

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills

Acting Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Thompson, chair of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills, presents the sixth report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee has considered the following Bills and has agreed to report the same without amendment: Bill No. 01, An Act Respecting The Saskatoon Foundation; Bill No. 02, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Full Gospel Bible Institute.

Your committee recommends, under the provisions of rule no. 61, that fees be remitted, less the cost of printing, with respect to Bills No. 01 and 02.

Fred Thompson, chair.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Shellbrook-Torch River:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce through you and to you and to members of the legislature today, a group of 21 grade 8 students from Davin School, which is in the very heart of Regina Lake Centre and in fact may be the heart of Regina Lake Centre. I'm going to meet with them at 2:20 for pictures, and in room 218 following our photo for drinks and discussion.

They're accompanied by their teachers, Steve Hicks and Lea Johnson. And I'd like the members to join me in welcoming them to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you two friends from Prince Albert, Tom Bell and Roger Bell, who are seated in the west gallery. Both are community activists, Mr. Speaker. They have always kept in touch with what's happening in politics and are here to observe today firsthand. I ask all members to welcome Tom and Roger Bell.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce to this Assembly a young gentleman seated in your gallery, Mr. Dave Kurtz from Saskatoon. Him and his wife have started a new business, and we'd like to wish them well. And I'd like the members to join me in welcoming him to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and to all members of the legislature, two guests sitting in the Speaker's gallery.

Our first guest is Julia Abbott. Julia Abbott is a first nations woman from Chitek Lake, a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, College of Education. She graduated with outstanding marks. She is presently working on her master's degree at the University of Saskatchewan, and she is the post-secondary coordinator at Montreal Lake. Julia is an example of what first nations women are doing in this province — they are becoming educated and they are going on to be leaders in their community.

So I want to ask Julia to stand and be welcomed by all members of the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Sitting beside Julia is Randy. And I didn't get Randy's last name, but Randy works for the Peter Ballantyne Band. He also is involved in first nations' education and community development. I also want to welcome him to the legislature this afternoon, as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Redberry Pelican Project

Mr. Jess: — Fellow members of this Assembly, please join with me in congratulating the Redberry Pelican Project in my constituency, which recently was awarded a Tourism for Tomorrow Award. These highly honoured awards are set up by the British Airways in association with the British Tourism Authority and Tour Operators' Study Group. The award in part is to raise environmental awareness. This highly commended prize was received at the London awards banquet.

The Redberry Pelican Project, which operates the Redberry Lake Interpretive Centre near Hafford, is a very unique and precious area of Saskatchewan. It is designed to allow interested people to enjoy and study pelicans in their natural and undisturbed surroundings. It is an environmental entity that is not only unique to Saskatchewan but to all of Canada.

The Redberry Pelican Project is the success that it is today because of the great cooperation and

dedication between the Saskatchewan Watchable Wildlife Association, the RM (Rural Municipality) of Redberry, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the town of Hafford, and several dedicated local individuals.

Upon word of the award, there was a reception held at Redberry Lake Interpretive Centre. During this gathering a new display for the centre was unveiled, an artistic interpretation of the world's seven pelican species by Eileen Laviolette. It should be also noted that the Redberry Pelican Project received the Governor General's Conservation Award two years ago.

I again would like to congratulate the fine people of the Redberry Pelican Project.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Queen's Baton Relay

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm pleased to announce that SaskPower will be joining with electric utilities in each province to sponsor the Queen's baton relay which began yesterday at Buckingham Palace.

The Queen's baton relay is a tradition of the Commonwealth Games which are being held in Victoria, B.C. (British Columbia) August 18 to 28, 1994. The sterling silver baton which carries a personal message of greetings from the Queen will travel to eight Commonwealth nations before arriving in our nation's capital on April 11.

From there the baton will travel west to Saskatchewan where the relay will be greeted by the Lieutenant Governor at a ceremony in Regina on May 9 and in Saskatoon on May 10. SaskPower will host events both in Regina and Saskatoon.

We are proud to be a sponsor of the Queen's baton relay and of the role we can play in this proud international athletic event. It is a time when the 50 members of the Commonwealth can cooperate and engage in friendly competition at the same time. It is also a unique chance for SaskPower to be part of an event which promotes opportunities for human development that celebrates cross-cultural understanding, the tradition of good sportsmanship, and the triumph of personal achievements. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Conservation at the Legislative Building

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We often go pretty far afield looking for good news and miss what is happening right under our own noses. Such is the case with our Legislative Building. We all know that it is one of the most impressive legislative buildings in Canada. And we also know that one of the privileges of serving the people of Saskatchewan is having a workplace of such grandeur.

But the workers of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) are also making this building a model of conservation and occupational health and safety, and I believe their efforts should be noted. For instance, a project is under way to remove all fluorescent lighting in the interior of the dome. When this is completed, maintenance will be safer and there will be a more even distribution of light. And, Mr. Speaker, there will be an energy savings of over \$1,300 a year. Also, the lights will be put on a timer to reduce the number of hours the lights are on and this will save over \$700. Overall, changes to the lighting in this building is resulting in savings of about \$4,700 a year. Perhaps these are small numbers, but they are only a part of what is happening just in this building.

The statement the member from Weyburn made yesterday would not have been possible if departments throughout government had not made similar decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Steve Bata and his staff in our building who are leading us by example in the ways of conservation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TRLabs

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the importance of advanced technology in today's societies is impossible to overstate. In *Partnership for Renewal* we identify information technology and telecommunications as one of the six strategic sectors that offer Saskatchewan a distinct advantage.

As well, a main concern of Saskatchewan people these days is that of jobs — jobs which will come as we build on the economic recovery in this province. This morning the Government of Saskatchewan recommitted itself to be an active part of the Canadian-Saskatchewan partnership in communications technology, to the TRLabs consortium. Working together, TRLabs and the University of Regina will link the university with the growing western Canadian network of laboratories and researchers in the telecommunications field. Ten jobs will be created initially, focusing on research staff and student employment.

Congratulations go out to TRLabs, the University of Regina, ISM (Information Systems Management Corporation) Saskatchewan, and others, for your hard work which has resulted in the welcome addition to the advanced technology community in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hemophiliacs' Compensation Deadline

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

my question this afternoon is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, there is a well-known line from *Julius Caesar* that warns: "Beware the ides of March." Two very important deadlines fall on March 15 and 16, deadlines that the provincial government opposite is treating with very inconsistent and self-serving motives.

Today, Saskatchewan hemophiliacs are faced with a decision whether or not to accept the government's compensation offer for receiving the AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) virus from tainted blood supply.

On this, the government opposite says that they are standing firm. When it comes to financial aid for those who need it most, there is no flexibility, no extension, says the Minister of Health.

Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is mandated by his own legislation to comply with the binding decision of a tribunal he set up to determine judges' salaries. Despite the requirements of his own . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Does the member have a question? Order. I want the member to put his question, please.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice is not too concerned, he says, about missing a 90-day legal deadline. Madam Minister of Health, would you be so nonchalant about your deadline as the Minister of Justice is about his? Would you consider allowing an extension of the requirement to the Saskatchewan hemophiliacs to sign away their right to further redress in the court?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite had been listening and watching the news over the last few weeks he would realize that if the government were to extend the deadline unilaterally in Saskatchewan, we run the risk of losing the compensation package because one of the preconditions by the third-party insurers was that there be a deadline. And I think if he understood that, he wouldn't be so urging for this to be extended. He also has to realize that 28 out of 29 of the victims have already signed up on the package.

Now I want to say that I know all members of this House and certainly our government has a great deal of compassion for people who find themselves in this situation, and our objective in negotiating a general package that can be given to everyone as opposed to making people go to legal action was because we were attempting to meet their needs immediately in a compassionate manner.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister. I am aware that there are 28 of 29 that have accepted the offer, Madam Minister, but they didn't

feel they had a choice — that's why.

There are still court cases to be heard, Madam Minister, and a royal commission is ongoing. It would seem that giving these people a financial package which was worked out and allowing the possibility for further redress in court might be the way to go, Madam Minister. By offering the package with a clause which prohibits further litigation is like giving them the option to throw a quarter you gave them into one of your slot machines you have installed around the province. Take the money or lose it and take your chances. Only the consequences are much more serious, Madam Minister, and they have precious little time to decide.

Madam Minister, why not give them the package that was offered now? And if further litigation determines that there is a need for further compensation, then provide it. If it is determined that none should be given in the first place, then arrange for a long-term payback plan. Madam Minister, have you considered that as an option?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the judgement that came down yesterday, obviously the government is going to want to take a very close look at that judgement. And that refers to people who are not included in this particular compassionate package because it refers to people who are indirectly infected from someone who was directly infected by tainted blood.

I do want to say this, however, to people in Canada who are considering whether or not to accept this package that, as was pointed out by the president of AIDS in Saskatoon, Mr. Frank Coburn, the compensation package that Saskatchewan helped to negotiate across this country provides people who have found themselves in this situation with roughly the same amount of money as was awarded in that particular case. And they don't have to go through the very long and arduous litigation that Mrs. Pittman had to and I think that's very important.

I also, Mr. Speaker — and this is an important point — I want to ask the member opposite, whether he has contacted the federal government that is responsible for monitoring and regulating the blood supply, to ask them whether they will extend their deadline.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Judges' Salaries Recommendation

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health, it appears, is standing firm on a deadline which seems arbitrary, unfair, and heartless. Yet the Minister of Justice appears to be unconcerned about tomorrow's deadline to comply with a binding decision of his own tribunal which determines judges' salaries. And we find that completely ironic, Mr. Speaker.

To be sure, Mr. Speaker, the official opposition believes that a \$20,000 raise at this time is not something the taxpayers would like to see and we certainly find that kind of remuneration to be far too excessive. Mr. Minister, this is a responsibility of your government. You set up the system, you put the lawyers in place who determine the salaries of people they must deal with in court — lawyers who may aspire to be judges someday.

Mr. Minister, when do you intend to comply with this ruling, and would you not admit that putting lawyers, or putting an all-lawyer committee in charge of determining judges salaries, to be less than wise?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, as the member will know, the process for naming the commission was set out in the Act. It involved the government naming a representative, the judges naming a representative, and those two working together in consultation with their principals, to agree upon a chair.

It happened, as it turned out, that they were all people with law degrees. Two of them are practising lawyers and the other hasn't practised for some years, the other being the city commissioner or the city manager from the city of Saskatoon, so he was not a member of the practising bar.

But in any event, the fact that they all turned out to be lawyers is purely coincidental. As to the government's position . . . my friends opposite are amused, but it was a coincidence because of course we had no control over the judges' nominee, nor did we have control over the occupation of the third person in the chair. Matter of fact that name was brought forward by the judges and we agreed to it.

As to the position of the government, we will be making an announcement probably tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that certainly the tribunal was made up of three judges, namely . . . or three lawyers, pardon me, namely Marty Irwin, Allisen Rothery from the Premier's former law firm, and Gerry Allbright — hardly independent, I would say, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, in whatever decision your government makes with respect to judges' salaries, and you've indicated that these were the terms laid out in the legislation, will you pledge, Mr. Minister, to amend your process such that those who determine salaries in the future will have no direct connections with the subject matter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say in answer to my friend's question is that we'll be

making an announcement with respect to the position of the government, most likely tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gaming and Law Enforcement

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for most of the gambling in this province.

Mr. Minister, I understand that you were to meet yesterday with the Saskatoon City Police to discuss the additional problems and additional costs that the Saskatoon police force will be forced to deal with as a result, a direct result, of your government opening a casino in that city.

Can you tell us today, Mr. Minister, the results of that meeting? What additional resources will you be providing to the Saskatoon City Police to help combat the additional crime problems that your new casino is going to create?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is correct. I did meet with a number of law enforcement officials yesterday. We met with the representatives from the city of Regina, from the city of Saskatoon, and from the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police).

I want to say to the member, it's part of the ongoing series of meetings that we've been having with law enforcement officials dealing with gaming and dealing with other issues.

Mr. Speaker, we had a presentation from these enforcement agencies. We think it's most helpful in terms of determining government policy and determining direction. We spoke, Mr. Speaker, of the existing gaming operations and we spoke as well of future enhancement of gaming in Saskatchewan.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I think that it was a very helpful meeting to both the officials from the Liquor and Gaming Authority, as it was to myself. With respect to funding, that will be dealt with in the same budgetary fashion that law enforcement is dealt with at the present time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From that, Mr. Minister, I assume that no commitment was made on your part.

Mr. Minister, the Saskatoon police have released a comprehensive report done by the Windsor police, which comes to the indisputable conclusion that crime and other demands on police have substantially increased in every North American city where a casino was established.

And when I raised this point with you the other day you said, well it hadn't opened yet. Well that's true. It's going to open up in April. But the important thing

to note is that as a result of this report, the Windsor police were able to negotiate the acquisition of 25 additional officers and all of the equipment associated with those officers.

And that's the difference, Mr. Minister. In Windsor they're dealing with the problem before it becomes a problem. And shouldn't you be doing the same, I ask you, Mr. Minister? Shouldn't some portion of your government's gambling revenues be going to address the increased crime problems that you are creating?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that he is right, there has been no casino opened in Windsor, as there have been no expanded casinos open in Saskatchewan.

We spoke with the law enforcement officials with respect to the consultations that we had done with other enforcement agencies in other provinces. We spoke of the logistics of enforcing a solid and a above-board gaming operation in expanded casino locations. They made us aware of some of the pitfalls that other enforcement agencies have seen with respect to gamblers who may choose to break the rules and we shared information as to how we may handle that.

I would want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in the course of putting together the casino proposals, it is quite clearly a responsibility of the operators of casinos to ensure that the regulations of casinos are followed, and I would assume that the regulations that are dealt with within the casino walls will be funded as part of their management costs. I think that's a reasonable position.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it's becoming increasingly obvious that you do not understand the gravity of the situation. Windsor was able to negotiate all of those in anticipation of a casino opening because they recognized the problems that they were to experience.

There will be increased demands on special investigations, victim services, the 911 centre, traffic branch. There will be increased demands for computer services, court services, prisoner handlings. Police will have to respond to more calls. The criminal investigations branch can expect an increase in vehicle thefts, break and enters, robberies, assaults, pickpocketing, extortion, credit card related offences, money laundering, drug trafficking, prostitution.

Mr. Minister, are you telling us that you've blindly gone so far as you have without doing more than just a superfluous study of the situation? What studies have you done to measure the increased demands that the Saskatoon and indeed the Regina city police forces are going to be experiencing as a result of your venture into gambling?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say to the member from Rosthern who stands up in his bright, new, shiny leadership suit that we have in fact done due diligence and as he has indicated, we met with the enforcement officials yesterday. And why does he think we met? Does he think this was a social call? Does he think the police chief from Saskatoon and Regina have nothing better to do and the head of the RCMP in Saskatchewan have nothing better to do than do a social call on the minister responsible for Liquor and Gaming?

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is part of the consultations and part of the preparedness that we are putting ourselves in to deal with any problems that may arise out of increased crime as a result of expansion of gaming. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have indicated we will do everything that we can, and I want to say that we will do due diligence, with respect to any ventures that we may embark upon, not only in gaming but in economic issues as well. Mr. Speaker, unlike the former administration who embark on spending hundreds of millions of dollars at Rafferty and Alameda, we will do due diligence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — I think it's a sad commentary, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, that that is the type of answer that you can come up with on a serious, serious issue that's going to have just tremendous implications upon the people of this province, Mr. Minister. And I don't think that you've really given serious consideration to the issues that I've raised.

Your government, your entire government, has just simply become engrossed with gambling fever. You've got dollar signs in your eyes as they glaze over with anticipation. You're trying to get as much of the gambling loot as you possibly can and you're not prepared to take care of the consequences of those types of actions.

Mr. Minister, I think we saw your true feelings on this matter yesterday when you said that the problem with horse-racing is that people are not wagering enough. You said we've got to get them to wager more, to come to the track more often. In other words, Mr. Minister, what is next? Are you going to promote liquor through your Liquor Board, so you're going to make more money on that aspect as well?

Mr. Minister, you're on the wrong course, and I want you to confirm that you indeed are encouraging people to wager more of their hard-earned money, and especially when you're unwilling to address the problems that are going to be associated with your political manoeuvring of the gambling situation in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if there was a question in there, but let me say this, that we will do much more with respect to due diligence than was done by the administration that he was part of. As he was part of the expansion to bingo gambling in this province from some \$4 million to \$104 million, they did nothing to regulate and control, and we're cleaning that mess up now, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the changes, in terms of amalgamation of the horse-racing, their administration did . . . I would have to admit, they worked hard on making some changes to horse-racing at the time they were government. The former member, one of his former colleagues, Mr. Harry Baker, is one of the people who know horse-racing better than anyone in this province, and I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the information that he brought to you from the racetrack was part and parcel of how you amended horse-racing when you were in charge of this province, when you were governing this province.

Mr. Speaker, we will be doing due diligence. We will be putting together a well-regulated industry. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, unlike the former administration, we'll be monitoring, regulating, and we'll be doing it in a proper fashion with controls.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Protection for Horse-Racing Industry

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the same minister. Mr. Minister, since I'm sure that you're going to bring it up, I did have the pleasure of owning a small share of a racehorse in one season of 1992. And I think I owned a part of its tail because my full investment was around \$150. Now he wasn't much of a horse, Mr. Minister, but the experience served to acquaint me with the people, the potential, and the problems of the horse-racing industry. And I saw the effort that was put forward by horsemen and racetrack operators to pursue sponsors to keep their industry alive.

Yesterday, you, Mr. Minister, announced the amalgamation of the Racing Commission with Liquor and Gaming. And you indicated that the racing industry would have to pursue corporate sponsorship as a means of survival.

Mr. Minister, the Rainbow of Roses, the Saskatchewan Derby, and dozens of stake races and daily features are generally sponsored by corporate sponsors, including Sask Lottery, including SaskTel, both corporations for which you are responsible. Is the minister unaware that both Saskatchewan racetracks have had full-time employees for years to market corporate sponsorships?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Quite clearly the member from Greystone is well aware of the racing industry, having not only been part of the proceeds of it but a part owner. And I would have to say to the member opposite that her

involvement doesn't surprise me, just because of duplicity and the way she's been handling her questions in here.

It seems to me and it seemed to me, Mr. Speaker, that there was good gambling and there was bad gambling. The VLTs (video lottery terminal) of course is on the side of bad gambling. The bingos, well not so bad but sometimes good, sometimes not so good.

She badgered in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, on an ongoing basis in estimates last year, she was telling us to go ahead; you've got to expand the video lottery terminal program. This year she tells us to stop.

I want to say to the member from Greystone that we are going to do whatever we can to protect the jobs in the horse-racing industry. Whether jobs or employees of hers or someone else's, we will protect those jobs in whatever way we can.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have been working with people involved in this industry over the past months. We put out a discussion paper, and based on those discussion papers we made the decision to amalgamate the Saskatchewan Horse Racing Commission with the Liquor and Gaming Authority. It will save some costs in terms of administration. We believe we'll be able to maintain a strong regulation of it, and that's what we . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, last year I was at the Rainbow of Roses Thoroughbred horse sale when you took the podium and encouraged people to open their wallets and bid on yearlings, because your government would support the industry and would not allow it to die. They responded to your commitment. In fact the average price per horse went up by almost 25 per cent.

Mr. Minister, yesterday you said that the way to keep racing viable was to get sponsors and to get people out to bet at the racetracks. Aside from setting up in competition next door to horse-racing with your expanded casinos, what are you prepared to do to keep the promise that you made that your government will not stand by and watch the horse-racing industry die in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Quite clearly, the member sees good gambling and she sees bad gambling. And I understand her initiative to protect the horse-racing industry. That's what we intend to do.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, who is she representing? Is she representing the industry or has she some other motives?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, there are a lot of

people working in the Standardbred and Thoroughbred and quarter horse racing and breeding industries, many of whom are aboriginal employees that you keep claiming you want to provide with jobs. The people who depend upon it — the grooms, the jockeys, the trainers, the employees of the racetracks, and *pari mutuel* operators — those are the people who simply want to know whether you're trying to put them out of work.

Mr. Minister, are you going to pull the plug on horse-racing? Or do you indeed have a commitment you promised at the annual Thoroughbred horse sale, the commitment that this government would not see horse-racing die in the province? And you can explain to us exactly what that commitment is today?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, maybe the member from Greystone can explain to us what she supports — public funds, or does she support private gain from horse-racing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, Queensbury Downs is located in the same building as the casino, and Marquis Downs in Saskatoon is across from the parking lot from the casino, neither of which has VLTs so far. Today on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), Larry Huber, racing secretary at Queensbury Downs, said that racing has suffered since VLTs have been operating in Saskatchewan, and they aren't even there yet.

Mr. Minister, how much of the \$75 million in VLT profits will your government be dedicating directly to the support of the horse-racing industry and the hundreds of peoples who rely on it for their employment as jockeys, as grooms, as trainers, as *pari-mutuel* staff and racetrack employees.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it becomes clearer and clearer, the member sees that there are good forms of gambling and that there are bad forms of gambling. There are some that interest her more than others. Quite clearly she's interested in horse-racing where she has vested interest, in my opinion, as she admitted here. Quite clearly she supports her campaign manager who was a bingo hall owner over a period of years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this administration supports gaming dollars that will go into the Consolidated Fund, that will go back into the forum of health care and of education, and I want to say we support jobs whether it be in horse-racing or whether it be in expanded casinos.

Mr. Speaker, we support the people of this province. We're going to ensure that the dollars from gaming stay in this province where they belong.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rabies Prevention

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to address this question to the Minister of Health, and I appreciate that the minister has been aware of the situation and look forward to her help and cooperation.

I raised with the minister the fact that there is a rabies concern in the Estevan area, and in particular, particularly a mother phoned me, Yvonne Mellom of River Park trailer court, and her daughter has been bitten by a rat. Other children in the area have experienced the same situation. And the Regina Health Board is sending serum down, as I understand, for rabies shots.

My question to the minister is, obviously, if she will do everything that she can with her resources to work with the city and with the rural municipal council not only in Estevan, but in neighbouring communities and perhaps in the south-east area as a result of, I think, and perhaps the water level rising and the particular problem with the rodents, and frankly the frightening situation for parents who are worried about their children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the hon. member for the question and for having given me an opportunity to contact the Department of Health to see what is possible.

The issue of pest control is a municipal responsibility. However, the public health office will be working very closely with municipal government to deal with this particular issue.

I will also be talking to the minister responsible for Municipal Government to see if we can't coordinate something at the government level. However it is primarily the responsibility at the city and town level.

But I appreciate the question. And the Department of Health has been instructed to look into it immediately and take whatever measures are necessary to help out. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to make a statement on a point of order that was raised yesterday. Yesterday the member for Rosthern raised a point of order concerning a response to a question posed to the Minister of Health during the question period of March 11. The member disputed whether the minister had actually taken notice of the question on that day. I have reviewed the verbatim record for March 11, and find that the minister did respond to a question put by the member for Kindersley by stating, and I quote: "Mr. Speaker, I will have someone look into the situation that the member opposite has raised . . ."

It is apparent that the minister did not expressly take notice of the question, whether or not it was her intention to do so. I remind the minister that a ruling of the Chair dated April 8, 1988 urged all ministers to clearly state to the House when they are taking notice of a question. To avoid confusion in the future, I ask all ministers to keep this in mind when it is indeed their intention to take notice of questions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Western Grain Transportation Agreement

Mr. Kluz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to deal with the motion before the Assembly which I will move at the conclusion of my remarks, which says:

That this Assembly call on the federal government to immediately cease following the agricultural policies of the previous government as evidenced in their budget which:

continues to erode the Western Grain Transportation Agreement to the tune of \$19.8 million in cut-backs this year alone, compounded by the previous administration's 10 per cent cut; and

does nothing to address their "red book" promises of some relief to farmers by way of interest-free cash advances,

together with other short-sighted farm policies by which the federal governments past and present have seriously harmed prairie agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue affecting farm families. And if you bring this issue into perspective, one has to go back to the federal election of '93 or the federal campaign where it was under everybody's impression, all the voters' impression at that time that the next Liberal government — it was obvious they were going to win by their support that the polls were saying — it was under everybody's impression that they would reinstate the previous funding to the Western Grain Transportation Agreement, and they would also reinstate interest-free cash advances.

There was also some candidates, Liberal candidates, at that time saying that they were going to have half of the cash advance available in the spring. Now none of that has happened, Mr. Speaker. And if you look in the so-called red book they used for their federal election, it clearly states in there that they were going to reduce input costs to make farming more viable. Mr. Speaker, this is how they got elected — they promised these things to farm families.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, I understand the federal

fiscal situation, and I also know that so did Chrétien before the election. He obviously should have known because he was the one that started deficit financing. He was the Finance minister when the Auditor General clearly said that federal spending is out of control and they have to get a handle on it.

With all these cuts, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has no plans to balance the budget. And this makes no sense in the scheme of things if you're not going to balance the budget. During the election they were running around saying, we're going to reduce the annual deficit to 3 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product). It sounds like good politics but none of the voters knew what it meant — 3 per cent of the GDP.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what does that mean? That means they're going to reduce the annual deficit to \$26 billion. They're making these cuts and they're not going to balance the budget. They're going to do the 3.7 per cent of GDP. So they're keeping the promise on not balancing the budget but they're not keeping their promise in the red book, namely the WGTA (Western Grain Transportation Agreement) and interest-free cash advances. They're hurting Saskatchewan farm families as well as all people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals of Chrétien and Goodale are continuing the direction of Mulroney and Mazankowski and Mayer. If you take the cuts to the WGTA and the cash advance, not reinstating interest-free cash advances, they're going on the same path that the federal Tories did.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, not so long ago in a press statement the former prime minister, Mr. Mulroney, said that he still feels like he's prime minister because the Liberals are doing the same thing he was doing.

If you take these cuts in the WGTA, Mr. Speaker, 10 per cent last year, or 40 million for Saskatchewan, another 5 per cent this year which is another 20 million for Saskatchewan, that's \$60 million out of the Saskatchewan economy. They're not saying nothing about next year because obviously it's going to be another 5 per cent cut next year if they don't change this.

(1415)

And if you take it into consideration, Mr. Speaker, on an average size farm where you seed a thousand acres of wheat in Saskatchewan, these cumulative cuts will have cost that farmer \$1,600. And if you add another 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, which will be over \$500 the following year, that's going to be \$2,100 for each farmer.

It's such an important issue. If you take the municipality where I once was reeve, where we grow a lot of grain, obviously export a lot of grain, it affects that municipality to the tune of \$260,000 per year.

This is a very important issue, Mr. Speaker. The official

opposition and the third party have been silent. They refuse to address this issue. And therefore on February 24 I stood in this Assembly during question period and asked that question to acceleration this issue, because obviously the third party and the official opposition weren't doing that. I think I know why. And, Mr. Speaker, when I asked that question, they weren't interested in farm families. All they did was heckle me while I was on my feet.

And getting back down into the third party, talk about the member from Shaunavon. I clearly remember when he was on our side of the House last year, when he was debating the budget speech, he was talking to the opposition members telling them they have to come clean where they sit on this WGTA funding. They have to come clean.

I clearly remember him saying, which side are you on? I clearly remember that. I ask the member: I know where you were; I don't know where you are now, but I'm hopeful you're still on the side of farm families. I'm hopeful it's on the side of farm families and not on the side of your Liberal cousins in Ottawa.

I want to offer you to enter this debate, Mr. Member, and tell the Assembly and tell the people just which side of the issue you're on. Stand in your place, hon. opposition and third party members, and support farm families. And you can urge the federal Liberals not to continue on the path of the previous government. They said they would not, if you read in the red book, they said that they were going to reduce input costs to farm families. They can change this, Mr. Speaker, if we have a united cause here.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is why, Mr. Speaker, these reasons — and there's many more and you will hear them from other members — but this is why I brought forward this motion, which is seconded by my colleague, the member from Shellbrook-Torch River, which reads:

That this Assembly call on the federal government to immediately cease following the agricultural policies of the previous government as evidenced in their budget which:

continues to erode the Western Grain Transportation Agreement to the tune of \$19.8 million in cut-backs this year alone, compounded by the previous administration's 10 per cent cut; and

does nothing to address their "red book" promises of some relief to farmers by way of interest-free cash advances,

together with other short-sighted farm policies by which the federal governments past and present have seriously harmed prairie agriculture.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, and I'm looking forward to having other members enter this important debate.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be seconding this motion brought up by the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

The member from Shaunavon and the member from Kindersley are kind of laughing about this Bill . . . or this motion, Mr. Speaker, but I want to tell you, they are part of the cause of the problems out in rural Saskatchewan.

I find it amazing that the federal government has decided to continue the cuts to the Crow benefit, Mr. Speaker. It simply bugs the imitation of that government. That government is definitely the cause of this Crow. And, Mr. Speaker, we live in a . . . Saskatchewan is in the middle of agriculture. And I'm telling you this is really not a laughing matter. I want to say that the farmers in my constituency are pretty upset with the 10 per cent cut last year, the 10 per cent cut this year to the Crow. It's going to mean a great lot of money lost by the farmers in my constituency.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the problems that lie in Paddockwood . . . they've got road . . . railroad being abandoned from Paddockwood to Henribourg last year. This year it's going to be from Paddockwood to White Star and also from P.A. (Prince Albert) to Shellbrook.

What will this mean, Mr. Speaker? This means higher costs for the farmers to truck their grain longer distance. Also this means a higher cost to the rural RMs, as they have to upgrade the railroads, also to the provincial government. I want to say that this will be a devastating cost to not only to the RMs and to the farmers, but also to the communities in rural Saskatchewan. Agriculture virtually has no profile in the federal budget this year, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — None whatsoever.

Mr. Langford: — That is, in this case the old adage of new . . . no business being good business just wouldn't fly. In this case, no business means bad business. The 10 per cent reduction announced by the former Mulroney government seems to have been made permanent by the Liberals.

But let's take one step back, Mr. Speaker. Not only is the federal government making a Tory policy permanent, they're taking it one step further, if you can believe that. A further 5 per cent reduction in the Crow also appears and it's supposed to be for this year if legislation can be amended before the crop year begins.

As I've already stated, Mr. Speaker, if the Liberal government insists on the gradual erosion of the Crow, this change, even more than the railway lines being abandoned or our elevators closing, will input onto Saskatchewan more than any other province.

It's time we made the federal government realize our province is our home and our home is our castle and our castle needs to be maintained, which means we make our living farming. What are they trying to . . . make our life difficult for us? Why are they trying to make our life difficult for us, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: — Cats are cats.

Mr. Langford: — Cats are cats. Right.

Why are their policies made in a vacuum? Agriculture is a living, breathing industry, an industry that has suffered through much these last few years. But it's beginning to turn around. For the sake of our farmers, Mr. Speaker, let us rebuild our industry. Don't keep throwing policy roadblocks in our way. We simply need to maintain rural Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that we've got to bring some sense to the debate and the motion brought forward by the member from Kelvington-Wadena. So, Mr. Speaker, after my remarks I'll make an amendment to the motion:

That the motion be amended by deleting everything after the words "That this Assembly" and substituting the following words therefor:

call on the provincial government to immediately take action to ensure a viable way of life for Saskatchewan farm families by (1) making changes to GRIP so that the surplus in the fund will reach those producers that need it for spring seeding; (2) take immediate action on crop insurance premiums to make them more affordable for farm families; and (3) show clear leadership in agricultural diversification by promoting the hog, beef, and grain industry.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess the members of the government made a few correct statements inasmuch as saying that the mess that was left by the federal Conservative government was somewhat shocking. I know that it was the federal Conservative government under Brian Mulroney that began the erosion of the WGTA with two 10 per cent cuts in the last couple of years.

And we all know that GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), well GATT seemed to go on for ever and ever, and they seemed to have worldly meetings — Geneva and Uruguay. But nothing ever came to an end, Mr. Speaker. No end in sight at all. And of course they were also going to do away with some cash advances.

However, when the present federal Minister of Agriculture, Ralph Goodale, took his position in government, immediately he took action on a few of these very important concerns. We now see GATT coming to some sort of a closure. There's some

promise on the future for farmers, for farming. He's taking action on the cash advances.

I know that in speaking with him, he will be . . . he's got some dialogue with farm groups to see how best to attack this problem where you're spending 50 to \$75 million a year on one subsidy, and is that best for the farmers. That's being looked at.

But you know, when I travel out in rural Saskatchewan, I'm not hearing the same concerns as the member from Kelvington-Wadena. You know what the farmers are telling me? They're telling me Ralph Goodale is doing a great job. In fact, when we look at the polls and all other water levels, he's doing a great job. Farmers are solidly behind the federal government's agriculture programs.

But you know what they do say? What those farmers are telling me is that they're in serious trouble for a few very clear reasons, Mr. Speaker. In fact what they say is they will never forgive the member from Rosetown and the Premier for trying to destroy a way of life in rural Saskatchewan that people have built up for years and years and years.

And I think back to a few of the problems that they brought forward to rural Saskatchewan farm families, that being, one, when they were going to gravel the highways. I know in my own constituency they wanted to gravel 90 miles of highway. They want to talk about changes to the grain transportation and they wanted to gravel all the highways out in rural Saskatchewan. Makes no sense. Makes no more sense than it does to close hospitals and close schools in rural Saskatchewan and destroy a way of life, and in fact put in a process that ensures these people can't rebuild what that government is going to destroy.

(1430)

You know, one other thing I hear farm families telling me in rural Saskatchewan is that they recall in the '91 election, in the '91 election when the Premier was on almost every stage in this province waving his finger saying, not one more farmer, Mr. Speaker. I recall at the time everybody felt, well this must mean not one more farmer is going to go into bankruptcy.

Well little did we know it meant not one more farmer is going to get help from this government. In fact what's happening is just the opposite. When he's saying not one more farmer, he already had plans in place to start taking legal action, had his Agriculture minister take legal action against farm families, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I look at some of their legislation that they've also brought forward, like the six-year leaseback program. On the surface it sounds good. What they've done is put in place legislation that puts rules and laws in place for banks and our credit unions — our credit union system, which is the reason why many farmers are surviving in rural Saskatchewan today. and yet their very own lending institution, ACS (Agriculture Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan),

gets to play under an entirely different set of rules, Mr. Speaker. They put in place avenues that allows ACS to begin foreclosure process on some of those farmers.

Why is the rules always different for the government than it is for the farm families in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

We look at some of the programs that they were cancelling, or cancelled early on in their administration. I recall when I sat on that side of the House and the discussion in caucus on FeedGAP (feed grain adjustment program). Now the member from Biggar is chirping from his seat. However, I recall the strong stand he took on FeedGAP, trying to stop that Minister of Agriculture, I guess the member from Rosetown at that time, from cancelling this program because of course it was really . . . it's an offset of the effects of the Crow benefit and it was bringing in something like — and I believe it was the member from Biggar that gave me these figures — four or five times more money to the province in economic development than what it was costing the government.

So of course with enough pressure from the caucus, from enough pressure from the general public, they pulled their horns in on that one and made the changes. They didn't go ahead with FeedGAP at the time.

But, you know, some of the more dramatic ones — and I think back to the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program — where there again they have the right in their mind to go about making and changing the rules for farmers and putting farm families at risk, putting some of these farmers and their families in a situation where that they've actually been foreclosed on because of the financial effects of what that government did to their farms.

You know, it's no wonder, it's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, why everyone — it doesn't matter if it's a co-op movement, if it's farm families — hundreds of people are now suing that government for what they've done to their lives. The unilateral changes from GRIP has just destroyed many livelihoods, and I don't think they have any right to sit there grinning about it.

What they could be doing, instead of trying to convince some of their members to be part of something and make them feel like a team, is perhaps to start taking action on what we've been calling for for some time — the \$320 million in the GRIP surplus.

I look at other provinces, Mr. Speaker. They don't have 300 or \$400 million GRIP surplus because they ensured that the design of their programs would get money out into the hands of farm families and not be sitting in a bank account somewhere that they would like to have people not know about so they could perhaps use it for other reasons.

We have farmers, farm families, going into the spring seeding. In my area, it's a month away; they'll be out

in the fields. And they have no plans — no plan, Mr. Speaker, to bring forward any programs to ensure that these farm families can put their crop in, Mr. Speaker.

What they've also done to crop insurance, they should be ashamed of themselves. They've taken premiums . . . the premiums have risen 20 per cent while at the same time 30 per cent of the farmers, Mr. Speaker, are dropping out of the program. Now that doesn't sound like a government that really does care about rural Saskatchewan and the farming way of life.

Mr. Speaker, I know the time is getting short. I can tell by the worry on your face. I will pass the motion now, Mr. Speaker:

That the motion be amended by deleting everything after the words "That this Assembly" and substituting the following words therefor:

call on the provincial government to immediately take action to ensure a viable way of life for Saskatchewan farm families by (1) making changes to GRIP so that the surplus in the fund will reach those producers that need it for spring seeding; (2) take immediate action on crop insurance premiums to make them more affordable for farm families; and (3) show clear leadership in agriculture diversification by promoting the hog, beef, and grain industry.

Seconded by the member from Greystone. I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Shaunavon has moved an amendment, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. I must remind the member that his amendment is out of order since the member from Saskatoon Greystone is not in her seat.

Order, order. Order. Does the member have another seconder?

Mr. McPherson: — Seconded by the member from Regina North West. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess two out of three isn't too bad.

I rather enjoyed myself over the last 25 minutes or so, or 35 minutes, listening to the various speakers as they tried to strut and perform in this Assembly here, each trying to outdo each other, Mr. Speaker.

The mover was making some points against a Liberal government at the federal level. And I couldn't help but take some of the notes that he was using out of the red book, so-called infamous red book during that election where the Liberals apparently had committed themselves to reinstate interest-free cash advance, which of course is — what is it now? — about two, two and a half per cent that people have to pay. They made that promise.

They also made the promise that they would reinstate the full amount paid to the Crow, on the Crow, and also that they would reduce input costs. And he said,

this is how they got elected; these were the promises that they made. And this is how they have let the people down.

And I guess that was a good point. But, Mr. Speaker, and fellow colleagues in this legislature, does it not remind us of another scenario, very, very similar, in October of 1991 when we had such dramatic promises as no new taxes for the next two years? And what happened, Mr. Speaker? And I don't want to take the time up of this Assembly now to go through the long litany of promises.

But, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line, the bottom line was that those folks across the way got elected on promises that they made, and the people believed them and now they formed government. And I find it just a little bit ironic, Mr. Speaker, that we find the member who made this motion get up in his seat and complain about the federal government being elected by promising certain things and now look what they are doing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we do find, I have to admit, that the federal level, the federal Liberals, are embracing certain fundamental core beliefs of the former Conservative government in Ottawa such as, for example, free trade. I'm not quite sure what their stand was in the '88 election on free trade; it was wavering back and forth, back and forth.

But now we have NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). And NAFTA was an issue during the federal election and how bad it was, this trade with Mexico, as my colleague, the House Leader, said that we will make this an issue; we will make this an issue and we'll send our MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) out; we'll fight it tooth and nail during the federal election.

Now what happens afterwards, Mr. Speaker? We find out that the federal Liberals are now embracing it and saying hey, maybe it's not such a bad deal after all; maybe it's got something going for it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have the situation of the WGTA. We had the dramatic cut, and I admit it, it was a dramatic cut that the Conservatives in Ottawa made before the federal election. And this was going to be restored. But what do we find now? What has the federal Liberal government done to it? It has increased it even more.

But, member from Shaunavon, don't get excited. I'm coming to the NDP (New Democratic Party) now, so we'll concentrate on them for a little while. Because the inconsistencies, Mr. Speaker, of members opposite who now have formed government based on promises that they made, betrayed those promises. And now what do we have? Not only have they betrayed those promises, but they have betrayed their own principles, the principles upon which the New Democratic Party was formed, upon which it was founded. And we have the scenario about Tommy Douglas being brought up all the time.

What about bonds? Do these people believe in bonds? Apparently they never did. How terrible — free enterprise, you can't have that. What are they doing, Mr. Speaker? They have now recognized what the former government instituted had a lot of merit, because they're promoting, they're selling; they're saying, people in Saskatchewan, invest in your own province. And I commend you for that — for waking up and recognizing that that is the proper format.

What about uranium, Mr. Speaker? We know their stand on uranium prior to the election. And what are they doing now, Mr. Speaker? — exactly the opposite.

And we could go on and on. Perhaps the one salient point I should mention is that prior to the election they said, oh those nasty Conservatives are going to close the five hospitals, in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg in the by-election. And we find that now, how many hospitals have you folks closed? Fifty-two hospitals. Where have you closed them? All in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what this motion talks about, is rural Saskatchewan. It talks about fundamentally Saskatchewan. Because as goes rural Saskatchewan, so goes all of Saskatchewan. Certainly particularly economically speaking.

And so when we look at the situation here, and I recognize the amendment that the member from Shaunavon made and it's a good amendment. I had an amendment of my own that was almost as good, but seeing that we've got an amendment on the Table I'll refrain from doing so. Because what we have to do is get you people to come to grips with the situation. That's what you have to do.

And I want to talk a little bit about that GRIP. I want to talk a little bit about your promotion that the Minister of Agriculture fondly calls *Agriculture 2000*. Now admittedly there will only be 2,000 farmers by the turn of the century, by the year 2000. That's perhaps the future as you see it.

And the direction and the speed at which you're going, that's exactly what will happen. Because let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, *Agriculture 2000*, as a policy for a government to say this is our policy, this is what we envisage for agriculture in the future, that is shallow, Mr. Speaker. It is hollow. Because it doesn't do anything.

I have yet to talk to one farmer, quite specifically, that even knows that there is such a policy as *Agriculture 2000*. And when I try to explain it to them they say, well what does it do for me? Where does that leave me? You know what their policy is, Mr. Speaker? They've gone around with one of their happy little committees, their advisory committee. And their advisory committee has come forth with suggestions as to what to do to save the agricultural economy of Saskatchewan.

And you know what the Minister of Agriculture tells us? The Minister of Agriculture of Saskatchewan says

that that advisory recommendation is going to form the basis for further discussion. We don't need further discussion. We need action. And we need it now. To sit down with the Minister of Agriculture and these recommendations to come up with something for the future bodes ill indeed, Mr. Speaker, on this day of the ides of March. And we heard a member before refer to the ides of March. And we know what happened to Julius Caesar. *Et tu, Brute.*

And that is what the people of the province are saying to you folks now, because you have betrayed us. You have betrayed us because we expected more, we expected better. Simply because those were the promises that you were making. And I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province are asking too much for this government to stand up to those promises that they made.

But what have they got done now? We find that example and it talks about GRIP. Let's talk a little bit more about GRIP.

You folks have got now about \$200 million and next year it will be three — \$200 million in your treasury, in the Consolidated Fund. And you know where that money comes from, Mr. Speaker? It comes from the pockets of the farmers, the premiums that the farmers are paying.

(1445)

Well how come you had a surplus of \$200 million? I've asked the Minister of Agriculture this question. Why is it in the Consolidated Fund? It comes out of the pockets of the farmers. Why isn't it being paid out? Because you changed GRIP. You unilaterally changed GRIP so the farmers would not be able to benefit.

Alberta doesn't have that problem of \$200 million surplus. Manitoba doesn't have that. Because their original GRIP is still there. Ours is not.

And so, Mr. Speaker, because of high premiums, low pay-outs, the farmers that I'm meeting . . . And I had to miss this meeting in Saskatoon yesterday, and I compliment the Minister of Agriculture for holding a series of meetings around this province dealing with this issue of crop insurance. But I talked to some people and I phoned some people up that were at this meeting in Saskatoon and that encompassed a large area. There were many people out there. I suspect between 3 and 400 farmers, who came up and said, what have you got for us? What can we look forward to? What hope can you give us? Can we put our seed into the ground?

We're not going to get a pay-out. That's already been announced and usually the premiums are being deducted from the pay-out so that the farmers can pay their premiums. That's not going to be the case.

The end result, I am told, Mr. Speaker, is that when the meeting concluded there were only half the number of farmers there that were there at the beginning of the meeting, that simply left. There was nothing in it for

them. There was no hope. There was no direction. Exactly and precisely, Mr. Speaker, as I've told you about the entire agriculture . . .

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

Mr. Whitmore: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to enter into the discussion on the issue that we're talking about today under rule 16 and the whole area of grain transportation.

But I think the members opposite, particularly the official opposition and third party, need a history lesson on grain transportation. Do you want to know who — I ask the question — do you know who initiated the changes of deregulation in the grain handling system? Otto Lang, the minister of Transport, also minister of state of the Canadian Wheat Board in the mid-70s.

Do we all remember the phrase, user pay? That was the initiation of what we saw in terms of the user pay and the change of deregulation to the Grain Transportation Authority.

Do you know who the executive assistant of the federal minister of Transport was at that time? Ralph Goodale, now the federal Minister of Agriculture.

As we went through into the '70s and '80s . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Wilkie says, what's the point? Well I have to say the Conservative Party and the previous Conservative government took credit for the deregulation of the grain handling system. I wish to correct him, that they cannot take the full credit, because the former Liberal administration before that put the wheels in motion.

If one remembers in terms of the payment and the arguments that took place in terms of changing the grain handling system and deregulating it, that in the '81-82, the minister of Transport at the time — who it was? Jean-Luc Pepin, the Liberal minister of Transportation — made the changes and created the Western Grain Transportation Act. He was the first one to put the nail in the coffin and create the deregulation of the grain handling system and the massive changes that we're seeing now in the grain handling industry.

Jean-Luc Pepin at that time brought forward in that legislation the concept of paying the producer. Do you know what the people of Saskatchewan said to that concept? No. A petition of approximately 125,000 people from all walks of life in the province of Saskatchewan was signed and delivered to that minister. And that minister was handed that piece of paper and then decided not to do it.

But at that time, when the delegation went to Ottawa to present this petition of farmers and political leaders, different provincial parties at that time brought forward also representation. Do you know who the leader of the Liberal Party was at that time? The federal Minister of Agriculture, Ralph Goodale.

And do you know what Ralph Goodale said at that meeting? Do you know what he said to Jean-Luc Pepin? He says, I support the people of Saskatchewan; pay the railways, don't pay the producer. He said that to a crowd, to the national press. Pay the railways.

An Hon. Member: — Where does the member from Shaunavon stand?

Mr. Whitmore: — Where does the member from Shaunavon stand? So I say to you what takes place. In terms of the final one who put the nail in the coffin in terms of the legislation and guiding it through the House of Commons — do you know who that was? It was then the minister of Transportation, Lloyd Axworthy.

So as you see, fellow members, and Mr. Speaker, that the change was initiated under a Liberal regime. Well I have to say that the next regime under the Conservatives accelerated the speed by which change was taking place. And I think it would be safe to say had they won the election, we would have saw rapid change in the grain handling system.

But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of trying to determine now where the former leader of the provincial Liberal Party, now the Minister of Agriculture, stated that he supported pay the railways. We have somewhat of a more confused message from the now Leader of the Third Party. And I wish to quote from *Hansard*, March 3, 1993, when we spoke about this very issue.

An Hon. Member: — What did she say?

Mr. Whitmore: — I will tell you. In another news article, this one in *The Western Producer*, dated September 19, 1991: Liberal leader said election is more about agriculture. But what does the Liberal leader say about grain handling and transportation? The Crow benefit should be paid directly to farmers rather than railways. The Liberals generally favour less regulation to the industry.

An Hon. Member: — Who said that?

Mr. Whitmore: — Who said that? Yes. Who said that? The member from Shaunavon, the member from Shaunavon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a grid road map of the province of Saskatchewan. When one talks about deregulation, one in villages in terms of a railway system which consists possibly of two or three railways going across the province of Saskatchewan . . . I see the members opposite are rather amused.

I have a map that talks about different areas of the province. And I wish to ask the hon. members from certain ridings, the member from Kindersley and the member from Shaunavon, what they will do when deregulation comes in the grain handling system; when Shaunavon elevator is closed and they have to haul to the main line; when Eston is closed and they have to haul to the main line; when Plato is closed and they have to haul to the main line. You tell me what

solutions they offer in terms of what happens to deregulation in the change of the grain handling system.

I know studies done by the Senior Transportation Authority that talks about changes in deregulation of the grain handling system, where for my member from Meadow Lake, the cost of hauling grain, the difference between if we see a change between Meadow Lake and Saskatoon is \$60 a tonne. It does not become worthwhile to grow any grain in that area of the province of Saskatchewan.

I say to you that does not recognize the potential of this province. It does not recognize and it penalizes this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of being land-locked in this country. The grain transportation subsidy is devised to create equality out there.

And I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we change the system to that of a pay-the-producer system that's being advocated by the previous regime — and I firmly believe that the Liberal regime is following the same tack — that we will see an undue penalization of the producers of Saskatchewan. Not just in grain, but also in livestock. Because I wish to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the province of Alberta is hovering over that method of payment; they are strongly taking the position they will get their lion's share.

Studies have proven, in terms of the slippage that will take place, that this province could lose from 100 to \$400 million in terms of a change of method of payment, Mr. Speaker. I say shame. That is not the right thing for the producers of Saskatchewan.

And when this Liberal regime takes out \$90 million right now from the producers of Saskatchewan, again I say shame, Mr. Speaker. This is not the direction we want to take in terms of a federal government. We must see some reason, we must see some understanding of the producers of Saskatchewan, we must have this kind of compassion deal with this. We do not want a deregulated system in the grain-handling system.

I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you travel to North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana and saw what Ronald Reagan's deregulation did to the grain transportation system there, saw the changes that took place, those are the same things that are going on here.

An Hon. Member: — . . . 30 years ago.

Mr. Whitmore: — The member from Kindersley says, 30 years ago. No, if he checks history, Ronald Reagan passed legislation in 1980 to deregulate the transportation industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I await to see how these people will deal with the devastation in rural Saskatchewan. I wait to see what answers they will provide. I ask again, what will they do when these elevators close? What will they do when the branch lines are tore up? What

will they do? What will they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be very pleased to support rule 16, the motion brought forward by the member from Kelvington-Wadena, but I will oppose the amendment for the very reasons that I have spoke. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I would like to make a few comments on rule 16. I first think I'll make a few comments about what I thought was happening in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we've made every effort in this House to cooperate in the spirit of the new age of politics. What we think we're hearing from the people out in the . . . now we have tried to give credit to the government where it's due and we have moved question period away from a purely partisan exercise to one where the public can get involved. We have tried to find ways to eliminate patronage without diminishing the government's ability to govern effectively.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're listening to the people. The people that we're listening to are not just PCs (Progressive Conservative), they're from all parties. We are listening to people from both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, and they're telling us they want change.

However it appears that the government is stuck in the '70s where the only tactic they can think of is to paint yourself white and declare everything else black. We go to the story of the black and white mice and we dig up some . . .

An Hon. Member: — Black and white cats.

Mr. Britton: — Cats. Well black and white cats, we do that every time. We dig up poor old Tommy Douglas and rattle him around a while, trying to stay in the past where they felt secure, where they feel comfortable and secure, way back in the past.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. mover is trying to rewrite history. And they are proposing to attack and turn their backs on the agriculture policies of the previous federal government, meaning the PCs. Well, Mr. Speaker, does that mean that we turn our backs on over \$15 billion, \$15 billion that the agricultural society received in assistance from the previous federal government?

The hon. mover suggested that that was part of the problem. I can't understand that; \$15 billion in assistance is part of a problem because of the Crow? Come on, I can't see the logic there.

Mr. Speaker, this has been more assistance to the western farmer than any government before. Mr. Speaker, he's asking us to turn our backs on years of drought, assistance for drought. Generous spending on the fuel rebate program. Numerous farm

diversification programs. Mr. Speaker, as late as August of 1993, 25 million to help farmers develop farm income. Turn you backs on that? That's what you want them to do?

Well I would say to yourself, ask yourself the question — ask yourself the question. How many farmers would be gone off the farm today if they hadn't had that assistance from the previous administration? The previous government persistently combined consultation, ingenuity, hard work, for stable, workable conditions for the farm economy.

They came up with solutions to problems in Canadian agriculture. The GRIP and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs for instance, that somehow mysteriously work in Alberta and Manitoba, but for some reason won't work in Saskatchewan where 45 per cent of the farmers are . . . farm acreages are. Why would it work that way?

This government is quite willing to put \$300 million in their pocket out of the GRIP program that should have went to the farmers. And they gleefully tell you how much more Alberta has in a debt and Manitoba has in a debt in the GRIP program, while they stuff 300 million in their pocket.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if that's what you want to turn your back on. We have to wonder, we have wonder here, as in the GRIP debate that took place, we wonder if the opinion of the members opposite had more to do with old style politics than they do with responsible government. The socialistic policy, socialist policy: more, more, give me more, give me more, but don't make me pay for it; make some rich, mysterious rich person pay for it.

The trouble with us in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we don't have enough rich people. Because this government in the years gone by when there was some money in this province wasted it — during the 1970s. They talk about our waste and mismanagement. Ten years of the best income this province ever had — down the tube.

An Hon. Member: — Down the potash holes.

Mr. Britton: — Down the potash holes, as one of my colleagues says.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the problems of Canadian agriculture went through the '80s, continue through today, and cannot be solved by just throwing money at them.

Unfair foreign trade practices are the biggest detriment to our foreign policy. And who put that on the GATT platform? Who put that before the GATT? It was a Conservative, Mr. Speaker.

The mover talks about the cuts to the western grain transportation system. Well let's look at that a little bit. Under that program, the government — this government that they say should not be followed — took it from zero to over \$2 billion in the space of six

years. And I would ask which federal government are they talking about? Which one do they want us to model after — Mr. Trudeau, who called farmers cry babies; or our current Prime Minister who clings to that era of the old Canadian politics, Mr. Speaker?

Producers were asked by the previous federal government what changes they wanted to Crow. Changes, Mr. Speaker, are necessary, not because of wheat or oats or barley; but all producers don't grow grain. Not all farmers are grain farmers and, Mr. Speaker, GATT may rule in the end that it's an unfair subsidy. So what did the federal government do? They said, you must prepare for changes. The previous administration created a panel — it was called the producer payment panel — to consider options and alternatives to the Crow.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the producers were alerted to further cut-backs if the method of payment was not modified. And to date there's been no resolution. The farmers, producers — and I have all respect for them — have not decided how they want the payment to be made. So when the member, the mover, gets up and starts bellyaching about the cuts, when he knew very well they were going to be there . . . well I don't think that was unparliamentary. I thought you were a little nervous there, Mr. Speaker, but that's what he did; he's bellyaching about the cuts that he knew were coming. If he didn't know, then why would he get up and make a motion like this, if he didn't know what he was talking about. Now whether that was a fair thing for them to do, is for somebody else to talk about.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the current government may be as responsible and consultative as the last in its agriculture policies. No one can deny that; no one can deny it would be a significant improvement over the agriculture policies of the '70s. Well the mover is looking for real examples of short-sighted policies which has seriously harmed agriculture. He has to look no further than his own backyard or maybe closer to his front benches.

Who hurt, who hurt the agriculture in Saskatchewan more than that triumvirate sitting right over there? Who hurt them the most, Mr. Speaker? Well they knocked the farmers out of contention in the GRIP; they have no right to reap recourse in the courts. Who done that? Was that the federal PCs, or was that the Saskatchewan NDP? Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the farmers know who hurt them the worst, whether it was the federal PCs or the Saskatchewan DPs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look. Saskatchewan farmers' transportation infrastructure is under attack by the Department of Highways decision to reduce maintenance on roads while the assistance available to them has been reduced by — I'll tell you why — the cancellation of the feed grain adjustment program, the red meat production equalization program, all cash advance programs, and most especially by the cancellation of GRIP.

Their costs have gone up, breeders' fees have gone up,

pasture rental fees have gone up, fuel rebate has been capped, municipal revenue sharing has been reduced, causing their taxes to go up. The Crown lease surface rights have been eliminated . . .

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

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to enter this debate today and I want to point out a number of things that I think have been omitted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the discussions that have gone on earlier.

I believe that this province and people in this province have talked about who pays the Crow rate. They've talked about what their volume of dollars should be to the province of Saskatchewan. They've also, Mr. Speaker, gone on record and said in many instances that we should talk about how it gets paid. How it gets paid, Mr. Speaker, is very significant in this discussion.

However, Mr. Speaker, what we are having when we talk about how it's being paid, we are having an erosion of the transportation subsidy paid to western Canada. It, Mr. Speaker, should be called an entitlement to western Canada. But what we have in the province of Saskatchewan and Manitoba today is we're talking about how it's being paid and how it should be or could be paid, when in fact, Mr. Speaker, and members of this Assembly, we should be talking what is being paid and how much is being paid and whether we have an entitlement in this province to the amount of monies that have been set aside in perpetuity to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — That's what we should be talking about in this province and not how it's being paid. Because for 50 years, Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about how it should be paid and whether we're going to have at the conclusion of the debate no money at all being paid to western Canada. And that's where the problem exists. And as I have outlined earlier and in past discussions on the Crow and the Crow rate benefit to the people of this province, it's not how it should be paid is what we should be talking about, it's what should be paid. And that, Mr. Speaker, is as important as this issue is.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta and the people of Manitoba have traditionally said that they want some changes. And as we go through the process of time, the people in Saskatchewan are also saying we need changes. But what we have consistently not said to the people in Ottawa, whether it is a Liberal or a Conservative government, is that the fact needs to be addressed in a firm and concise and precise way that what we get paid has to be established and then we can legitimately talk about how.

But, Mr. Speaker, today is not the time to talk about how it's paid; the time today, Mr. Speaker, is to talk

about what is being paid. And as we talk about how — and what the people opposite have always talked about is how — what we have had is an erosion of the amount of money that is paid into western Canada for transportation. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what we should be dealing with today. Nineteen million dollars is the cost.

Mr. Speaker, in one program alone, in changes to the fuel tax to rural Saskatchewan, those members opposite cut \$26 million out of rural Saskatchewan. Did they blink an eye? No, Mr. Speaker. Today they talk about \$19 million coming from the federal government as being a huge amount of money.

And, Mr. Speaker, what they neglected to consider is that they have undermined agriculture far more than any federal government ever has. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fact. Talk about GRIP in the same context, Mr. Speaker. What did they do? They undercut rural Saskatchewan to the tune of not even letting them go to court to defend their opportunities that they had in relation to monies being paid out.

And what do we have today, Mr. Speaker? We have them talking about \$19 million when in their kitty, in GRIP, in revenue insurance they got 200 million or is it 300 million? Or is it 350 million? Will they tell us? No, Mr. Speaker, they will not.

And that is the reason why we should . . . what we should be talking about and not this insignificant amount of money when it comes to what these people have already pilfered out of the people of the province of Saskatchewan in rural Saskatchewan. That is the issue that we should be dealing with, Mr. Speaker, and how to re-establish the opportunities that haven't existed for a long, long time in this province on how to benefit those people who can't defend themselves in rural Saskatchewan.

Have these people here done that? No, Mr. Speaker, they have not. They have not. They have consistently undercut rural Saskatchewan. They defend in this motion, they defend the \$19 million that comes from the payment of the transportation agency. And in one, in one fell swoop in the taxation on gasoline, they cut out \$26 million out of rural Saskatchewan.

I could add hospitals. I could add user fees. Mr. Speaker, over and over again these people have cut out the feet from under rural Saskatchewan and delivered it without a doubt — without a doubt — without even a conscious word about how it's being done. And they say \$19.8 million is being cut out of transportation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as they're piling up their revenue insurance, Mr. Speaker, they have suggested to this Assembly that that money will flow back to the people who provided it. And that, Mr. Speaker, will give back to the federal government a hundred million dollars that is in their treasury. And will they blink an eye? No, Mr. Speaker, they will not.

And they come into this Assembly and have the nerve

to talk about \$19 million? I think they should be ashamed of themselves. They will take and put in their own provincial treasury a hundred million dollars in revenue insurance. It will go into the Consolidated Fund. They'll give a hundred million back to the farmers, and the federal government will be paid their hundred million dollars. That's what they're going to do with the revenue insurance.

And then they have the audacity to talk about \$19.8 million in a resolution about grain transportation. It's sick, Mr. Speaker — it's sick.

They talk about defending rural Saskatchewan. They are so far back they think they're first. They're so far back in agriculture, they don't understand the beginnings of agriculture.

And the member from Rosthern talked about the program *Agriculture 2000*. Well, Mr. Speaker, they don't understand even that part of it in dealing with agriculture in this province. They don't understand it well enough to deliver a proper program to the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, what I hear on the street over and over again, just let this government get out of my way so I can move forward and do my own thing, because I can make a living in this province. I can grow grains and oilseeds in this province, and I can make money doing it. And I will be a taxpayer in this province, and I will hold my head up high when I'm doing it. And that is even the toughest part of agriculture.

In the good parts, Mr. Speaker, in the parts where the livestock industry are doing their thing, Mr. Speaker, they're paying tax and they're proud of it. But what do these people do every time you turn around? They tax you more. They tax you in fees in every way, shape, or form. There isn't a thing that moves out in the country . . . and next they'll be taxing the gophers on our property as well. That is what they're doing — taxing everything in existence.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is where the problem of this administration has focused. They have talked for so long about how the Crow gets paid that they've lost sight of anything else productive in agriculture. It's time to talk about what gets paid, as I've stated earlier, and that's where you need to start. And members of this Assembly I believe need to do that. We need to do that with our farm organizations, Mr. Speaker. These people over here need to start doing that with the Sask Wheat Pool. They need to start being fair and open and honest.

Mr. Speaker, this Crow payment to western Canada is an entitlement — it's an entitlement for western Canadian producers. And that, Mr. Speaker, has not been addressed by those people opposite. That's what we should have been talking about today in this discussion — the entitlement to western Canada of \$720 million. That's what we should have been talking about.

(1515)

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Under rule 16, the 65 minutes of time has elapsed. And according to our new rules, the 65 minutes of debate shall be followed by a maximum of 10-minute question-and-answer period. And we will do that at this particular time.

I will say to the members that I will conduct this question-and-answer period in a similar manner as I do our regular oral question period, so that one member or two members do not dominate the 10-minute period. So keep your questions short, and also keep your answers to the question that is directed to the member.

I will now recognize members for questions, if there are any questions.

Mr. Kluz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the member from Shaunavon, who talked about and amended the original motion, and he talked about GRIP. The question is, Mr. Speaker, if you're such a . . . member from Shaunavon, if you're such a strong advocate of GRIP, why are you silent on the federal government cancelling GRIP? And if you and Ralph are so close, why didn't you bring up and ask him to introduce your new GRIP that you were working on when you were on our side of the House?

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously they didn't have time to write his question, as they did his speech.

Mr. Speaker, what became obvious at a recent meeting at Winnipeg where they had the Agriculture ministers from each of the provinces and the federal Agriculture minister and they did have discussions on GRIP, and what was obvious at that meeting was that Saskatchewan was the only province that did not want to support a GRIP program. All other provinces wanted to retain a GRIP program, which begs the question, why didn't that government . . . why didn't the province of Saskatchewan come up with a GRIP program? They've had two, two and a half years to come up with a program as an alternative to GRIP; instead they come up with some shiny, glossy booklets and it just doesn't do anything for the farm families of Saskatchewan. Start to address what really means something out there.

Mr. Kluz: — Supplement to the question, Mr. Speaker; obviously the member didn't ask a question. Did the member from Shaunavon talk with the federal Minister of Agriculture and introduce his new GRIP proposal that he advocated when he was on our side of the House?

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When he is referring to the program that I did design, what he should be making quite clear is the full support I had from the rural caucus when I did that, including the member from Kelvington-Wadena. If he's at this point saying he didn't support it, he had better go back to his farmers up in his area and explain to them why he mailed out so many copies to them.

Mr. Kluz: — Just to clarify that, Mr. Speaker, I never mailed out any such copies. I don't know where he'd get that intelligence from. But obviously since that member isn't going to ask and it's maybe worthless to continue, I have a question for the member from Morse. I'm wondering why he chose to speak the clock instead of voting off the amendment and voting on this motion.

The Speaker: — Order, order. That question simply will not be allowed. The questions are to be asked on the content and not on the process.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Shellbrook-Torch River. Mr. Member, would you support a pay-out to farmers of the surplus in the GRIP program?

Mr. Langford: — I don't know if I heard the member right, but I want to say that definitely I was not in support of the old GRIP program. Definitely, as you know, that our Agriculture minister has implemented a program called the Ag 2000, which I really support.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'd like to ask a question to the same member. The question was: would you agree to paying back the 300 million because you did not support GRIP? Now I understand you didn't support GRIP; that's fair ball. But now there's about \$300 million surplus. Would you now agree that that money should be paid back, simply because you didn't like the program in the first place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — Thank you. This is . . . the member from Wilkie just probably doesn't understand pay-back of this money, where it comes from. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that that money right now we're talking about is in the middle of the year. We don't know what the year-end pay-out, whether there will be . . . the price of grain will drop or the price of grain will rise. We'll know at that time whether . . . what the money surplus will be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Shaunavon. In regards to the statement made by the member of Shaunavon on March 3, 1993 that was mentioned here today, which referred to the Liberal leader's position that the Crow benefit should be paid directly to the farmers rather than to the railways, what I want to know is what the member of Shaunavon's position is today, what is the Saskatchewan Liberal position. And tell the people of Saskatchewan what your stand is. It's very simple. Should the Crow be paid to the railways or to the farmers?

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased that the member from Bengough-Milestone did ask the question about what our position is as of paying out monies that the governments have to farms

and farm programs. And we fully support getting the money in the hands of the farmers that need it for their spring seeding.

And this would be a good one for that member to ask her own Agriculture minister, and Premier, why don't they support getting the \$320 million out into the hands of farmers for farm seeding? Or perhaps dealing with the \$600 million of crop insurance debt which is the reason why the farmers in south-west Saskatchewan are so negatively hit with premiums in the crop insurance program. If they really want to address something, they're in power, why don't they start to address some of those issues?

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the member from Kelvington-Wadena how he and his caucus handle the deputy minister of Agriculture whose position on the Crow has been, throughout the province, as pay the producer. And I'd like to know from the member from Kelvington-Wadena how he rationalizes that out in his caucus and through his minister.

Mr. Kluz: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for that question. My original motion, and what I talked on, was the red book where the federal Liberals said, we're going to reduce input costs to make farming more viable.

And more importantly on the method of payment, which the member knows, when you take \$60 million out and a potential of 20 million out next year for Saskatchewan, it ends up \$1,600 per producer. The more important answer here is the total cost, what it's costing the grain producer, and has nothing to do with the method of payment. The Saskatchewan share is disappearing and none of the hon. members will agree to voting on a motion where we could send the federal government a message.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — I'd like to know from the member from Biggar if he would be in favour of paying back the 300 million-plus that is already in the revenue insurance program; whether he would be in favour of paying that back to producers, and the federal government's share and the provincial government's share as well.

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it's rather early and premature to be talking about what we're going to be doing with premiums when we haven't gone through a crop year yet. I think we have to measure and see what possible problems could arise. We're not as sure yet, in terms of what the price of grain is going to do. It is rather unstable right now.

We have seen our customers, in terms of Russia, not buying grain. So it is rather an unstable year. So we've seen some declines in terms of the price outlook for these crops drop in recent statements in terms of the gross revenue insurance program. So I think we have to be careful of that in terms of making any statements,

or premature to be assessing any . . . (inaudible) . . . in the program at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member from Kelvington-Wadena the same question: would he be prepared to pay back to the people of Saskatchewan the premiums that have been collected on behalf of the farmers and on behalf of the farmers that the provincial government has paid into the revenue insurance and on behalf of the farmers the federal government has paid in the premium? Would he be willing to allow the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan to get that money so that they can have an opportunity to put their seed in the ground? Would he answer that question?

Mr. Kluz: — Mr. Speaker, obviously we're in the middle of the crop year. We don't know if there's going to be a surplus. And the member opposite knows full well that the money from the federal premiums, the program that they set up, is targeted for a new program.

Sure I'm in favour of paying back that federal money, but how can we when the original program they set up doesn't allow us to do that? And we have, at least we're going to have, a surplus in the program, hopefully, not like Alberta whose premiums went up 46 per cent, there's a deficit, and the producers have to pay it back.

I'd rather have a surplus in that program with a good chance of being able to pay that back to the farmers. And I think . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I want to thank members for abiding by the rules that they themselves have set down. And I think it was a fairly orderly question and answer period, although some might not have liked the answers that were given.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Resolution No. 33 — Convening of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the matter that we bring before this Assembly is very important. And it's important that this matter be brought before this Assembly today.

In his letter dated February 15, 1993 the member from Yorkton crossed lines that MLAs must follow. The member from Yorkton has violated two items listed under not acceptable uses for MLA communication dollars under section 50(3)(f). The first states material of a blatantly partisan nature, Mr. Speaker, and the member's letter is clearly partisan.

The letter begins, Mr. Speaker, with the greeting: "Dear New Democrats." It contains such remarks as, and I quote:

... I try to remind people that Saskatchewan was a great place to live and is again because the "*Tories are gone*".

It goes on to speak of 10 years of Tories filling their pockets, Mr. Speaker, and other blatantly obvious partisan remarks. For anyone to say that this letter is not partisan, Mr. Speaker, would be completely off base.

The second item under not acceptable, Mr. Speaker, states:

... material which solicits donations to a political party or attendance at political functions.

Within the same envelope members from the Yorkton constituency received the NDP (New Democratic Party) membership update including 400 club ticket sales to eliminate the constituency's \$4,000 debt, invitations to the NDP curling funspiel, the executive's spring barbecue and appeals for support of the NDP membership and donation drive.

(1530)

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this is in full violation of asking for political donations and attendance at political functions. Further, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this is common practice since the constituency update starts out by saying:

Here we are again, stuffed in with our M.L.A.'s letter, saving money and getting some constituency information to you!

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a serious matter. This misuse of communications dollars must be dealt with immediately in order to ensure that the public is fully informed of this matter and that the integrity of elected officials can be restored.

These sorts of allegations have been taken very seriously today and I don't see any reason why the member from Yorkton's situation is any different. Accusations of breach in other circumstances have been treated in a very different manner. For the sake of fairness and equitable treatment of all members, Mr. Speaker, this matter needs to be addressed immediately and objectively.

All members in this Assembly have experienced at one time or another cynicism from the public. Saskatchewan people should be fully informed about the use of their tax dollars not because they demand it, but because they deserve it, because it is their right.

Mr. Speaker, they deserve to be fully informed with the details of this situation as they have when other similar circumstances have come about. It is imperative that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections determine exactly what has happened in this situation and that appropriate measures be taken.

Mr. Speaker, we all need to know how many times this has taken place, how many times the member has included partisan material and schedules of NDP Party functions and political donation drives, and how much money is involved. We need to find out how much money has gone toward this exercise not because it is an exorbitant amount, Mr. Speaker, but because principles have been violated and we need to ensure this does not happen again.

Mr. Speaker, we need to restore faith in elected officials in general and faith in members of this Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, the member for Yorkton could take the first step toward this initiative by offering an apology to the public of Saskatchewan and to the members of this Assembly.

I therefore move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member from Thunder Creek:

That there be an immediate public convening of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, and that the committee consider, but not limit itself to determining the following: (1) the amount of money expended on postage, letterhead and sundry expenses involving the February 15, 1993 letter to New Democrats from the member from Yorkton; (2) immediate restitution of the above expenses from the member personally or the NDP constituency association; and (3) immediate and unequivocal apology from the member to the public of Saskatchewan and the Legislative Assembly.

I so move.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, the issue that my colleague from Yorkton brings to the Assembly this afternoon is not one that any of us here should take lightly. I think any time a question arises about integrity or the character of any colleague in this Legislative Assembly, we all share in the consequences, no matter what our political affiliation is.

And as such, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it absolutely clear this afternoon that I don't believe anyone in the discussion today should be here trying to make political points at the expense of any one member. And I certainly say in the case of the member from Yorkton, who I personally think is a fine member of the Legislative Assembly, that this should not be aimed personally at him. But, Mr. Speaker, the challenge of this Assembly this afternoon, I believe, is to set in place the goals that would allow members of this assembly to understand very, very clearly what the procedures are in regard to the issue in front of us.

In other words, how is the framework regarding violations to the Board of Internal Economy handled. Mr. Speaker, the Board of Internal Economy under directive no. 4 allows each member to receive reimbursement or payment by the Government of Saskatchewan for amounts incurred by a member

in respect to duties as a member for postal, advertising and other communication expenses.

Each of us in this Assembly does that on a regular basis. Communication, as we all know, is a very integral part of being an elected member of this Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the board has determined over time and directed that postage and letterhead are acceptable items for reimbursement, but that materials of a blatantly partisan nature and materials which solicit donations to a political party or attendance at political functions are not acceptable items.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not a concealed order. This directive is contained in the members' handbook, which we all have, which is regularly updated, and, Mr. Speaker, which we constantly address, as you well know, in the Board of Internal Economy.

The directive in the handbook states very clearly:

It is essential that the above items (acceptable items) not be blatantly partisan in nature. Members must be aware that the allowances available to them are public funds and they receive these funds to enable them to . . . (represent all of the people in their particular riding).

Now the term, political, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, can be interpreted in many different ways. It is important to note though, Mr. Speaker, that the term used in the directive is partisan, which refers to items which deal with party matters, be they Conservative or Liberal or New Democrat or whatever the make-up of that particular house.

And the intent of the directive is to ensure that MLA funds are not used in the place of party funds. And I believe in this the directive is an honourable one, Mr. Speaker.

Now as my colleague from Yorkton has outlined to you, Mr. Speaker . . . or from Moosomin has outlined to you, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, the letter sent from the member from Yorkton on Assembly letterhead, presumably with Assembly postage, did not go to all people in that riding. It only went exclusively to members of the New Democratic Party.

The letter itself I believe did have a lot of inflamed political rhetoric in it, and partisan references. But I guess what I think is very important to the issue at hand, Mr. Speaker, which we as all members have to sort out, is the fact that in the same envelope, in the same envelope was a document which is entitled Constituency News, which was generated exclusively by the Yorkton New Democratic Party executive, by the president and the secretary of that association. And what is absolutely clear about the admission — the admission, the violation of the board's directive, and I quote from the letter, Mr. Speaker, is:

Here we are again, stuffed in with our M.L.A.'s letter, saving money and getting some constituency information out to you!

That says to me, Mr. Speaker, that this wasn't the first occurrence; that the president and secretary of the Yorkton New Democratic Party organization considered this a regular and ideal way to disseminate the message of that political party gratis, gratis of the taxpayer of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is no other reason for that sentence to be in there. Now as my colleague mentioned, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of constituency information in there, and I don't think that I need to elaborate on that because that's all been addressed here before.

But, Mr. Speaker, if this was simply a case of the particular member playing hardball politics, as we all understand the term, I think there would be probably enough interpretations available, Mr. Speaker, that this issue would not be here today. However it is clear, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that this package was designed to benefit the New Democratic Party in its Yorkton constituency and also the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan.

And I don't think, Mr. Speaker, one can call this anything but blatant. So as such, Mr. Speaker, the opposition raises a question of privilege, a question of disobedience of the rules of the House or a committee or contempt of this Assembly. And I think that is only proper, Mr. Speaker, when these things come. Because as my colleague said in his text the other day, and I would quote from the 1982 edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* by Joseph Maingot, the affirmation of this claim is very clear. He states:

Disobedience of the rules or orders represents an affront to the dignity of the House and accordingly the House could take action not simply for satisfaction, but to ensure that the House of Commons is held in the respect necessary for its authority to be vindicated. Without proper respect, the House of Commons could not function. Thus disobedience may well be considered contempt . . .

Disobedience of the rules or orders is an obvious contempt . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the time and the prima facie case had been established. And, Mr. Speaker, you ruled against the question of privilege, stating that the Board of Internal Economy was not a creature of this Assembly but a creature of statute and therefore breaches of the board directives are not breaches of the Assembly. And I respect your ruling very much, Mr. Speaker, in that regard.

But, Mr. Speaker, the consequences of that technicality are very broad and are something which this Assembly, I believe, must deal with in order to arrive at a solution to the question at hand.

For instance — and I have sought opinion on this, Mr. Speaker — I believe that the ruling means that a member's privilege does not extend to meetings of the board. That is something that the six of us or seven of us in this Assembly right now that are on the Board of Internal Economy have to be very concerned about.

In other words, the protection that I as a member receive in this Chamber today and any committee of this House does not extend to me now in the Board of Internal Economy — the very board which is charged with developing the directives, the directives which members are supposed to live by. In other words, any member here or any member of the public could sue for slander, could sue for bringing false pretence. Mr. Speaker, that is a very serious implication.

Your ruling also mentioned that this matter could be dealt with in two ways: by a substantive motion or by the board itself. Mr. Speaker, as you know, we have initiated action on both fronts. We have asked for the board to sit at its earliest possible convenience, and I understand that process is under way.

And today, Mr. Speaker, we are moving a motion to go to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, to be convened at the earliest possible time in public to deal with this issue.

The issue must be addressed, Mr. Speaker, and I believe it is the collective responsibility of the members of this Assembly to do it as expeditiously as possible. Because, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of confusion in the minds of members and in the minds of the public.

On page 119 of the March 3, 1994 minutes of the Board of Internal Economy, I did raise this issue. I raised this issue, Mr. Speaker, because in one instance we have a breach of directive no. 4 that is now in the legal system. And, Mr. Speaker, we also today are discussing the possible breach of another directive no. 4 that has not entered the legal system. It simply, I believe, Mr. Speaker, has been shoved aside by this House.

(1545)

Mr. Speaker, that simply should not be acceptable to any elected member of this House. Those rules and directives must apply equally to all 66 sitting members of this House, and their adjudication and the process around it must be equal, Mr. Speaker, or there will be no confidence in this House, or any board or commission or committee of this House which allows unequal treatment to take place.

Mr. Speaker, that is the reason this motion must be brought forward today and dealt with. It is a reasonable motion. The last time that Privileges and Elections met in this Assembly was 1977. It was over an issue of name-calling, and Mr. Speaker probably remembers it well. Mr. Former Member Brockelbank was in the chair at the time. It resulted in fairly severe and stiff penalties to members of this Assembly.

But it was over name-calling, Mr. Speaker — name-calling. Today we face an issue surrounding the expenditures of public funds in a partisan and, I believe, sir, blatant disregard for the rules of this Assembly in the area of fund-raising for political parties.

And we also have the issue of a directive of this Assembly resulting in the entry of the legal system into the mix.

Mr. Speaker, those things are far more dangerous to this Assembly and the members in it than simply name-calling. And the motion brought forward by the member from Yorkton — or Moosomin, rather — from Moosomin, to call together Elections and Privileges, I think, Mr. Speaker, is only fitting.

And then the members that were on that committee can be charged with rectifying what obviously is a very difficult situation. And then members can feel confident that the rules of this Assembly will apply equally and fairly and that we all must subscribe and live to those rules as they are laid down.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the motion of the member from Moosomin.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I've listened carefully to the remarks made by the member for Moosomin and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. If I understand correctly, the essence of the arguments put forward by both the mover and the seconder of the motion before the Assembly, I understood the mover to say that in essence he brought it to the House because he believes that it is desirable to restore public trust in elected officials and that's his motivation for doing that.

As I listened carefully to the words of the seconder of the motion, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, what I understood him to say was that he supported the motion because he saw it as a goal to set in place procedure to make clear rules and remedies related to members' use of allowances.

What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that I support both of those objectives. And in light of that, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving at the end of my remarks, an amendment to the motion to the effect:

That all the words after the word "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

The Board of Internal Economy be convened at the earliest opportunity to review and clarify directive no. 4 and the associated guidelines for communications expenditures by members.

And I'll be moving that at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not speculate that the

motives of the members in bringing this resolution to the Assembly are anything other than what they've stated. And it would be certainly be my view that if you have a problem, you solve it. That is not a complicated way of looking at the issue.

And as I reflect on the matter that members bringing to the Assembly with some concern for a resolution to a problem, and I reflect on public comment on related matters, my attention certainly, Mr. Speaker, has been caught by an editorial written in Yorkton this week, dated March 12, which would be . . . I guess that would be on Saturday, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd like to quote verbatim from just a portion of that editorial. It writes in part, and I quote:

On Wednesday, the Speaker of the legislature refused a request from the Conservatives to hold a special meeting to determine if Serby broke any rules. However, the matter will likely be raised with the Board of Internal Economy . . . of MLAs which makes rules on members' pay and allowances.

In a prepared statement, Serby says he welcomes such a review, and he should.

The editorial goes on to say:

If the board determines the rules should be clarified, then some good will come from this matter.

And the editorial concludes:

There appears to be some confusion among MLAs over what they can and cannot do with allowances. Until this is clarified, allegations will continue to surface to the detriment of MLAs and the legislature as a whole.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, there is a fair amount of wisdom in that final sentence of that editorial, that serves as some guideline to those of us in this Assembly who do seek, as the members have said, to restore public trust in the elected officials and to set in place procedures to make clear the rules and the remedies related to members' use of allowances.

And I note as well, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition in his remarks made reference to page 119 of the *Hansard* of the Board of Internal Economy meeting of March 3. And I do want to remind the Assembly of that, and members will have received that on their desks yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to make some comments about that meeting and the content. In saying that, I want to be very clear that I do understand that it is inappropriate in rules of debate to involve the Speaker and officers of the Assembly in the debate. And I have cautioned myself accordingly and will do the best I can to communicate from the meeting without violating that important principle of debate here.

I do want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that an agenda item brought to the Board of Internal Economy meeting on March 3 was intended to in fact address, I think, this very issue that has been referred to by the members in their debate on the motion. And consequently there was brought to the members of the Board of Internal Economy for consideration a statement of guiding principles related to members' expenses and allowances. And that was what was under discussion then on pages 119 and 120 of the *Hansard* of the Board of Internal Economy at that time. And as he said, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition did request some clarification as to what the guidelines are and what are the remedies.

Now being very acutely aware, Mr. Speaker, of the rules of debate, I simply want to say that in the discussion it became clear that a precise definition of partisan, as it applies in the word "directive", has some fuzziness about it. It also became clear that the remedy for raising the question also is less than precise at the current time.

It also became clear, Mr. Speaker, that the subject of consideration of a statement of guiding principles is not something that had been to the board before. And it was thought to be desirable so as to give, as much as possible, clear direction to members and in response to some legitimate questions being raised by members of this Assembly, whose desire was and is to bring a clear understanding to do the two things that the hon. member for Moosomin and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition raised in their debate.

I want to note as well, Mr. Speaker, that that discussion concluded with the members of the board clearly committing themselves to in fact come back to this issue, to consult with their caucuses, and then to come back on the public record, as the Board of Internal Economy is now open and does carry out its debates on the record, and then to come back and attempt to resolve it in the interest of . . . and I share, I repeat again, I share the objective of the member from Moosomin of restoring the public trust in elected officials.

And I share as well the conclusion of the *Yorkton This Week* when they say that if the board determines the rules should be clarified, then some good will have come from this matter.

So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, and the desire I think shared by all members of this House to see clarity brought so as to help to restore . . . and noting as well that I got on my desk this very day a notice of meeting of the Board of Internal Economy for Thursday of this week, Mr. Speaker, with all of that in mind, I move, seconded by the member for Prince Albert Carlton:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

the Board of Internal Economy be convened at the earliest opportunity to review and clarify directive no. 4 and the associated guidelines for

communications expenditures by members.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by the member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Resolution No. 34 — Regional Economic Development Authorities

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and fellow colleagues of the House. It gives me a great pleasure to stand here in support of the development of the formation of REDAs (regional economic development authority). And at the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving a motion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again the development and the formation of regional economic development authorities is a prime initiative, one of the major initiatives and the cornerstone in the *Partnership for Renewal*, the economic development blueprint that we have released, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say that there has been some marvellous announcements in some communities, certainly taking the forefront and demonstrating leadership in the establishment of REDAs.

(1600)

I want to say first of all that the REDA formation again is community-driven. It's a grass roots exercise, Mr. Speaker, and fellow colleagues, and it gives the opportunity for communities and third-level governments and stakeholders to pool their resources together and to identify strengths and to work together in a cooperative and collaborative approach.

And again, I think it is much along the lines of the spirit of cooperation. And I think it's nice to see that today more than ever that spirit is alive and well in Saskatchewan.

I want to take this opportunity however to highlight two particular communities and two REDAs that have been formed recently, the first one being the Prince Albert Regional Economic Development Authority which was formed and officially announced in January of this year. And again, as I say, it points to the hard work of individuals in Prince Albert and the many communities around Prince Albert. And certainly they did a tremendous amount of work in establishing this particular regional economic development authority.

And I'd like to recognize some of the communities and stakeholders that are participating in this regional economic development authority at this time. Some of those are the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), Woodland Institute; the Birch Hills Economic Development Authority; the

Prince Albert Indian and Metis Friendship Centre; the New Opportunities Rural Development Corporation; the Meath Park and Albertville and the RM of Garden River; the Lakeland District Chamber of Commerce; the village of Weirdale; the town of Birch Hills; the RM of Buckland; the RM of Prince Albert; the RM of Birch Hills; the RM of Paddockwood; CLIO Communications; the RM of Lakeland; and the Prince Albert Multicultural Council.

I think we take our hats off to all of these particular stakeholders, these towns and villages and RMs, chambers who have come together in the spirit of cooperation, at a time when this province needs that, at a time when we've got to pool our resources. I think we should take our hats off for their leadership in demonstrating that we can do it in the 1990s, working together.

And I'm looking for exciting and innovative ideas coming out of the Prince Albert Regional Economic Development Authority. Already, Mr. Speaker, they're working on numerous projects that have been identified and again identifying their strengths, and some of those strengths in the Prince Albert area, and they're working on some of those projects.

So again, I think all of us should take a special time to thank and congratulate these particular communities. I'd like to also take a bit of time to also commend the recent announcement of the Rosetown-Biggar-Elrose Regional Economic Development Authority which is entitled the Entrepreneurs REDA Incorporated which just was recently announced. And the Rosetown REDA, again similar to the Prince Albert Regional Economic Development Authority, is comprised of local RMs and communities and stakeholders.

And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, and fellow colleagues, that there's a tremendous amount of excitement and enthusiasm around the Rosetown REDA and the development and the creation of this REDA. The participants in the Rosetown REDA are the Bear Hills RDC (rural development corporations) out of Biggar; the Eagle Creek RDC out of Harris; Rosetown and District RDC Rosetown; the RM of Monet No. 257; the town of Elrose; the Prairie West Regional College; and the Prairie Centre Credit Union. Again, these communities and all of these RMs have come together to form this REDA.

I just want to read some of the comments that some of the representatives from these particular stakeholder organizations . . . the comments that they made on the release of this regional economic development. And again, it is testimony to the spirit of cooperation and the spirit of working together. But some of the comments that some of the particular individuals made were from one individual.

The Rosetown Economic Development Authority chairperson, Roy Haddock, said it is gratifying to see the establishment of a regional economic development authority. I have never been through a more positive thing in my life, said Haddock, who is one of the 14 directors on this new regional economic

development board.

Mr. Speaker, this individual is saying that he has never seen something as positive as the creation of this particular authority. And this is an individual who's seen a lot of economic development initiatives in his career.

And Mr. Speaker, he is seeing firsthand what the *Partnership for Renewal* and the initiative of the REDA formation is doing for communities like Rosetown and surrounding districts. And what it is again is the concept of bringing all of our resources, pooling all of these resources together in a given region where these particular regions have compatibilities and have links together.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't only have to be restricted along regional economic development lines as well. We're applying this particular philosophy all along. If you take a look at the community governments with the ICC (intercommunity cooperation) program, again similar in nature — getting communities to work together.

Another comment that was made was by the Rosetown mayor, Mayor Subhas Maharaj, who told that: economic development has been central to our strategy for the future; your efforts will secure a solid future for generations to come. And again the mayor is seeing some of the positive highlights and some of the great potential and possibilities from this particular formation.

Again I want to stress that REDAs and the REDA formation is voluntary; it is community-driven. The government is not in any way, shape, or form, going out to communities, drawing boundaries, or telling particular communities or stakeholders which ones can or cannot be in a particular REDA.

This is a grass roots, it's a community-driven formation. And we're allowing that to happen naturally, because if you let it progress along developmental lines, the particular strengths, the particular links, the ties between communities and community organizations and all the rest will be identified and then they can form their REDA along those lines. And we're seeing that it is happening.

The government's participation and the contribution, the financial contribution to this particular initiative, Mr. Speaker . . . and it must be noted, because without financial assistance to this particular initiative it would be difficult at times to get them to set up all of the administrative apparatus.

The Government of Saskatchewan, through the Department of Economic Development, is funding approximately \$1 billion to assist the development of regional economic development authority. Fifty per cent of that goes towards the incorporation of the economic development authorities; the other 50 per cent is used for administration and other expenditures.

I want to say that we're very, very excited and very positive that this formation and this development is going to continue. In fact we will probably see approximately 20 regional economic development authorities created by the end of 1994. And that is going to be a tremendous boost to regional economic development. And we're excited to see that again we are meeting the time lines as set forth within the *Partnership for Renewal*.

I think it's important to note and to realize that as we head towards a new century and as the world and the market-place get smaller and smaller every day, and of course globalization is a thing that is a reality today, and we're seeing that many, many major industrialized countries and even developing nations are using the same concept. They're pooling their resources, they're cooperating much more, they're forming strategic alliances.

And this is something that has not been lost on the Saskatchewan government and the Saskatchewan people. And we are moving to meet that new challenge in the 21st century. And the formation and the development of regional economic development authorities is going to play a key, a key role in getting the Saskatchewan economy prepared for this new economic order in the 21st century.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and fellow colleagues, I want to personally congratulate the Prince Albert Regional Economic Development Authority and all of the individuals who contributed in the development of this particular corporation, this particular authority. And I want to congratulate all of the participating communities and I want to urge other communities in the Prince Albert area to look at the possibility of getting involved.

I also want to congratulate the Rosetown individuals and organizations for their formation of their regional economic development authority and I want to congratulate all of the individuals who worked so hard to make this a reality.

And I want to, in conclusion, say that the Government of Saskatchewan will be working with the other communities and other regions of the province to help them in the establishment of their own particular . . . their own regional economic development authorities, and I want to congratulate the Saskatchewan government for having had the foresight to set this particular initiative in place.

Mr. Speaker, with that I'd like to move my motion, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly give recognition to those communities which are working together to address regional economic development in a coordinated and cooperative fashion by setting up regional economic development authorities such as the ones in Prince Albert and Rosetown.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from Kinistino has moved . . . I believe we have a little bit of a problem here. The member from Prince Albert Carlton was not in his chair at the time that the motion was moved, and the member needs to be in his chair in order to second the motion. Will the member from Kinistino move his motion?

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton:

That this Assembly give recognition to those communities which are working together to address regional economic development in a coordinated and cooperative fashion by setting up regional economic development authorities such as the ones in Prince Albert and Rosetown.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton, I want to make sure the House understands I will not accept this as a precedent. And in the future if the member is not in . . . or she is not in their place, I will not accept the motion. So I will not accept it as a precedent for this House.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure for me to second this motion put by my colleague from the constituency of Kinistino, in particular because it recognizes and congratulates the work done by a large number of business people in my constituency of Prince Albert and in the constituency of Prince Albert Northcote.

The whole concept of the REDA actually starts from a grass roots idea, Mr. Speaker. Many business people in the Prince Albert area were looking at business opportunities which they felt they might be able to attract or put together, but there didn't seem to be a way of doing it.

They saw that over the years, with the NAFTA agreement coming in and the free trade agreement being implemented, that the ability of the government to deliver programs from a centralized level was being curtailed. It is no longer possible for Crowns to act in the same way as they were acting in the '70s to deliver the profits available from resources to the treasury. So we needed a new vehicle.

And in particular what had happened is that the people of Prince Albert and area, as the people of Rosetown — indeed people in many regions around the province — noted that there are a lot of people with jobs and with ability but there aren't any jobs available, or few jobs available. Certainly the number of people available for jobs and the skills available for jobs exceeds the number of jobs. The REDAs then are an attempt to fill the void and to work out a system where people will actually be able to create their own jobs.

It is very important, I think, that the REDAs, as they're known, remain a grass roots organization, remain controlled by the people in the area that have come together.

It's important that they have recognition, official recognition, by the province and indeed by municipal governments. And that's why I'm very pleased to see that in the case of Prince Albert, a whole series of RMs and other businesses have come together to give the REDA the credibility that it needs. And I specifically mention the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) Woodland Institute in Prince Albert — it came into the REDA — the Birch Hills Economic Development Authority; the Prince Albert Indian and Metis Friendship Centre. Those three in particular, Mr. Speaker, sort of exemplify a good cross-section of the kind of support that's needed for this type of an endeavour. It involves people of all cultures; it involves people from organizations — well-established organizations — and involves people not only from the city of Prince Albert but also from the district around Prince Albert.

Also included is the New Opportunities Rural Development Corporation which consists of Weirdale, Meath Park, Albertville, and the RM of Garden River, the area immediately north of Prince Albert in the constituency of Shellbrook-Torch River.

It also includes the chamber of commerce, the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce, and a series of towns and villages including Weirdale, Birch Hills; some RMs, including Buckland, Prince Albert RM, the Birch Hills RM, Paddockwood RM, the Lakeland RM, and including a business company by the name of CLIO Communications, and also the Prince Albert Multicultural Council, who was also very concerned with the search for jobs because one of their prime objectives is to help new immigrants come in and settle and take their place in the community and contribute to the community.

I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, how this REDA fits into the total economic development structure, economic development objectives and methods being used by this government. Just forming a REDA by itself, of course, won't create any jobs. It'll help people get together, it's a way of people pooling their energies, pooling their intelligence, establishing a network so that they can use that to bring projects together. But by itself, it's not enough. Quite often a REDA will need a source of funds; quite often a REDA, as we look down the road, we can get a project going, will need a way of marketing those.

Now if funds are available from the private sector, that is all well and good. If marketing agents are able to be found or developed, that is all well and good, but that's not always the case. Sometimes it's very difficult in a province like Saskatchewan, where we're away from major centres, to be able to sell the products which our people here are able to produce.

So this government is also bringing in as a parallel to

the REDAs, Saskatchewan trading corporation, whose job will be to establish a system of exporting or selling the materials made by people of Saskatchewan. Its job will not be exclusive to working with REDAs; it will be to help trade in anything that's made in Saskatchewan. But the REDAs certainly will be able to make use of this corporation.

We've also formed in this legislature, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, which will be another source of funding for projects. This will give a provincial source of funding for projects which may not get other . . . may not have other money available to them, and projects which would not be in competition with existing businesses.

I might mention that I hope that the community bonds corporations, which were formed under the former government, will also be able to participate in this entire scheme of working together to develop opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

I think that that was a very excellent way of getting money. And some of the community corporations have been able to get small amounts of money but have been able to lend them out to small businesses, and in that use the small-business sector and provide the small-business sector with a way of expanding. And we all know that it's the small-business people that are really the place where businesses start, and hopefully it's the small businesses that eventually get to be the larger businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention that this concept of devolving authority from the provincial level to the regional level is one of the earmarks of this government. We have done that in economic development. My colleague before me spoke largely of that. I've spoken to that as well. We've done that in regional development, but we've done it in other areas as well, and we're prepared to do it in others areas on a voluntary basis.

In the case of education, we hear people also asking for opportunities to organize on a regional basis where school boards are asking for amalgamation. We are assisting in what we can in that and to remove impediments to that process. There are several municipalities which are looking at ways of saving money and asking government to help them form alliances and sharing services on a regional basis.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, with respect to health, we are devolving the authority from the Department of Health to the regional level where people who are closest to the delivery of a service will be able to organize the services and will be delivering the services directly. This represents a major shift in power with respect to economic development and health from the provincial level to the regional level, something that will be recognized as time goes on, Mr. Speaker, as a very significant, very, very significant move.

So I close, Mr. Speaker, by congratulating once again all of those people in the Prince Albert and Rosetown

areas who are working on behalf of their neighbours, working on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan really, and looking for new ways, new and creative ways to get the province rolling once again, and through that get the economy . . . keep the economy buoyant, welcoming our neighbours back and our children back to Saskatchewan where they can make a good living and bringing them back to a place where they like to live.

I heartily support this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to stand today and address this motion. I want to start out my remarks by reminding members of this House just exactly what the principles of the governing party of this province are, the principles of the New Democratic Party. Because I believe that those principles basically are the principles that inform this motion and that inform the whole notion of regional economic development authorities.

The principles of the New Democratic Party, the social democratic movement in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are the principles of compassion — compassion for those less fortunate than us, and a determination to do something to help people who are less fortunate.

The principle of economic and social justice. The principle that says all people have the right to a slice of the good life, to a share of this earth. All people have the right to be treated with dignity, to be treated with respect, regardless of religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic background, or whatever. So economic and social justice is an important principle for the New Democratic Party.

Another important principle for the New Democratic Party is the principle of community. It is not solely a big, monolithic, centrist government that determines everything and determines what thou shalt do and shan't do. In other words, Mr. Speaker, local communities need to be the local decision makers. They are the ones who know best what the problems are in their communities and what the solutions are.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, a major, major principle of the New Democratic Party, of the New Democratic government of this province, is the principle of cooperation. It is not solely the privilege or prerogative of one sector or another, of one group or another, to determine solutions. We find solutions through sharing a collective sense of commonality, a collective sense of togetherness through cooperating together.

So those, Mr. Speaker, are our principles: economic and social justice, compassion, community, and cooperation. And, Mr. Speaker, those principles are being played out, are being given reality, so to speak, in the whole notion of regional economic development authorities. We are saying that it will not

solely be the centralist provincial government that decides the economic or social adjustment strategy for a community. We are saying that communities will be actively involved in this and that there will be cooperation as we search for economic solutions in this province.

As part of that, Mr. Speaker, we have been going out and actively encouraging communities to reach out, one to another, and to share their resources and to share their ideas about economic development.

The speakers who preceded me talked very glowingly and justifiably about what has happened in Prince Albert and in Rosetown. And I congratulate those communities for their excellent spirit of community and cooperation in establishing a regional economic development authority.

I am from Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and I am very pleased that Saskatoon right now is in a dead-heat race with another community, that being Swift Current, to find out which of those two communities will be the third and fourth area of this province to establish another regional economic development authority.

I am confident, from what I know of the people of Saskatoon, the spirit of Saskatoon, that Saskatoon will likely win that particular race, and we will see the third regional economic development authority in this province established in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

(1630)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Now it's taken a bit of work for Saskatoon to get to that point. They started out, first of all, by having what they called an industrial development department in the city of Saskatoon. That was back in the old days when the assumption was if you could establish factories on every corner, somehow you would establish prosperity in every home. And so obviously the best agency to do it would be a department of the municipal government. And so they had an industrial development department.

After a few years, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatoon realized that that was not exactly getting them the kind of results that they wanted and needed, and they looked around and said, well what are some other models that we could try? And they actually created an industrial development board. I was very pleased, in the late '70s and early '80s, to be a member of that industrial development board.

But even that, Mr. Speaker, was not good enough. For it is quite clear that jobs, economic development, in this country is a little bit more than merely industrial development. And so the industrial development board decided that what they had to do was change their focus and become what they called an economic development board.

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

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.
Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery there are some fine people from the Lucky Lake area: Bev Kimble, the mayor of Lucky Lake; Bill Sheppard, the RM of Cannan; and Jim Boon, councillor for the RM of Coteau. They were in to meet with me this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to tell me about all the things that are happening around Lucky Lake, and I really appreciated them. And I would like all members of the House to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Resolution No. 34 — Regional Economic Development Authorities

Ms. Lorje: — Continuing my remarks, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, before at least one hon. member introduced guests, Saskatoon created an economic development board. But at that point again it was recognized that this response, while more in keeping with the modern needs of modern economic development, was still not quite an adequate response.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the city of Saskatoon embarked on what it considered to be a bold venture, what members of this government would consider to be a fairly common-sense venture, and that was to create an economic development authority independent from, separate from the city, with many, many collaborative ties with the business sector and with other groups who were very concerned about economic development in the city of Saskatoon.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, very recently the city of Saskatoon did formally create the Saskatoon Economic Development Authority. And it is not in City Hall; it has separate facilities where it is housed in a cooperative, collaborative fashion with the local Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce and the downtown business development authority called The Partnership of Saskatoon.

Those three groups work very closely together to attract economic development opportunities to the city of Saskatoon. And as part of their work, they have developed an extremely good relationship with the Department of Economic Development for the province of Saskatchewan.

Indeed I would venture to say that a big part of their success to date has been that good working relationship they have developed. Because they have been able to promote and to push various things such as a single-window business development concept in the city of Saskatoon. It's innovative, ground-breaking and, I would suggest, will go a long ways to helping

Saskatoon achieve a major milestone.

In Saskatoon right now we have an unemployment rate of 10.4 per cent. Now I consider that far too high. I personally am in favour of full employment in this country and I think that is the only way that we will ever, for once and for all, resolve the problems of poverty in Canada, is by dedicating ourselves as politicians, as business leaders, as working men and women, towards a full employment policy in this country.

But still, a 10.4 per cent unemployment rate in Saskatoon is quite a bit better than it was even a year ago before the creation of the economic development authority and all the good work that it has been able to do in cooperation with the provincial Department of Economic Development.

The unemployment in Saskatoon is down 1.5 per cent from 1993. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, the unemployment in Saskatoon, while I still consider it to be unacceptably high, is actually the fourth lowest in all of Canada. I would suggest that that is partially due to the excellent diversification strategies that the provincial government has been encouraging all across this province and most particularly with respect to regional economic development authorities.

It is a misguided notion, Mr. Speaker, to suggest — as certainly some of the members opposite have in their time in government, whether they be Liberals or Conservatives — to suggest that only the private sector can create jobs or that the private sector creates jobs in total isolation.

It is also a misguided notion, Mr. Speaker, to suggest — as have some people in my party or in my movement — to suggest that only the public sector can create jobs. I take issue with people in the social democratic movement who suggest that and say that the private sector is necessarily wrong and evil.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is time that we move beyond those notions and recognize that the private sector cannot work in isolation and the public sector should not be working in isolation and both private and public sector should not be working at odds with each other.

It's time to move beyond those artificial schisms and recognize that, in terms of economic development and employment, we're all in this together, Mr. Speaker, and we have to take the best of both sectors and work together in partnership, collaboratively, cooperatively, towards creating strong and healthy communities in this province.

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is the first jurisdiction in Canada to admit that we have to have close links between government, between industry or economic development, and between working people. We all three groups have to work in tandem if we're going to have strong economic development.

We're starting to see some results from that approach, Mr. Speaker. Unemployment in Saskatchewan from year over year, February '93 to February '94, increased. Employment increased by 1,000 in this province. And in fact non-agricultural employment increased by 7,000 from February of '93. So we're starting to see major benefits from our diversification strategy in this province.

And we need to do this, Mr. Speaker, because we're moving into a new century. We're seeing many changes on the global horizon. We are seeing the forces of continentalism and globalization breathing down our backs, so to speak. And we can't simply hunker down with a bunker mentality and pretend that change isn't going to occur. We need to grasp the winds of change and to fashion new responses so that Saskatchewan will continue to be a place where we want to raise our children with dignity and respect.

In order to do that, Mr. Speaker, we need to build on the strengths that we have in Saskatchewan. One of the strengths that we have is a strongly educated group of people who have a lot of initiative and show a lot of effort. People often comment to me, when they're talking about people from Saskatchewan, and they comment on how ambitious they are and how when the tough gets going . . . when the going gets tough Saskatchewan people get going.

We have a lot of expertise here. We have a good public education system that provides good training for people for the workforce. And even more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we have the basis and the collective will, I would suggest, to continue to have a strong and a satisfied workforce in this province.

As proof of that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point to the fact that we recently introduced in this legislature the amendments to The Labour Standards Act. These are the first amendments, the first substantial amendments that have been introduced on that Act since 1977. Now many people would have anticipated that when you open up a major Act like that, that it could cause a lot of furore and doomsaying amongst many people.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that that has not been my experience. Talking to people who are very active in economic development in Saskatoon, I have been pleased, more than pleased to hear their positive reaction towards our proposed changes in The Labour Standards Act.

Now they may have some concerns with specifics on this small item or that small item, but to a person, Mr. Speaker, the people that I have spoken to whether they are in the mining industry, in the hotels industry, representing various economic development organizations, in the retail trade industry, or the information sector, all these people have said that they recognize that it is time to make these necessary changes. And the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is that these people recognize that you need to have a strong and satisfied workforce if you're going to have a strong and satisfied economic development force.

I would like to at this point, to quote from an article that appeared in today's *Leader-Post*. It was entitled: "Labour changes: cost/benefit analysis," and it's a commentary by Dale Eisler. And he takes a look at what might happen if we had a right-to-work regime such as many states in the United States have and whether or not that is adequate for creating full employment and economic prosperity. And he clearly says, no, that that is not the case. He says:

If all we had to do to create full employment and economic prosperity was to drastically cut the legislated costs of doing business, such as with those troublesome minimum wage laws and labour standards, then places like Arkansas would be shining models to follow.

That's not the model that this government is choosing to follow, Mr. Speaker. The model that we're following is a model of cooperation and community; a progressive model that builds on the strengths, the collective strengths of organizations such as regional economic development authorities.

Mr. Eisler goes on to say — and I think this is the most telling part of his whole article:

. . . (that) experience shows that weak labour standards help to create and perpetuate poverty. Without government setting minimal labour levels, poor and desperate people are left unprotected and merely bid down the value of their labour by competing against each other.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — That, Mr. Speaker, is obviously not the kind of thing that we want to see in Saskatchewan. Indeed that's not the kind of thing we want to see all across this world.

We need to move beyond the easy comfort of the bunker mentality and we need to start thinking in more global terms, and we need to think, how can we create a strong, viable base here in Saskatchewan as we move outward to compete in the global economy?

We will do it, Mr. Speaker, by taking a lot of little steps. There is no one simple panacea for economic development in this province or in this country or in this world. But a lot of little steps, collectively, can add up to giant progress.

(1645)

Some of the steps that we have taken, Mr. Speaker, have been to encourage value added, particularly in things like agriculture; to encourage diversification; to encourage proper international marketing; and most particularly, Mr. Speaker, speaking specifically to the motion before us today, to encourage cooperation amongst communities with respect to economic development.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why this government is very

proud that people in Saskatchewan are endorsing and actively working towards implementing our policy of encouraging the creation of regional economic development authorities.

Local people know the local situation, the local opportunities, and the local challenges. They can work together with the provincial government who can provide them with a broader perspective in terms of some of the international marketing skills and opportunities that they need. And through the combination of the public sector and the private sector working hand in hand, Mr. Speaker, we will see Saskatchewan emerge as a strong and viable unit in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to support the motion, moved by the member from Kinistino, seconded by the member from Prince Albert Carlton, and I think that it will be one of the very key building blocks for Saskatchewan as we once again regain a sense of prosperity and progressivity in the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:47 p.m.