories, just like all the Tories across this country, but it doesn't mean that you're going to stop good economic development in this province — upfront, open, honest, contractual arrangements to supply materials to this province. You will not stop that.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Morse, when he was speaking, talked about why we selected these two corporations. They were selected simply because the review process that we went through deemed that these two organizations fit the bill for Saskatchewan as far as quality was concerned, as far as assuredness of supply was concerned, and as far as having a track record in this province since 1982 that the Tories signed a contract with, with GTECH in particular.

They have a record of being upfront and honest as opposed, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Morse's government who spent \$5 million buying machines, not unlike machines like we're buying, video lottery machines, but they were buying machines to translate our laws into French. Five million dollars was spent. And you know, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, there wasn't one word translated into French.

So I can see where the member comes from. If his mindset is the way it was in his 10 years of destroying this province, of 10 years of destroying this province, the quality factor never came into it. Quality of product never once came into it. And we can go through time and time again the number of ventures that the former government went into that flopped flat on its face. So quality never came into it. But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, in this case quality was the number one factor involved, and that's why they were selected.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there's no contracts that have been signed. We are simply negotiating a contract with the two corporations that were selected. Now, Mr. Speaker, in the review process — and this is another point where the members seem to be very, very deaf, as to what's going on — the security review was completed, Mr. Speaker, and not only did they go through Canadian law-enforcement agencies and personal security personnel and gaming control agencies, other jurisdictions were contacted as well, but they forget to mention this. South Dakota lottery commission, Montana gambling, Nevada state gambling control board, Oregon state lottery, Rhode

Island state lottery, Alberta lotteries, Atlantic lotteries, Manitoba lotteries.

The Speaker: — Time has expired.

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, then I would move this motion, seconded by the member from . . . the amendment, Mr. Speaker, seconded by . . . I would move, seconded by the member for Shaunavon:

That we remove all words after “Assembly,” and add the following:

commend the government and the Gaming Commission for their open, honest, and thorough approach to the introduction of video lottery terminals into the Saskatchewan market.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand pleased to second the amended motion put forward by the member from Humboldt. I find the original motion laughable in view of who put that motion forward given their past record, and I think it has to be addressed as to what games they’re playing.

The opposition is once again trying to instil a cloud of doubt over the process of the gaming that we’re putting forward in Saskatchewan, and we look in the past what this same group have done to try and put a grey lining on the lives and professions of the people working for this government. They’ve been attacking auditors, they’ve attacked civil servants. Anyone who came out opposed to that former government, they attacked. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the time has come to put an end to that.

What I want to do is read into the record a letter from the Western Canada Lottery Corporation, Garth Manness, the president. He writes this letter to Byron Burnett of the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission:

We have been asked to provide a letter of reference for GTECH Corporation.

And that’s the corporation that these fellows are claiming have some terrible dealings with the mafia and the like.

GTECH has been the supplier of traditional lottery on-line goods and services to our organization since 1982.

That’s back at the time when Paul Schoenhals was supporting this group.

In 1991 GTECH was selected to provide central system functionality for our video lottery test project in Alberta.

Did you say anything about that at the time, I ask the member from Morse?

The video lottery central system has proven to be suitable for our test project needs. The selection of GTECH for our traditional lottery on-line and video lottery test needs was based on their excellent reputation, (that’s the reputation that the members opposite are trying to destroy once again), as well as their ability to meet the required time lines and provide ongoing support.

And that is quite important to the province. The last line of this paragraph is:

We remain pleased with our decision to utilize GTECH resources.

And that’s: Yours truly, Garth Manness, President of the Western Canada Lottery Corporation.

And I ask: are you trying to destroy this man also? It seems like everyone that has ever went opposed to you guys, you’ve tried to destroy. And yet who’s got the dirty record? Well it’s the members opposite, there’s no question.

The member from Morse moves a motion in an effort to have an appearance of some cover-up in that he can’t get enough information. Well let’s have a look. The minister responsible for Gaming Commission in the province of Saskatchewan, the Hon. Eldon Lautermilch, sent a letter to — and I’ll quote — Mr. Harold Martens, MLA, Morse constituency. This is dated April 5, only a few days ago:

Further to our ongoing discussions during question period, I am providing you with a copy of the briefing note Justice has prepared in response to your request for a copy of the Gaming Commission’s security report on VLT manufacturers.

And he lists a number of points for Mr. Martens to follow. The Gaming Commission acts independently of the minister. And the member from Morse knows full well that that is the case.

Pursuant to section 5 of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act that was proclaimed by our government, you have the right to access to information subject only to exemptions under that Act.

Yet the member from Morse has never applied through the freedom of information Act. He goes on to say:

Further to this I have advised you, as is confirmed by the memo from Justice, that I am not in a position to release the security report of the Gaming Commission. This advice is consistent with that of officials in the Gaming Commission. However I also advised you that you may wish to apply for this under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. To this extent I have provided you with a copy of the access to information form

for you to complete.

He's given him the form. All we didn't do was fill it out. Would you then send the form back, we'll fill it out and help you along with this — I ask the member — instead of trying to muddy everyone's lives up.

The facts show, Mr. Speaker, that this government has nothing to hide. But let's, however, let's take a look at the record of the members opposite. Let's see if they had anything to hide.

Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts reported that three ministers used a private viewing suite containing four seats a total of 17 times free. These are all things that come out in the *Public Accounts*, and by the auditor.

SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) reported they've paid taxi fares of \$682 for various ministers and their staff. You were one of those ministers.

An Hon. Member: — I was not.

Mr. McPherson: — You were so.

An Hon. Member: — I was not.

Mr. McPherson: — Even though a charge account for this is available at the Legislative Building.

An Hon. Member: — You prove that.

Mr. McPherson: — You were one of them.

An Hon. Member: — No sirree.

Mr. McPherson: — Saskatchewan Liquor Board paid expenses totalling \$16,162 for ministers to attend the Big Valley Jamboree — so you could go and wear your big cowboy hat there. Drink free booze. Free trailers. Free rent. Get in for free; eat for free. And you did that while you were putting people down.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I just want to remind the member from Shaunavon, he's not to address his particular remarks to any member in the House. He's to address his remarks through the Chair, and not to a member in the legislature.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at a *Star-Phoenix* editorial, that was October 10, 1991. *Star-Phoenix* says Four cabinet ministers . . . invested . . . taxpayers' money in . . . businesses.

Now they say they have nothing to hide. Let me quote:

Four cabinet ministers have . . . invested about \$4.1 million of taxpayers' money in small businesses through a government-owned company (quietly) set up last year . . .

The Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* reported today.

As directors of Saskatchewan Diversification Corporation (SDC), Grant Schmidt, Lorne

Hepworth, Jack Klein, and George McLeod, (all former members, all former colleagues of the member opposite) authorized investments in 19 small companies . . .

An Hon. Member: — What's your point?

Mr. McPherson: — Well the point is, you guys were hiding information all along, continuously, continuously. It was coming out in the papers, of your scams.

Mr. Speaker, here's another one, "Business given priority over public", *Star-Phoenix*, October 12, 1991:

Perhaps they thought no one would find out about it (it starts off). After all, handing out taxpayers' money in secret gets around the whole accountability thing.

But the sheer audacity and ethical bankruptcy demonstrated by (last weeks') explanation of why the government hid the Saskatchewan Diversification Corporation from (Saskatchewan) is astounding.

I'm going to read down, Mr. Speaker:

Who's going to be responsible if one of these companies sues or make the list (of companies SDC invested in) public? "Who's going to be responsible if these companies fail?" Schmidt asked. The counter question is: What's that got to do with anything?

That was Schmidt's response.

And the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, sat there, they allowed that to happen. They thought that was okay when former colleagues of theirs and ministers and themselves refused to bring forward information. There was no problem with doing that.

Well the point is is that we are now open and accountable, and yet the members opposite are still attacking the lives and professions of those people that are serving this province. And I think it's shameful. And yes, I second the amended motion put forward by the member from Humboldt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was really happy to be told earlier by our whip that I would have a chance to participate in this debate. And I even am more happy now that I get up to have the opportunity to debate and argue against the amendment. The amendment of course, Mr. Speaker, I guess, is supposed to somehow tell the people of Saskatchewan how great the new government administration is and to assure us that the accusations that they've been dealing with crooks in this process are not founded. And I guess they have that right to try to justify that.

Unfortunately they talk about having done a review of several companies — several companies that were going to provide the very same service. And the best one that they could find is one that is heavily, heavily scrutinized throughout most of the world for having wrongdoings and accusations of wrongdoings brought against them. Now these people are the best they could find to supply these services.

And it is indeed a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, for me to stand up and to speak to this issue. In 1991 the NDP, Mr. Speaker, made a lot of promises to the people of Saskatchewan. They promised more money for health care, they promised more money for education, they promised an improved drug prescription plan. They promised to restore the old school-based dental program.

(1530)

And believe me, Mr. Speaker, that was a tough issue for me to campaign through in my constituency in some sectors, because quite frankly a lot of people did think that was a good program and they were going to vote NDP to get that program back.

The government of the day, while campaigning, promised to conduct an open and honest government. A lot of nice promises. But since forming government, the NDP have been starving the health care system of money. They haven't improved the health care system. They've reduced the funding — exactly opposite to what they said. They are closing schools in rural Saskatchewan — exactly the opposite to what they said. They continue to increase the prescription drug plan and the deductibles in the plan; they continue to increase those up to \$1,700 a year plus 35 per cent thereafter.

And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP has eliminated the children's dental program for anyone not on social assistance. Not only aren't they bringing back their promise of a school-based dental program, they've wiped out the whole thing. Every child in this province is without any kind of support for medical care in the dental area.

And these are the kinds of promises that were made to the good people of this province. This NDP government has gone on record for doing all of these things. And they have a good record, Mr. Speaker, in one area; they have a good record for breaking promises. It's the only good record they've got. By refusing to be open and honest with the people of Saskatchewan, the NDP record for broken promises remains intact.

It never fails, Mr. Speaker: what the NDP say and what the NDP do are two completely different things. I've never seen anything like it. The only difference between this broken promise and all of the other NDP broken promises is that not being open and honest is hard to pin on the deficit or the federal government. They can't blame this on anybody but themselves. So this is going to be a tough one. This is a deal that they've made all on their own.

What is so ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission defends the NDP government's decision to award government contracts for VLTs to suspected criminals. Why would you even try to defend that? Why wouldn't you just say: we're going to investigate it; we'll check it out; if we made a mistake, we'll correct it. But no, they defend this. That's very objectionable.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is also very indefensible. He doesn't feel that the government has done anything wrong. It is as though he has never heard of guilt by association. I'm sure that some of the people in the back benches could explain that, but he won't take the time to listen to his back bench. We've seen that.

Those who deal with criminals are often implicated in wrongdoings themselves. It doesn't mean you're necessarily wrong, but oftentimes there is an association. The NDP government is almost completely made up of lawyers, and we wonder why they don't advise the members or the member from Prince Albert Northcote to come clean on this issue.

The member from Prince Albert Northcote continues to tell the opposition that the Gaming Commission acts independently of the minister. Independently, Mr. Speaker. He is starting to sound like the Minister of Health who claims she has no power over health boards.

To put it bluntly and simply, this is garbage, as the member from Humboldt has pointed out.

The minister must take responsibility for the Gaming Commission because he is the minister responsible. Why is the member from Prince Albert Northcote collecting a minister's salary if he's not responsible for anything? If the Gaming Commission truly acts independently of the minister, then the minister responsible has no duties. No duties, no job. That is something the people of Saskatchewan would appreciate — less NDP cabinet ministers, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the member from Prince Albert Northcote understands why the opposition wants to see the Gaming Commission's security records on the GTECHs and the VLTs. We want to see if the security checks were conducted before or after the GTECHs and the VLTs were awarded contracts worth \$20 million — not a buck and a half or three — \$20 million.

It is an important item of business, one that the government should be concerned about, Mr. Speaker. We want to see the security checks uncovered — the GTECHs, VLTs — and we want to see this speedily passed. This is an important item of business for us and for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The security report will clear the government or they will implicate the government, one or the other. Because the members across the floor are refusing to cooperate, are refusing to table the report, I would

have to suggest that they are guilty.

Why would they award government contracts to out-of-province firms that are suspect of criminal activities? This is a serious business, Mr. Speaker. Did the NDP think that we would sit idly by when \$20 million, 20 million taxpayers' dollars are at stake?

If we are wrong in our suspicions, then the NDP should prove it, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for gaming and the Gaming Commission should prove that he is not guilty of doing anything wrong. Come clean with the people of Saskatchewan. Table the security report on GTECH and the VLTs. Conduct an open and honest government.

Find one more thing that you're good at besides breaking your promises. Conduct an open and honest government. Show us and the people of Saskatchewan that the contracts were awarded legitimately. Prove that Saskatchewan firms were not purposefully shut out. Table the security report clearing GTECH and VLT. Table the contracts. Table all of the correspondence.

Very simple for you to do — clear your name. And if you refuse to do that, we have to assume that you are guilty. Table all of the documents relating to the government's dealings with these companies, companies accused of criminal activities. Table these documents and prove that the NDP government is not implicated in shady dealings. You have that obligation and that opportunity.

And to say, Mr. Speaker, that we should apply through the process of access to information, is really terribly bad. To suggest that an opposition should not use the vehicle of question period to have the minister . . .

The Speaker: — I must inform the member that his time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to join in this debate in support of the amendment moved by my colleague, the member from Humboldt, and seconded by also my colleague, the member from Shaunavon.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, what this debate is all about, it's about open and honest and accountable government. And that, Mr. Speaker, is words and terms that is very foreign to the ears of the opposition. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, this foreign word is what sprang them into questioning the merit or the open accountability of our government.

And I agree with my colleague from Shaunavon who said that the motion brought forth by the opposition is laughable. It is, Mr. Speaker, it is laughable. For the opposition to suggest that our government is anything but open and honest and accountable is like the pot calling the kettle black. Mr. Speaker, all we have to do is look back at the record of their government, a

record that they try to now suggest is lily-white and as pure as the fresh, wind-driven snow.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think not only we in this House, but I know that the people all across this great province know that that is a myth. And I would just like to quote a few comments from the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the record of the former government. One of the quotes, it says the former Premier's office hid \$980,000 worth of political employees in various departments and Crowns. The opposition, Mr. Speaker, might call that open and honest government, but the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* calls it a fraud.

Mr. Speaker, there is unlimited list of secret deals that was carried out by the former government, most of them to benefit themselves and members of their government personally, such as the Liquor Board hiding \$15,000 worth of booze that was delivered to the PC (Progressive Conservative) cabinet ministers; Liquor Board hiding \$10,000 worth of kickbacks to the PC ministers and their guests when they visited the Big Valley Jamboree.

Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on. The list also indicates that the Liquor Board was forced to pay a kickback of \$1,000 to a defeated PC MP, John Gormley, that paid for the services that he would never perform or intended to perform. And then, Mr. Speaker, they have the gall to suggest that our minister in charge of the Gaming Commission is not being open and honest with them.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, *Hansard* will record that whenever the opposition have asked him a question he has given them a very straightforward, clear, and concise reply. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a little like the pot calling the kettle black.

I also find some comments from the Provincial Auditor's report for the year ending March 31, 1987, rather interesting. And the Provincial Auditor indicates in his report the lack of cooperation that he and his department received from the former government.

I find it regrettable, Mr. Speaker . . . And I will quote from one of the comments made here: I find it regrettable that for the first time since my appointment I must incur in my annual report comments concerning the lack of cooperation in obtaining information that I need to . . . necessary to carry out my work.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the indications of the lack of cooperation and the intentional moves by the former government to operate in secrecy, to hide the truth not only from the members of the legislature but to hide the truth from the people of this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, truth will always out. They fooled the people of Saskatchewan for a while, but I believe it was a gentleman by the name of . . . former president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, who said that you can fool some of the people all the time and all the

people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time.

Mr. Speaker, that became absolutely, evidently true with the results of the last provincial election, where people in that election did not vote just for one political party or another political party. What they voted for was honesty, openness, and that's what they're receiving from this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand up in this legislature today and offer my voice in support of the amendment, for that amendment most truly reflects the principles that govern this government and the principles that the people of Saskatchewan have long looked for during the 10 years of tyranny of the former government. Mr. Speaker, those are the principles that have carried us through in this province through tough times, and those are the principles that will restore this province, restore the dignity to this province.

(1545)

We have to look at new and modern ways of economic development throughout this province, and a part of that, Mr. Speaker, is the introduction of the VLTs. But we are doing it, Mr. Speaker, in the most upright, straightforward manner possible. We have done it with the best interests of Saskatchewan people and taxpayers in mind, putting into place through the Gaming Commission stringent regulations and screening system to ensure that those who participate are of the highest standards possible. That, Mr. Speaker, is not something the former government can boast of. Mr. Speaker, we well know and the people of this province well know the standards on which they operated and the standards on which they made their deals and the lack of standards that they used to create their partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, there is no partnerships by the Gaming Commission. The Gaming Commission is not entering into a gambling partnership with GTECH or VLC (Video Lottery Consultants). There will be a direct purchase of VLTs from suppliers with no ongoing relationship. Mr. Speaker, there is no contract and there has been no substantial exchange of money.

Mr. Speaker, we have as government, and I think something to be very proud of, put into place the highest standards of anywhere in North America in scrutiny of the gambling process as it takes place in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to offer my voice in support of the amendment to the resolution. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to enter this debate for the short time that's left to it. It's interesting listening to the government members how they have done everything possible to try and scratch enough to cover their tracks here.

Obviously the government is roundly embarrassed about the fact that they've been dragged through the mud on this particular topic, Mr. Speaker, for some time now.

They've spent \$20 million of the taxpayers' money. They aren't willing to come forth with the due diligence, with the proper information for Saskatchewan taxpayers to make sure that this is seen as above-board and open. Instead they'll put a succession of back-benchers here to come up and drag up a bunch of stuff from the past to try and cover their tracks. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that just emphasizes to this Assembly and to Saskatchewan people that these people have something to fear.

The problem we have here, Mr. Speaker, with GTECH and Video Lottery Consultants of Bozeman, Montana, is the fact that in a dozen jurisdictions in the United States and places like Australia, these people are under investigation — under investigation, Mr. Speaker.

I mean the opposition doesn't throw around the names of the FBI lightly. These people have been indicted in some cases. They've had people removed from their board of directors. They've had pay-offs. They've had governors of states get themselves into hot water because they're dealing with these people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the question of these two companies and the due diligence done . . . And we suspect that some front bench minister over there signed this deal before Mr. Egan ever came along and before anybody else ever came along. They've had four ministers, Mr. Speaker, responsible for the Gaming Commission. They've had CEOs (chief executive officers) without end. They've had people resigning, always for personal reasons.

Mr. Speaker, you and I both know that you don't get a succession of well-respected bureaucrats in this province resigning for personal reasons every time they touch the Gaming Commission. And on top of it, Mr. Speaker, we have the former treasurer of the New Democratic Party in this province getting a hundred thousand dollar a year job as the chairman of the Gaming Commission.

Now if I was going to put somebody in place to try and cover up my tracks, who would I choose? Well they went the ultimate route, Mr. Speaker. And it's obvious to see the reaction of these members in here — that they're afraid of this, that they're afraid of the government record in this case. So we see them coming up with all sorts of things to try and draw the public's attention off of this case.

Well I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people in this province want to know how that \$20 million was spent. They want to know that there isn't some member of that particular political party involved in this, that the friends of the New Democratic Party aren't involved with GTECH or VLC. That's what the people out there want to know.

We've asked the question in this House time and time again, Mr. Speaker. Why don't you table your due diligence? Has it ever been the role of the opposition in here not to ask those questions? Have we ever had ministers with the audacity before to stand in this legislature and say, use freedom of information? Mr. Speaker, it was the former Conservative government that put the freedom of information Act together.

And I think it is a shame, Mr. Speaker, that we would have the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission sending a form over to the member from Morse saying here, apply through the freedom of information laws and maybe after 90 days, maybe we'll give you the information. Maybe we'll give you the information to say that we checked these people out and we did our due diligence, but no.

Even at the end of 90 days, Mr. Speaker, they can turn around and come up with a technicality and say, say to the member from Morse, say to the opposition, say to the people of Saskatchewan, we don't have to give you that information. And this is after, Mr. Speaker, we have had these two companies investigated all over the world for wrongdoing, for manipulating the political process, for using their hired people to subvert the political process in other jurisdictions. Where we have states in Australia throwing them out of the country, where they're saying you are **persona non grata** in our jurisdiction because of your corrupt and crooked ways.

And yet this government says to us, we shouldn't ask those questions, we should be content to work through freedom of information. Well, Mr. Speaker, that has never been the role of the official opposition in this legislature and it will not start. This government is responsible to the people. They are responsible to table those results in this legislature.

I sat in here, Mr. Speaker, all through the GigaText affair, and I saw the member from Prince Albert, who is now the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission, say day after day: Madam Minister, would you table your due diligence? Would you table the Dun & Bradstreet that was done on Guy Montpetit? And now this same hypocritical minister has the gall to stand in this legislature, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I know the member inadvertently used a word which he knows he cannot refer to a member in this House as being hypocritical, and I ask him to withdraw that word.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will delete the word from my repertoire and I will find another one that suits the minister.

Simple fact is, Mr. Speaker, that when that member was in opposition he expected answers out of the government of the day on a due diligence process. The minister didn't send over a freedom of information form for him to fill out. These people are hiding, Mr. Speaker. They're hiding from the truth and they don't want Saskatchewan people to know about the process that had \$20 million of taxpayers' money

spent. These people had Saskatchewan folks come along and say, we'll do the job for you. We'll do it above-board, we'll create some employment in the province. Was that acceptable? No. We'd rather do business with somebody that is in trouble. We'd rather do business with someone in the United States.

What we would like from this government, Mr. Speaker, is to have that information compiled by the FBI, compiled by the gaming commission in Oregon, compiled by the gaming commission in West Virginia, compiled by the governor of New York state. We want that information tabled in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, because only then will Saskatchewan people have the confidence that they should have in the expenditure of \$20 million, that they'll have the confidence that the friends of the government aren't involved in this. And that is why we've seen them scratching today so vigorously, Mr. Speaker, scratching to cover up the tracks, lighting up the blame thrower, trying to divert the public's attention.

The gall of these people, Mr. Speaker, in even bringing this motion, this amendment which tries to subvert legitimate questions that are asked in this legislature on almost each and every day, tells me that we have a government that is losing touch with Saskatchewan people quicker, quicker than any government in our history.

Mr. Speaker, people should learn from the past. They roundly, roundly castigated the former government because of the way the GigaText thing was handled. They said that your due diligence, your Dun & Brad, everything else, was not up to snuff.

And I remember well that member from Prince Albert and that member from North Battleford standing on their feet day after day, and yet we now have those two members sitting in a cabinet of the province of Saskatchewan expecting Saskatchewan people not to expect as much from them as they asked of the former government.

It is just one more betrayal, Mr. Speaker. It is say one thing in opposition and it is do another in government. I really wonder how comfortable some of these back-benchers are. I wonder if this stuff has been talked about in caucus. I wonder if the due diligence has been brought forward. Or do they say to their own members: here's a freedom of information form, fill it out. This is the only way you're going to find out anything in this government, fill out a freedom of information form. I wonder how many of these back-benchers have done that.

I'm sure there's a lot of curiosity, Mr. Speaker; it was a question at their convention last fall. I'm sure that some of these new-found Democrats in this province are curious about GTECH and VLC. I'm sure they would like to know about the workings of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. I'm sure they'd like to know about the workings of some of the former members who held that portfolio. I'm sure they would like to know about the former campaign manager of the member from Melfort.

There are a lot of questions here, Mr. Speaker, that aren't being answered. And I am wondering if the members of the government back benches have taken the time to fill out their freedom of information forms so that they can get the goods and have the assurance that there isn't some kind of chicanery going on with this particular operation. Mr. Speaker, those are legitimate questions that are asked in this Assembly each and every day. They are asked so that we, as the official opposition, fulfil our responsibilities to Saskatchewan taxpayers in this expenditure of \$20 million.

And, Mr. Speaker, they will be asked over and over and over again, until that minister lives up to the expectation that he left with this Legislative Assembly while he was in opposition, about the government doing their . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Johnson: — Mr. Speaker, on this particular motion I feel that the amendment is the direction to go, and that it commends the government of the province of Saskatchewan and the Gaming Commission in the province of Saskatchewan for the honest and thorough approach to introducing the video lottery terminals into the province of Saskatchewan.

But first of all, before commenting further on that, I would like to indicate that the previous speaker was really trying to cover some of the problems that they had generated while being a government, in not doing the thorough approach to studying what was going on.

What he had indicated to this Assembly, and he demonstrated what he was attempting to do in covering up what they had done in the past, and saying that the Conservative government was the one that had put into . . . together the freedom of information Act; and that's accurate as far as it goes.

But, Mr. Speaker, he forgot to indicate to this Assembly that the former government didn't bother to bring the Act into effect. And therefore although they put the Act together, it wasn't in place to be used by anyone. And he was attempting to basically inform this House incorrectly about what was taking place there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the motion that we have . . . the amendment which we have before us today, indicates that there have been a number of decisions that are taking time to be put into place. One of the things is that there is a security report on the companies which submitted proposals, and this was prepared by the Gaming Commission. Both VLT and GTECH passed this security review and these companies do not stand accused of any criminal activity.

(1600)

No contracts have been signed and the government is

negotiating for details in the content of these particular items. Mr. Speaker, one of the things in purchasing items of this nature is that one needs to know exactly what's being purchased, and that's what's taking place.

I'd like to say that the individual who spoke previous to me indicated that there were investigations on individual companies all over the world. But that's as far as his statement went. He's just simply taking and highlighting something and attempting to do what no one . . . to cover what they had been doing in the past, in covering their own tracks, by highlighting things which were not necessarily being effective.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the VLC and GTECH in the . . . VLC was recently selected, Mr. Speaker, as the supplier of the video lottery terminals to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I must inform the members that the time for a motion under rule 16 has elapsed.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before we go to the next item on our agenda, I want to inform the members that I would like to table the 24th annual report, 1992, of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Saskatchewan branch.

We will now proceed to the next item on private members' motions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Resolution No. 4 — Government Spending Cap

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a few moments today to speak on a very relevant topic I believe at this time. And when I finish my debate, or my remarks, I'm going to be moving a motion that reads as such:

That this Assembly urge the government to keep the Premier's promise to the Saskatchewan people to cap government spending at \$4.5 billion and demands the government immediately bring forward legislation capping total government spending at \$4.5 billion consistent with that promise.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for the motion is we just . . . it wasn't that long ago that the Premier of this Assembly of this province, the Leader of the NDP Party, gave a promise to Saskatchewan voters that indeed we should be able to live within a budget of \$4.5 billion.

And during the election campaign and prior to the election campaign of 1991 the then leader of the opposition, Leader of the NDP Party, and now Premier and many of his colleagues went around the province of Saskatchewan and basically promised Saskatchewan voters that they would cap government spending at \$4.5 billion, that they wouldn't need any more than \$4.5 billion to indeed balance the budget, bring in a balanced budget and show the people of

Saskatchewan that they could not only hold their spending within 4.5 billion, but they could use a \$4.5 billion budget to as well reduce the operational deficit of the province of Saskatchewan.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, we are all aware on numerous occasions of some of the remarks or many of the remarks the Premier made. And I go back to September 3, 1991, where the Premier's speaking on CKCK-TV said: we believe in living within our means. We think \$4.5 billion expenditure a year roughly is what we now expend in the province of Saskatchewan, and we believe it's enough.

And that's what the Premier was saying at that time. And I believe if the Premier really believes that what he was saying then was true and really meant it that it would be appropriate for the government then to bring forward legislation or indeed show that they can live within the \$4.5 billion expenditure. And rather than raising taxes, they should be cutting or reducing government to the point that they can live within the funds that are available to them.

In fact in February of 1991 the Premier said tax increases were not needed to pay for the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs.

And I believe at that time, Mr. Speaker, the Premier was referring to the suggestion made by a former colleague of mine, then Finance minister, when the Finance minister of the day in 1991 came out and suggested that by harmonizing the sales tax with the goods and services tax that indeed there would be enough revenue derived, additional revenue brought into provincial coffers to pay for Saskatchewan's commitment to the GRIP and NISA programs as well as add additional funding to government revenues that would provide the means for the government not only to meet its expenditure targets, but as well to reduce its operational budget and the Consolidated Fund; and in the long term, Mr. Speaker, to address the overall total debt of the province and through a period of years, reduce that debt. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, the now Premier said that it wouldn't be necessary to harmonize. We don't need to increase taxes.

And yet what do we see today? We see a government and a Premier . . . or being led by a Premier who has found, I believe, that it's more convenient to say what people really want to hear rather than being totally up front and honest with people prior to an election to get elected, and then afterwards turn around and do totally opposite of what he had said.

And as we were discussing in the Assembly this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, we were raising some concerns and questions regarding health care in this province; raising questions that are being raised by hospital boards and care home boards and home care boards, health care givers across this province, about funding.

And we asked the minister to release the details of the

funding that these hospital and care home and ambulance and home care boards could expect from this government in the 1993-94 budget, and what did we find? In question period, Mr. Speaker, we indeed found that the Minister of Health wasn't ready to come forward with the numbers or indeed wasn't willing to release the numbers so that health care givers out in Saskatchewan, not only our large urban centres but even our small rural centres, would know exactly how to set their budgets for this upcoming year.

Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder if indeed this government really is as open and as honest and even as accountable as they would lead us to believe, or would lead the Saskatchewan public to believe, or the taxpayer. And it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that many of the taxpayers out there are beginning to question the real integrity of the government, questioning the Minister of Finance if indeed at the end of the day we are going to see a balanced budget on the side of the operational . . . or on the operational side of our ledger, or in the Consolidated Fund.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to raise your attention to the fact that in the debate on the Appropriation Bill last week, the Minister of Finance refused to answer any questions about the impact that opposition members, my colleagues, were bringing forward about the impact of the 1 per cent increase in the sales tax from 8 per cent to 9 per cent.

What kind of an impact would that have upon spending in this province? And if indeed at the end of the day that the government would realize real dollars, enough dollars to help them meet this year's budget and not only meet this year's projected budget and projected shortfall but also generate the funds that would be needed to balance the operational side of this budget, Mr. Speaker, as well as address the long-term debt in this province.

Now as we all know, the increase from 8 per cent to 9 per cent was the second increase that we've seen in taxes. And yet prior to the election of 1991 the Premier and many of his colleagues, many of the members who are now sitting on the front benches of this Assembly, told the people of Saskatchewan there would be no new taxes.

In fact I look at an article of September 6, 1991 and I quote: no new taxes would be imposed. Instead the NDP would cut wasteful spending and encourage new economic development. One has to wonder exactly what the then NDP leader meant when he said no new taxes would be imposed. Instead the NDP would cut wasteful spending and encourage new economic development.

It would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that when the NDP leader, the now Premier of this province made those promises, even though he knew what the deficit of this province was at the time because it was brought out in the leadership debate on CKCK TV, the Premier, then NDP leader acknowledged that indeed the overall budget deficit for this province was \$14.2 billion. He acknowledged that, Mr. Speaker.

And yet he said . . . he went out prior to the election and said, no new taxes. He said they'd cut wasteful spending. However, when the NDP formed government and established their Gass tribunal and Mr. Gass and the other members of the tribunal went through the books, what did they say? What did they have to say?

Did they find the wasteful spending and the mismanagement that the NDP of the day, the NDP Party, the opposition of the day said was there that they would bring under control and they would be able to just overnight, just a snap of the fingers they'd be able to balance the budget? No.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think if you look very carefully at the submission made by Donald Gass, Mr. Gass indicated that indeed the government of the '80s was open, was accountable, that the books were open, they were accessible for everyone to see, there was nothing hidden.

And that is reflected in the fact that the Premier, while in opposition and as Leader of the NDP Party going into the provincial election, indicated that he knew there was a \$14.2 billion deficit. But he also said, even though there is a \$14.2 billion deficit, we will take and we will live within a \$4.5 billion a year operational budget, and we won't increase taxes; we're not going to dip into people's pockets.

Unfortunately what have we seen? People of Saskatchewan have come to realize — and it's very unfair in the way it has been transpired — the people of Saskatchewan have been made aware of the fact that their pockets which they were holding on to very carefully, trying to make sure the government didn't dig into them, are now open even wider than they were before.

Because if the Premier argues that increasing utility rates isn't a tax on people of Saskatchewan, I don't think the Saskatchewan people would believe him. If the Premier would argue that increasing the provincial sales tax is not a tax, I don't think the Saskatchewan people will really believe him any more. In fact I'm sure the Minister of Finance is finding it awfully difficult to go and talk to people across Saskatchewan who are finding that the bottom line, the net take-home that they have at the end of the day has diminished significantly since October 1991, while at the same time government spending has not necessarily diminished. In fact it's increased.

We see the former minister of Finance in his new position as Provincial Secretary has actually received an \$800,000 increase to his department. And one has to ask ourselves, we have to ask ourselves indeed, what was that increase for? Where is that increase going? Why was that increase put into the Provincial Secretary? It could have been used to reach out to people in Saskatchewan by strengthening our rural fibre and urban fibre, strengthening our health care, strengthening our educational programs.

We find that the Premier said prior to October 1991, he promised a government that will live within its means and spend no more than the current budget estimates of \$4.5 billion annually.

And what we're asking the Premier . . . because we have seen this government has refused to indeed take to heart the words of its members and of its leader and of the Premier, and indeed live with its means. And we've seen a budget . . . two budgets in a row that have continually dipped into the pockets of Saskatchewan people.

We feel, and I believe it's very imperative that if this Premier, the Premier, the member from Riversdale really believes what he said prior to October 1991, that he indeed live up to his commitments to Saskatchewan people. Because I believe Saskatchewan people are beginning to say, we cannot afford any more, we cannot afford to see our services cut.

(1615)

And we don't have to look too far and see what is actually taking place. Even in urban Saskatchewan, people are beginning to realize some significant hurt. But when I look at some of the rural areas that I represent, Mr. Speaker, it boggles my mind when I look at the suggestions that are now being made by the Department of Health and the reduction of services when every time I remember being in this House from the period of October '86 through to October of 1991, through that period, through the period of the late '80s, the present government and many of its members who were here sitting as opposition members continually stood in this House and berated the government for not spending enough in health, not spending enough in education, indeed not looking after the people of Saskatchewan.

And I must look at . . . I picked up a recent article out of the Saskatchewan . . . I believe it was the *Star-Phoenix*, April 3, '93, and I want to quote a paragraph of this article that says:

Two years ago, Simard was in the legislature bringing up one health (scary) . . . story after another . . .

And I think we heard the minister today talking about scare tactics.

Well I don't know if there was anyone who had a greater ability to create fear and fearmongering and raise scary stories in this House than the present Minister of Health when she was an opposition member. And I quote here:

. . . Simard was in the legislature bringing up one health (scary) . . . story after another — people's lives were at risk because of cuts to the drug plan, hospital waiting lists threatened someone else. And every day, then Health Minister George McLeod discounted her claims, saying Simard missed the mark too

often to be taken seriously.

And yet what do we have today? We have a minister who all of a sudden has turned the tables and is not willing to divulge the information that people across Saskatchewan both in our large urban centres and in our rural centres need to know, need to have in front of them, so that they can address the budgets that they will be putting together to serve the needs of Saskatchewan people.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, what we're going to find, and I predict that what many of these regional health boards will find, that at the end of the day that global budget that is going to be coming their way will not be anywhere close to the money that is presently going into their area right now through hospital and ambulance and care homes and home care boards, Mr. Speaker. And that's what's scaring people out there.

They don't mind the government living within its means. They don't mind and they want to see a government that lives within its means. But they have difficulty in trying to understand when a government promises to live within its means, promises not to increase taxes, promised to provide services and even greater and more enhanced services. They have grave difficulty in trying to understand where a government is really heading when in fact what they're seeing, a government reducing services — increasing taxes and reducing services.

And the other thing, Mr. Speaker, as we have been discussing in this legislature, the budget presented by the Minister of Finance, the greatest portion of that budget has yet to be seen. And the Minister of Health just confirmed that today when she refused to commit to present the budgets so that rural communities and rural health centres would know what figures they could use in establishing their budgets.

In fact I had one administrator mention to me that they were budgeting on the basis of a 3.5 — at least that was the impression they were left with last year — 3.5 beds per 1,000 population. And so they're trying to draw up a budget on that basis. But now we see the government suggesting they should be looking at 1.5 beds per thousand patients . . . or population.

And, Mr. Speaker, do you know what that does to a small rural hospital? Basically it's saying, the minister is saying she's not closing hospitals. She's not going to make that decision. It's going to be made at the local level. Mr. Speaker, what we have is indeed the headline that I see in the paper recently where it's talking about communities, towns drawing health care battle lines. People just are not certain of where they stand today.

Because of that, communities are banding together because they want information. They want to know exactly where the government's going. Are they going to really address their commitment to living within their means without putting all the onus on the local taxpayers?

A recent article said: Towns drawing health care battle lines. A tide of fear and resentment is growing against the provincial government's plans for rural health care and the future of small town hospitals.

People expect the government to live within its means. And people are not immune or not hiding their head under the sand or under a basket and saying that a government can't live within its means without having the revenue to provide the services, or government cannot continue to provide services if they're going to cost more than it's drawing in.

People are willing to give, and people are talking about rationalization in the health system and in our educational system. But, Mr. Speaker, what they're having a problem with is the way the government is approaching the whole . . . the whole process that is being put forward by the government right now.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I were to commend the minister and the government, I would say they've done a fine job of putting all the onus on someone else to make the decisions, so at the end of the day they're actually going to look quite . . . probably look quite clean in the fact that they never made any of the major . . . or weren't forced to make the major decisions because they offloaded the responsibility onto larger, regional health boards.

In fact what I see, many of the health boards that have been formed today, there are many people are beginning to question and are asking themselves: do I really want to be involved on this regional board, as I begin to see the funding; and the fact that my neighbour down the road, is he going to be happy with me when I come out, when our board says, well your hospital must go or your school's going to have to trim its budget or we're going to have to cut the services in home care.

I talked to a young gentleman yesterday, Mr. Speaker, whose wife at present is at home and is receiving services under home care. Here's a young lady who is very vibrant and healthy and active, and just over a year ago she came down with cystic fibrosis and today is totally dependent on somebody else. But he was commenting about the fact that he was pleased that his wife could be at home and that he was receiving home care services. But his question was, how long will those services be available to me?

And, Mr. Speaker, we must look at how the government is indeed trying to address the commitments they made to Saskatchewan people prior to the election. Now maybe the government is going to say at the end of this term, well we're now living within our \$4.5 billion budget that we've talked about. We've reduced services. We've reduced our commitment to Saskatchewan people — someone else has that responsibility. We've cut our spending because we've offloaded.

And who knows at the end of the day if indeed the government is going to have to look for more funding,

because we're aware of the \$106 million that the federal government wants back from the province of Saskatchewan because of their overpayment. So what I find, Mr. Speaker, is that where the Premier was being honest and the Premier suggested that he live within \$4.5 billion, we're saying: why is the government not taking the position of living within it, the \$4.5 billion, the commitment it promised . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the Minister of Social Services asks, what would you do there?

Mr. Speaker, a number of communities in my area have already taken to rationalizing health care delivery and services in their communities. In fact one of the major problems we face throughout Saskatchewan is the fact that we've got too much government, too much bureaucracy. We've had home care boards. We've got care home boards. We've got hospital boards. We've got ambulance boards. And through the '80s, and it was the former minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, Mr. Taylor, who went out to communities when he was Health minister and asked communities to look at ways in which they could rationalize and cut spending in order to control spending across Saskatchewan in health care.

And one of the communities that I represent, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see today doesn't have four boards. They have one board, one health board. That's a commitment and a suggestion that I made over the years, that communities must look at addressing health in a global context rather than a care home board over here and a hospital board over here, and a home care board over here, just taking the money that comes out to it and using it because they might lose it tomorrow.

And that's another problem we have, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, why should communities or health boards or hospital boards be forced into a position where they say, well I've got a global funding and if I don't use it today, it's gone. I think, Mr. Speaker, there are other ways we could address the question as well, and looking at ways in which we could rationalize without taking hospital beds and care home beds and home care services out of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move this motion, seconded by the member from Thunder Creek. The motion reads:

That this Assembly urge the government to keep the Premier's promise to the Saskatchewan people to cap government spending at \$4.5 billion and demands the government immediately bring forward legislation capping total government spending at \$4.5 billion consistent with that promise.

I so move.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering if the previous speaker, the member from Moosomin, would take a question.

The Speaker: — Will the member from Moosomin

take a question? Yes, he will.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I listened very intently to your comments and I have a couple of questions for you. As a person who was born and raised in rural Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan people are worried about a couple of things. What are the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member can only ask a question. She can't make a comment. Question to the member.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — My apologies. I was trying to put my question in context. But I guess my question to you is this, member from Moosomin: in terms of your rural hospitals, how many of those hospital beds are occupied daily by people who have had operations or had babies? I'd be interested in hearing your response to that. And would it not be better to take money that is spent on empty hospital beds and move that money into more appropriate health services?

Mr. Toth: — I thank the member for her question, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, one of the communities that I was talking about has a team of doctors who have been really providing an excellent service. The member talked about how many beds there are being utilized due to babies born in the community.

Well in the community of Kipling, that has become a centre where many women are coming to have their babies because of the competent team we have in the community. It's a community where we have, because of the doctoral team we have there, that many people around the area in fact are coming to the community. And the last I talked to the administrator, they were above their allocated daily census of usage of hospital beds.

At one time, I will acknowledge the fact that there were more level 4 care patients and that was one area that was a burden to that hospital. But because of the compatibleness of the hospital and the doctors and the services they receive there, and the commitment of that health centre, we find there was a very solid usage.

And the greatest fear, as I indicated earlier, was the fact that if we had a way to address the daily census figures, and rather than just a global funding but you had funding available on the basis of usage, you wouldn't have had hospitals just stacking patients to make sure they protected their daily census. And that's why I stand here and defend rural communities and rural hospitals.

The Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to give notice that I am putting forward an amendment to the motion by the member from Moosomin, that would be moved by myself and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld.

And the amendment would be to:

Remove all the words after "Assembly", and replace them with the following:

support the government and the Minister of Finance for having the courage to address Saskatchewan's financial crisis in a responsible manner, so that the province can regain its financial freedom;

and be it further resolved that this Assembly commend the Minister of Finance for bringing in the 1993-94 budget at \$4.080 billion for government spending, well below the \$4.5 billion target, except for the \$847.5 million payment for interest on the previous government's debt.

(1630)

Mr. Speaker, I'm amazed, and I wonder at where the member from Moosomin was during the nine years of the Tory regime where each and every year they came forward with a budget filled with debt.

I would like to restate again, Mr. Speaker, that except for the \$847 million payment in interest that is gone, and leaves this province yearly to be paid out to interests elsewhere, that we would have lived within the target that we spoke of.

And when we look back and we talk about the record of the members opposite who are now trying to force on this province an immediate living within the target that they're talking about, what would be their record from the last 10 years? Well we can look back, and in 1982 they inherited a surplus, a surplus they acknowledged. And they signed on the dotted line to say yes, we've accepted that there is a surplus of over \$120 million in the province of Saskatchewan.

The debt, according to some of the borrowings of long-term debt, would be about \$3 billion, covered by the many billions of dollars at that time in assets that were held by the province of Saskatchewan.

So they did indeed agree that they inherited a fine situation. And the former premier, the member from Estevan, as he left this province and went to New York in 1983, bragged at that time indeed that, you know, Saskatchewan has so much going for it that you could afford to mismanage it and still break even — our former premier from Estevan in New York. He wouldn't have had the nerve to say that in Saskatchewan.

But it gets back to people in Saskatchewan. And then they look at, what is the record of the previous administration, the previous government? And so we look to the 1986 big whoops after the election where they projected they were not going to come in with a very large debt. There would be some and they would account for that.

And after the election . . . I remember at that time having people take lotteries and look at saying, let's guess how far out the Government of Saskatchewan

could be in their projections on what the debt would be. That's how under control they were and how aware they were of the budget figures.

What happened in 1986? Well the hot tubs and whirlpools came back to haunt them and, whoops, there was another horrific debt for the province of Saskatchewan, another deficit budget.

So where were they when they're talking about now living within a certain means or putting forward that now all of a sudden we should put more duress and hardship on the people of Saskatchewan by trying to live within their arbitrary figures and their arbitrary means. Where were they in the last nine years in this province when we talk about bringing in balanced budgets? Where were they when their Mr. Hepworth writes a letter?

Now you think that when a minister of the government writes a letter under the letterhead and quotes the premier of the province and says, we're going to come in with about \$265 million deficit this year, that that could be believable. And if all projections were true, they were going to come in on target.

What do we find after the 1992 election? Another big whoops! And a '91 election? A big whoops. We're dealing with it in '92; we're dealing with it in '93. Another big whoops from the previous administration.

And how did they respond to this crisis? How did they continue to respond to the increasing debt and the further and further in the hole that they were putting the province of Saskatchewan into and the compromising of social programs and the economic well-being of this province? They responded with the flip, offhand comments, give 'er snooze Bruce and you don't say whoa in a mud hole. You just keep going and somehow you get further and further in debt and magically it'll turn around someday, somehow. They knew someday and somehow. They know that New Democrats always clean up the mess that's left behind by the previous administration or a Liberal administration in the province of Saskatchewan.

We've said whoa, enough is enough. And people asked us during the last election to say, whoa. Enough of the outrageous deals, the legacy of the Tory Conservatives in this province. Enough of the outrageous deals to some of the largest corporations in the world who they themselves now who are looking at renegotiating with us feel that they can do something to turn around the outrageous deals that were given to them during the previous administration — the Weyerhaeusers, the Saskfercos, and the Federated upgrader that we're looking at now.

Mr. Speaker, there's a legacy of the deals of the Tory Conservatives that go back to the people of Saskatchewan. And you put it before them and you say, this is really unbelievable. We cannot believe that someone who says that they are business managers and have control over the trust that people put in

them, trust and control of the taxpayers first, that these business people would do this with a trust, with the taxpayers' dollars.

Why did they do it? Well when we look back it's for the pork-barrelling and individual greed. You've heard members earlier talk about the good time they'd have at our expense at Big Valley Jamborees, tickets to the Centre of the Arts, booze hauled into the Legislative Building. When you talk about decorum to the Government of Saskatchewan, that's the kind of decorum that they displayed in this legislature. It was a disgrace, and the people of Saskatchewan said it was a disgrace.

But let's talk about who suffered. Let's talk about . . . we know who gained . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you can't constantly be interrupting from your chair. You should give the respect to the member to allow her to make her statement.

An Hon. Member: — I was reading out loud, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Hamilton: — It's not often, Mr. Speaker, you see just a twinge of remorse from the members opposite, but we see a little bit of that present here now.

Let's look at then, Mr. Speaker, who suffered under the Tory regime in the province of Saskatchewan. As a member of city council, we had to look at the daily line-ups of people who were going to the food banks. Mr. Speaker, in 1982 there were no food banks in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, let's look at who suffered. Let's look at the welfare system that was set up that was policing people, spending money on trying to look at the individuals and try and find any little individual way they could put people under duress.

We all know 3 to 4 per cent of the population either can't work or will find ways not to work. We know that — 3 to 4 per cent. But when you had unemployment climbing to 10 and 12 per cent, that was not people who didn't want to work, Mr. Speaker. That was people who couldn't find a job under the previous Tory government unless they were friends of government.

Let's look at the discussion that we had one night at city council when social workers came forward and say their case-loads are increasing. They're not allowed to spend time with their individual clients, talking about how to manage their dollars and make do with the meagre amount that they were going to be allocated, and provide some personal support and some individual support and help; but rather to say, let's victim bash. Let's skulk around the bushes and try and find out . . . if we'd spend money on finding out those few people who were really abusing the system.

At that time a report came forward to city council called "On the Breadline", a sad statement in itself, Mr. Speaker. And when we looked at the statistics in there, we found as the numbers dropped as the appeals grew longer to social assistance, as they knocked people off for any excuse in any way they could get them off their social assistance rolls, we saw the numbers in the food bank increasing and the attitude that charity and that churches would pick up and take care of those people greatest in need. Not that it was a responsibility of a reasonable and a caring and compassionate government; it was now somehow the responsibility of people if they felt they could have some goodwill and charity toward others. Those are the people who suffered under the 10 years of Tory regime.

Let's look at the situation of the municipalities and how uncertain they were from year to year about their budgeting situation and in particular the city of Regina who in one year lost \$9.2 million in offloading from the previous government.

They didn't find out about that, Mr. Speaker, early in the year to be able to adjust to a major cut-back like that, but not until July when they finally had their act together and could tell municipalities they were going to receive a major thump and a removal of dollars from the community at a level and a property tax level that is the least fair way to pay taxes because it's not based on ability to pay.

And a few years later they attempted to cut special needs transportation. Are those the kind of cuts they're talking about when they want to see the immediate coming into terms with their waste and mismanagement?

People who should be hurting no further are now having to take responsibility with the rest of us to clean up the Tory mess. And the greatest frustration I hear out there and the greatest danger of all is that they're saying, it's unfortunate that somehow we had nine years of getting into this mess and you've been put into the position where you really have to address the financial mess and the financial situation to be able to even get the money that you need to run and operate what you're trying to accomplish and turn this province around in less than four years.

That's the frustration of the people that they're trying to help us and feel for us in our task of trying to clean up. Let alone put it on a hurry-up track when we talk about trying to also deal with the additional \$800 million per year in interest payments on top of that.

We could have lived within the \$4.5 billion, and we would have lived well within that targeted budget if it were not for those interest payments.

Well let's look at also where the idea comes up now that we can also do a balancing of the budget and where they were going to act. Let's look at health care where they had a health care system that they kept putting money to and money to in trying to address the concerns and tinker around the edges. The no ideas

group, the no community development group. We're just going to try and decide how we can take a little bit out now of the system when we realize we have to finally come to terms with the amount of money going out. But a blanket cutting of dollars to health care, putting the health care system at risk for future generations without any care or regard because they don't have a vision and didn't have a vision there on health reform or moving to a wellness model of health care.

And let's look at a morning I sat on a black Wednesday toward the end of their last budget when they were talking about . . . we're going to make announcements that say there's no increased funding in health care. But we meant that for rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan, your decrease is a minus 3 per cent decrease. On top of inflation and everything else that the health care providers had to deal with at that time, it was a major withdrawal of funding.

But wait a minute. What happened to that budget? If these people were so wise and under control and had their financial house in order, surely they would have had a budget presented to the people of Saskatchewan. Well it shows that this is a no conscience and a morally corrupt group of people we're dealing with when a member from Estevan can go out to a high school and pretend to the students there that somehow they passed a budget that year.

What did we find when we had to come to terms with the budget that they left behind? And, Mr. Speaker, no one knows how they would have lived up to their commitment of a Fair Share Saskatchewan and the millions of dollars that our conscientious civil servants could see going out the window in that ill-fated scheme.

I could go on to talk about the kinds of severance deals and contracts and sly, scheming packages that were being dealt to the friends of the Conservative government as we took power in 1991, the kinds of unconscionable contracts you talk about when someone's lining their own nest before they know they're going to take a fall, and do it at the expense of the taxpayers' trust and the taxpayers' dollar in Saskatchewan.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, the part that hurts the most, it was deliberate; that the deals that they made and the kinds of contracts that they were signing were a deliberate scorched earth policy. And they were even bold and braggart enough to stand up and say it, as Mr. Berntson said in a speech that was quoted in the paper for days, that had cartoons written about it — talking about at that time Saddam Hussein and the likeness to Eric Berntson when they talk about scorched earth policy. He was going to leave a province that would be left in such a state that no one would be able to manage or govern the province.

(1645)

Well, Mr. Speaker, our record speaks for itself. People no longer trust the kinds of things that the politicians

are saying because of what the Conservatives did. But let's compare it to a New Democrat record. Eleven years of balanced budgets under the Blakeney government — good times and bad times of New Democrat government — there was only one deficit budget in the province of Saskatchewan and at that time it was to address not the hot tubs and the whirlpools and the gas tax — there's a tax, then there's not a tax; then it's increased, then it's decreased; it's off, it's on — or a lottery tax, and so on. But it was to address the unforeseen emergencies that come up in talking about a province when you have an agricultural crisis. Not to buy the votes, but to address in an extreme situation, an emergency or a concern through a slight deficit. A far cry from the 11 years of the Tory regime.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, to talk about over 40 new taxes that were put in during the Conservative era, and I've heard their solution — a provincial GST (goods and services tax) — that old gouge and scratch tax that the federal Tories have put in. Another tax on low income earners and people who could least afford to pay. No addressing progressive reform and tax reform that needs to happen in this country. Just another tax on the average person every time they turn around.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at what's before us in the budget address that we put forward, and that was put forward by the hon. member from Saskatoon Westmount, it states right in the financial pages that, had we not had the \$847.5 million each year — over \$2 million a day to throw out the window because of the Tory mismanagement on interest payments — we would have lived within the \$4.5 billion allotted. In essence, we would have lived with \$4.80 million.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand before you and say, where were the 10 members of the rump across from us when they had their opportunity to balance budgets and walk their talk.

The amendment I've put before us today, Mr. Speaker, is one that says, that's our intent. We did try to do what we said we would do, before we realized the kind of debt that had been rung up by the members opposite. And we have put forward in this budget a determination to do so.

It's with pleasure I put forward the amendment to the motion.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this opportunity to speak to the original motion put forward by the member from Moosomin and against the amendment.

The member from Moosomin reminds us of the promises made by the Premier, the member from Riversdale, and indeed every New Democratic Party member of this legislature. An opportunity that allows members of this Assembly to reflect on the shallowness of political promises ought to be welcomed by us all.

Mr. Speaker, the motion brought forward by the

member from Moosomin demonstrates the difficulty many people have with government and with politics in general. Just this week a poll was released which compared Canadians' feelings about politicians to those of their western world counterparts. The poll indicated that Canadians were more cynical and more distrustful of their politicians than any other peoples in the western world.

Much of that, Mr. Speaker, is fed by statements and shallow political promises made by people who sit on the government side today. People in our province are tired. In fact people in the country are fed up with politicians who say one thing and do another.

The Premier claims that his party represents reform, that it represents change. I question, Mr. Speaker, what sort of reform there is in making promises just to get elected. I say with respect to the Premier, respect he claims to offer me, that he is not really committed to reform; he is just better than most at practising the ancient, and I quote, promise one thing but never deliver, politics that has gone on in this place for years.

Mr. Speaker, despite the obvious inconsistency of the members opposite, there is much more to discuss about this resolution. Just today the government released polling information to the public. This example of openness is to be commended. The government's record, however, has to be more than the odd example. But a solid record is what we need, a solid record of performance, and for that I wait patiently.

The polls released today indicated that earlier this year almost 58 per cent of Saskatchewan people are not satisfied with the way in which the NDP government has managed to control government spending. Last year the members opposite increased government spending by \$103 million. They did that in part, Mr. Speaker, by introducing \$340 million of new taxes last year, and that is increased by another \$193 million this.

This represents a serious change. In an economy that has a total output of \$18 billion, our government has decided that it wants to socialize another \$500 million of everyone's income. The question people want answered as a result of all of this new taxation is, how does that represent controls on government spending? How does that represent \$4.5 billion is enough?

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is that it does not and it never will. During his reply to the budget speech, the Premier chose to refer to authorities beyond our province to show that his government made the proper budget choices. Well I am going to take the same liberty this afternoon. The Premier, I would hope, would pay heed to people like Mr. Lloyd Atkinson who is the chief economist at the Bank of Montreal.

In a recent address to the parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, Mr. Atkinson stated that to get

their financial houses in order, governments in Canada must abide by two fundamental principles. Those two principles, Mr. Speaker, include: reducing operating expenditures; and secondly, keeping to a policy of zero per cent tax increases — zero per cent tax increases, Mr. Speaker. While the government has made an effort to reduce operating expenditures, it has failed miserably on the zero per cent increases in taxation.

It appears that we do have people here, our socialists of the 1990s, who are no longer interested in creating social programs for every problem. They just want to socialize incomes of Saskatchewan people with their tax increases. In the last election, Mr. Speaker, an election in which my party did its best to put out the message to reduce abuse of taxpayers' dollars, we put forward a proposal similar to the one called for in this resolution. We offered the people of this province policies that would force governments to balance their budgets over a four-year period. We proposed making government lay out a four-year vision of what its tax plans would be.

We wanted this laid out in law, Mr. Speaker. While I realize that governments have authority to change laws, we felt so strongly about controlling spending and controlling taxation that we were prepared to put our promise into the black and white of legislation. We were so prepared to hold the line on spending that we were willing to put a plan into legislation, stay with it, and face the consequences.

If the member from Riversdale and his colleagues are so committed to their plan, why not risk placing it in legal language of a taxpayers protection Act, or spending controls. Why don't they do it, Mr. Speaker? That is the question to which I would like an answer.

I can only guess that the Premier wants the freedom to blame the problems on other people, the freedom to be able to not meet an objective because it was someone else's fault. And I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we are living in the here and now, the Premier blames the harsh impact of his plans will have on families of this province, always on the previous administration, always on the federal colleagues.

He always blames it on megaprojects of the previous administration. And I agree that there were many, many things that happened in the last nine and a half years that were unconscionable. But we do have a New Democratic Party in power now, sir, that was responsible for governing in the most lucrative times in Saskatchewan's history where oil prices, gas prices, where potash prices, and grain prices were the highest ever seen in the entire history of Saskatchewan. And what did they do about the debt in the 1970s? It went up, not down. The overall debt went up. The overall debt to gross domestic product was not reduced when we had every opportunity at our disposal to keep our province safe, lucrative, stable, and secure for times to come.

Yet today, Mr. Speaker, we see that one of the Crown-owned corporations is deciding to start a \$42

million project to build a transmission line across much of the province. We have to ask and you should be asking the members opposite: do we need this project? Do we need it in this time of restraint? Can we afford these kinds of projects when we are broke? But we're still spending more than the five point billion dollars which is supposed to be enough.

The government argues that it cut the deficit by hundreds of millions of dollars. If one accounts for the cost of servicing the debt, one finds that the controls on spending which the government introduced are really not all that significant. Spending was reduced by .6 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and revenues were increased by 6.1 per cent — 10 times full. How does that equate with the Premier's promise of \$4.5 billion is enough?

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is that raising revenues at a rate 10 times greater than the rate at which one reduces expenditures is not getting one's priorities straight for the people of this province. It is no wonder that the majority of people in Saskatchewan are dissatisfied with this government's attempt to rid itself of the addiction of government spending.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, while people agree with the seriousness of the financial state our province is in, they know that job-killing taxation is not the solution.

I support the original motion. I ask the government to reconsider its directions, reconsider the damage that hollow promises make and continue to do to a public that is already distrustful of its elected officials. The members opposite must above all remember that if they seek the cooperation of the public, they must have the trust and confidence of the people. One more unkept promise will do nothing to gain the trust needed to remove the province from this current crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the time, I ask that we adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.