

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 17, 1995

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Clerk: — Petitions for private Bills are presented and laid on the Table as follows: by Mr. Swenson, of the Briercrest Bible College in the province of Saskatchewan; by Mr. Cline, of Our Lady of the Prairies.

These are the petitions for private Bills: by Ms. Lorje, of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the province of Saskatchewan; by Mr. Upshall, of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little confusion in the morning helps to get the blood stimulated.

I have a petition from people in the Gull Lake area. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any money available from the federal infrastructure programs towards double-laning Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

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

And these people come from Tompkins, as I said, Gull Lake, and that area.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this morning to once again table petitions on behalf of citizens who live along Highway 42 or have to drive on it. And I'll just read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate the total amount of funds garnered from the taxpayer for fuel tax, vehicle licence fees, and provincial sales tax on new vehicles toward the maintenance and capital costs of Saskatchewan roads; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan dedicate any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards Saskatchewan's road system, rather than provide these sums toward capital construction of casinos in Regina and Saskatoon.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I have petitioners from communities such as Morse; Regina; Eyebrow; Calgary, Alberta; Moose Jaw;

Kelowna, B.C. (British Columbia); Keeler, Saskatchewan; Tugaske, Saskatchewan; Chaplin, Saskatchewan; Brownlee, Saskatchewan; Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan; people all over the province who use this particular piece of road, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to table it today.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have petitions I wish to lay on the Table. And I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitions I have in my hand are signed by people from the communities of Preeceville, Punnichy, Sturgis, Chamberlain, Endeavour, Buchanan, Canora, Simpson, Nokomis, and Regina. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, from across this province.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present the following petitions. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to the present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

These petitions come from the Francis, Weyburn area of the province, Mr. Speaker, Melville, Tyvan, Sedley. I'd like to lay them on the Table now.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding dedicated toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

And of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate funding toward the maintenance and capital costs of Saskatchewan roads.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery I would like to introduce some constituents of mine and very dear friends, Cecil and Ina Ralchenko. And I would like this Assembly to please welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a former member of this Assembly, Mr. Ted Gleim, who has joined us behind the bar today.

Ted, as you know, is from Eastend, Saskatchewan, the beautiful south-west part of our province where the dinosaurs have been discovered and tourism is abounding. They are looking forward to a tourism season such as the world has never seen before this summer. And we're happy to have Ted with us here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure in fact to also introduce Ted Gleim, an hon. opponent. And having been transferred back to the private sector by Ted in 1986, I want to say to Ted a special welcome. And also say that there are three former members from Shaunavon in the House today, one who's only here for the next few months. But I do want to say seriously to Ted, we've been good friends for many, many years and that friendship . . . even while the campaign was on we maintained close friendship and I think that's what politics in Saskatchewan should be about.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in welcoming Ted to the legislature today. And I guess the member from Regina Elphinstone can be rest assured that he will once again be sent back to the private sector. Thanks.

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through to all the members on the floor of the legislature, Mr. Ken Nelson; he's in the gallery behind me here. He's the editor of the *Nipawin Journal* in Nipawin, Saskatchewan, and he came down to hear the budget read yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Family Resource Centre

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend a group of people whose efforts will make a difference for some preschool children in Moose Jaw.

Over the past two years a local group came together to find a way to better help children at risk in the Moose Jaw school

system. They felt that these kids could find success in school if they had better early development and healthier self-images. That means better coordination of community services, more help with preschool development of language and social skills and self-image, and help for parents to improve parenting skills.

Mr. Speaker, these people from the Moose Jaw School Division, public health, mental health, John Howard Society, Social Services, Moose Jaw First Nations Council, and parents' associations concluded that there really can be a solution. And it's called the Family Resource Centre for preschoolers at risk and their parents.

And, Mr. Speaker, in Moose Jaw it's going to happen. They have received funds from the Department of Education, Training and Employment to hire a coordinator and start up a family resource centre this fall.

My colleague, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, and I were so pleased to be a part of the announcement, Mr. Speaker, that combines local cooperation with provincial financial freedom. We share the local enthusiasm that the Family Resource Centre will go a long way to replacing discouragement with hope for our most valuable resource, our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Parkland Health District

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has always been a leader in health care and with the health reform it is leading again. I am pleased to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that health reform in the Turtleford constituency is a success.

The Parkland Health District has an abundance of positive news. First, the saving of about \$200,000 in administration reduction has been redirected to 24-hour nursing coverage for the district nursing homes.

The Parkland Health Board has approved as well an increase of 25 per cent in direct services to home care. Home care services have been decentralized and are now provided from 10 locations in the district, including the four hospitals. In Big River, Spiritwood, Canwood, people now have a single entry point for services that they require.

Also, added services in the four hospitals have been implemented — services such as respite beds, physiotherapy, palliative care.

Mr. Speaker, the hospital bed utilization in the district has been dramatically reduced through good management, by avoiding unnecessary admissions, and early hospital discharges.

Mr. Speaker, these health reforms are definitely a milestone in the history of Saskatchewan Health. And I believe that the people of Saskatchewan and the people of the Turtleford constituency . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Luther Invitational Tournament

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday a special event took place in Regina, the opening ceremonies of the 42nd annual Luther Invitational Basketball Tournament, the LIT. Begun in 1953, the LIT is the longest continuously running basketball tournament in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, the basketball skills displayed here are of the highest calibre.

Those who are lucky enough to squeeze into the Luther high school gymnasium are guaranteed first-class sport entertainment. They also risk permanent damage from deafness . . . or deafness from the enthusiasm of the crowds, but some rewards are worth the risk.

Mr. Speaker, the LIT is unique in many ways. It invites teams from high schools across western Canada to compete, and the tournament is totally student run and operated — almost totally — with some help from the staff and other people involved. But over 80 students are directly involved in the organization of the LIT and the majority of the 500 students are involved in one way or another.

For those unable to attend in person, the final two games on Saturday will be televised on our local cable channel.

The LIT is a very special event in Regina for those who attended or who have children who've attended Luther, and of course for those who are competing or have competed in the past. It's also significant for those who believe that sport should represent the pursuit of individual and team excellence solely for the joy and fulfilment it brings. I congratulate all involved in this year's LIT and wish each competing team the very best.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Pilot Butte Lions-quest Program

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention and applaud a program taking place in Pilot Butte School, my old school.

The program is sponsored by the Pilot Butte Lions Club and is called, appropriately enough, the Lions-quest program. The program, Mr. Speaker, is just one of many ways the Lions support education in our community. The club also provides annual bursaries for students to attend camps and workshops, it collects eyeglasses for its eye care program, and it contributes every year to the school Christmas concert.

The Lions-quest program itself has been implemented in grades 4 to 9 and also has a pilot project in one kindergarten class this year. Through Lions-quest, teachers are sent to in-service training seminars, curriculum guides and teaching materials are purchased, and student workbooks are provided.

Lions-quest has five goals: to help students develop positive social behaviour; to help them develop the social skills necessary to lead healthy and productive lives; to promote a strong commitment to community; to encourage a healthy, drug-free lifestyle; and to support parents, teachers, and others in their efforts to educate and lead young people.

Mr. Speaker, I like that last point. Students are encouraged to teach adults to help students. Education, after all, is a circular experience. Anyone involved in education knows we all teach each other.

The Pilot Butte Lions Club is to be congratulated for its commitment to education and to the community. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

GRIP Premiums

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for the Premier.

Mr. Premier, yesterday you delivered your budget and once again we only got half the story. Let's talk about some of the things you forgot, Mr. Premier. You forgot to mention the \$95 million in gambling money that you're taking out of Saskatchewan communities. You forgot to mention that you balanced the budget by stealing \$188 million . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I ask the member to refrain from using that language in question period. Order, order.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you forgot to mention that you balanced your budget by taking \$188 million from Saskatchewan farmers. You forgot to mention that while you were taking that money from farmers, you didn't take one dime from the Crown corporations of this province.

The Provincial Auditor says that the budget doesn't give a clear picture of where the Crown corporation profits should have been directed. They should have been directed to the government, rather than the farmers' GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) premiums, Mr. Premier. You took millions of dollars from Saskatchewan farm families and you didn't even touch the family of Crown corporations in this province.

Mr. Premier, Mr. Premier, when you go on TV on Sunday, are you going to tell them the whole story? Are you going to tell Saskatchewan people that you balanced the budget of this province by taking from farm families?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that rather long question.

Let me deal with the issues that he raised. Let me start first of all with GRIP. We gave back to the farmers their share of GRIP. We put 70 per cent of our share, the provincial share of GRIP, back into farm programs. The problem is in Ottawa. They put less than half of their share of GRIP back into farm programs. Why are they after us? Why don't they go after the problem?

But what I'll say to the member opposite is, what he's not talking about today is the fact that this government, for the first time in over a decade, has balanced the books of the province. We had a plan to balance the books of the province; we delivered on that plan. We have a new plan to give tax relief to people, to create jobs, to provide a quality education and health care system, and to pay down the debt. We delivered on our first plan; we will deliver on our second plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, the only thing that you are giving farmers these days is bills in the mail. That's what you're giving Saskatchewan farm families. They're getting a bill in the mail these days from your government.

And on top of that, you took \$188 million from their GRIP premiums and directed it towards the budget of this province. That's what you did for the farm families of this province, Madam Minister. You took \$188 million from them.

First of all, the member sitting beside you broke their contracts and now you're taking \$188 million from the farm families of this province to balance your budget. Your budget is entirely balanced on the backs of the Saskatchewan farmers, Madam Minister.

How can you, Madam Minister, and Mr. Premier, how can you be so proud of a budget that is balanced by balancing it on the backs of Saskatchewan farmers — \$188 million worth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite can't speak out of both sides of his mouth. He says yesterday, geez, I would have cut government spending by 5 per cent. Eighteen per cent of that new spending is in agriculture. If he's going to cut government spending by 5 per cent, he's going to be giving farmers even less than what we're giving them. He's got to be consistent here.

You know, these opposition members simply can't stand good news. All across Canada people are saying, Saskatchewan is the first province to balance its books. Congratulations, Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — People all across Canada are proud of Saskatchewan today. And what do the members opposite

say? They niggle and natter and niggle and natter. What I say to the people of Saskatchewan, we had a plan to balance the books; we delivered on that plan.

We will stand on our record. Will the members opposite stand on their record in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. There's simply too much interruption, particularly when the minister is trying to answer, and I ask members to please not interrupt and let the person ask his question and the minister answer.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, four years ago you got elected by saying, trust me and I'll lower your taxes. Then you got in and raised their taxes. You told farmers, trust me and I'll come up with more money for agriculture. Then you got in and you broke contracts and stole hundreds of millions of dollars from farm families. Now you're telling farmers, trust me and I'll come up with a better safety net. It's like asking chickens to trust Colonel Sanders.

Mr. Premier, why should farm families trust you? Why should they trust you? Why should farm families trust the very person who has taken \$188 million from them in this budget alone?

Mr. Premier, how do farm families know you aren't going to renege on the new farm safety net program as well, just as you have broken their contracts in the past and have taken money from them in this budget as well?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's got to look at some basic facts. We have given to Saskatchewan farmers a new farm safety net. What about the counterparts around us — Alberta and Manitoba? What have they got? They've got a huge . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm not interrupting the Minister of Finance but I do want to hear her answer, and I ask members to please quit interrupting.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — What do our neighbours, our Tory neighbours around us have? A huge, massive deficit in GRIP, which they will be giving to their taxpayers as a nice bill sometime near in the future.

Look at the facts. Eighteen per cent of our new spending is on agriculture. Be clean with the public.

If you're going to cut everything by 5 per cent, tell them and say farmers are going to get less from these folks. But don't run around the province saying: by the way, we'll cut, but not you; and by the way, we're going to cut your taxes.

Yes, they're going to cut our taxes just like they cut our taxes in the 1980s. They cut the gas tax; people felt great. A few years later, high deficits; they raised not only the gas tax but other taxes.

We have a plan for the province of Saskatchewan which provides tax relief for every taxpayer in the province, provides quality education and health, provides jobs, and the payment of debt. We'll stand on our record . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Corporation Dividends

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Madam Minister, in today's paper there's a headline that says that your budget is not accurate. And I've noticed, Madam Minister, that when we talk about policy in respect to Crown corporations, that your budget showed \$60 million dividend from CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) that suddenly was not taken. You didn't transfer one dime.

And the Provincial Auditor is saying in today's paper that you are not presenting an accurate budget by doing that. That's in spite of record utility rate increases. Your family of Crown corporations, Madam Minister, is so bloated with ill-gotten gains from the taxpayers of this province, that they're bulging at the seams.

Madam Minister, is it the case that your CIC policy, which is administered by the Premier's friend, Don Ching, has nothing to do with fiscal considerations but has everything to do with your political agenda? Is that not what the auditor is saying to everyone in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I would expect this kind of question from a Tory opposition: you mean you have some money in this government somewhere and you haven't gone out and spent it? You haven't gone out and taken every single penny and spent it? What's the matter with you? That's how you run the province.

That's how they ran the province in the 1980s. That's how they added a billion dollars each and every year to the debt.

Now with respect to the auditor. Let's quote the auditor and let's see exactly what he's saying. He said in February, 1995: the government's financial statements represent fairly in all material respects the financial position of the government of the province of Saskatchewan, following accurate accounting principles.

An Hon. Member: — Read the rest of it.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Yes, yes. What the auditor's talking about is the way he wants us to budget. We budget the same as every other government in Canada except Alberta, because they have no Crown corporations.

For the members opposite to be standing up and lecturing us about open, accountable government — when they were in

power the people of the province just didn't have any idea of the size of the debt because they weren't prepared to tell them.

We've opened the books. We are open, accountable. We have a new plan and we will deliver it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Madam Minister, why didn't you have the courage to read the rest of the article in the House? Just like you didn't have the courage yesterday to tell people in your budget address what you were really doing to this province.

You could have had a surplus of \$229 million if you'd only followed your own budgeting allocations of last year. The auditor says there should be a complete financial picture of the province, which you're not giving.

Madam Minister, \$60 million would have been easily attained, given the rate increases and the taxation which you have passed on to Saskatchewan families in the last year.

Now, Madam Minister, the question is, you budgeted 50 million for the following year. Are you going to draw that back because you've changed your policy? We would like to know what that policy of CIC is. You budget it one day, you take it away the next; you put another figure out for the next year, and you continue to tax through the Crown corporations.

Madam Minister, show us what that policy is so that next time we'll know the truth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, you really do have to have a sense of humour to have the Tories giving us lectures about open, accountable government and keeping the books properly.

Let me tell them in very plain, simple language why we have left some money over in CIC. It's because of their megaprojects. When we inherited this government, we inherited megaprojects whose financing was a nightmare. We have worked to stabilize them, to try to save the jobs, but they were bad financial deals and you can't turn a disaster into a rose.

So yes, we have left some money there to guard against any uncertainties with respect to those megaprojects. The money's there; it's open, it's accountable, people can see it, people know what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, we have moved light years in opening up the books of this province to the people, because we're proud of what we're doing with their books. We are managing their finances in a prudent way, and now we have a new plan which will give them tax relief, improved health and education, a plan to pay down debt, and jobs. We're proud of our plan. I wish they would be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Identification of Young Offender

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

It comes to my attention that on February 3, 1995, the Attorney General was a guest on a local radio talk show. While on that radio program, the minister made comments which served to identify a young offender involved in the Martensville sexual abuse case.

While I will not repeat what was said in this Chamber, I have sent over a transcript of the Attorney General's remarks to refresh his memory.

My question is to the Minister of Justice: Mr. Minister, would you not agree that your comments were in contravention of the law, and if so, would you turn that transcript over to the Justice officials for investigation?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I've just been handed the document that my friend refers to — by the page — and all I can say is that I'll study it and of course I'll refer it to the appropriate authorities if there's anything untoward about it.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A further question to the Minister: Mr. Minister, let me take a moment just to remind you of the law. Section 38 of the Young Offenders Act says that, and I quote:

. . . no person shall publish by any means any report . . . of any hearing, adjudication, disposition or appeal concerning a young person who has committed or is alleged to have committed an offense . . .

I also remind you that anyone who contravenes this section

. . . is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years . . .

Mr. Minister, anyone else publicly identifying an individual convicted under the Young Offenders Act is subject to the full weight of the law. Will you ensure that a complete, open, and independent investigation is undertaken such that you will have equal treatment under the law?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I guess that this signals that the budget debate is over.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I told the Minister . . . I told the member, I should say, that I don't recall this. I've just received the transcript; I said I'd review the transcript; I said I'd refer it to the appropriate authorities if there's anything untoward about it. Now that's the second time I've answered it, and I hope that we can leave it at that.

Health Board Election Costs

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government does not have a thoughtful plan when it comes to health care in this province, Mr. Speaker, and the facts speak for themselves. As recently as this week, the government has put a band-aid on their unsuccessful attempt at major reconstructive surgery.

The Minister of Health allocated 20.3 million to try and fix their mistake. Mr. Speaker, they're now gearing up for health board elections across the province. This process should have been part of the original reconstruction, will cost approximately \$1 million extra for taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Health. You could have saved \$1 million. The \$1 million it will cost to run these elections could have been spent to help people. How can you justify spending \$1 million on elections at a time when you've closed 52 rural hospitals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I would have expected on this day questions regarding the budget, the budget of the Department of Health; but as my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General says, apparently the budget debate's over.

Mr. Speaker, to speak to the member's question: it's very difficult to address questions from the Liberal caucus. Today the member is saying we should not be doing district health board elections. That's what he's saying. There shouldn't be something in the budget for district health board elections.

Now that's an interesting position. A year ago, not quite a year ago, he was writing articles in his own weekly journals, calling upon this government to immediately go into elections — immediately. Now I heard his leader this spring saying that we should postpone and suspend the election process. Mr. Speaker, it would help I think the understanding of the public, my understanding, the understanding of the House: would the member please identify what is the Liberal policy on health board elections?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is disappointing to see the Minister of Health make light of what they've done to health care in rural Saskatchewan here today.

Mr. Speaker, governing is about making choices that are in the best interests of the people who elect them. This NDP (New Democratic Party) government has made some extremely questionable choices, Mr. Speaker. One glaring example of this is, the government's poor judgement is demonstrated by the million dollar reduction in spending in the field of cancer research and redirecting these funds to non-essential services such as electing health board officials.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, how can you reduce funding in an area as important as cancer research and use the money to run elections that should have been conducted at the same time as the municipal elections last fall?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, again the member surprises me by — and surprises I think the public of Saskatchewan — by seeming to forget we had a provincial budget delivered yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address very specifically the question about the funding for cancer research in our province. Mr. Speaker, it's true in the *Estimates* this year, the number is down because in last year's budget we injected substantial amounts of money in capital improvements. Mr. Speaker, capital improvements to research and treatment in this province.

Mr. Speaker, those improvements will be in place, and indeed in terms of cancer treatment and research in this province we, like in other areas, are leading the country. We have, Mr. Speaker, across Saskatchewan, available in communities across Saskatchewan, the best mobile breast screening treatment program in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again I ask the member, and I challenge the member and his leader, what is the Liberal position on health board elections? One minute they're telling us we should have done it before, the next minute they're telling us they should suspend it; now he's telling us we shouldn't have put something in the budget to see it happen. Mr. Speaker, would the member please acquaint the public and this House of the Liberal position on health board elections.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that this government has again demonstrated the lack of concern for the vulnerable people of Saskatchewan. This NDP government has recently announced that they plan to spend 1 million taxpayer dollars to celebrate Saskatchewan's 90th birthday, yet they also plan to eliminate funding for nursing homes that house the increasing population of seniors who built this very province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a quote from *Hansard*, March 28, 1989, from the then former health critic, the member from Regina Hillsdale:

It's time for this government to get its priorities straight, to cancel its birthday celebration, and to start spending its money where it counts, and where the people of this province want the money spent. And that's in our major services such as health, education and social services.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister of Health, I want you to tell the people of Saskatchewan today why your priorities are parties and not the well-being of our pioneers.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, from the day this government was put into office our priority has been to restore

the fiscal security and future of the province of Saskatchewan, and yesterday in this province, Mr. Speaker, we took a giant step forward in achieving that goal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, by taking that giant step forward we are now in a position, as the Minister of Finance has indicated, that where there are some surplus dollars we'll be able to lower the debt of this province, relieve the taxpayer of this province, and to provide some program initiatives in the important areas of health and education.

And as the member well knows, in this budget there is one of the most progressive initiatives that we have seen in the province of Saskatchewan. As a result of this budget, Mr. Speaker, we will have available to communities across our province the most comprehensive program and people-sensitive program of community-based and home-based services that you will find anywhere in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously what the Minister of Health isn't catching on to, the people of Saskatchewan don't want millions spent on health board elections. They don't want the millions spent on things that they don't need. They want their services back.

Mr. Speaker, our rural health care system has been turned upside down by this government with little or no consultation with the people who are directly affected.

Mr. Speaker, again this is really about choices. Not one person in this province is against health care reform but they definitely question this government's decisions and choices. Other provinces have cut spending by \$240 million in health and not closed one rural hospital.

Mr. Speaker, given these facts today — Mr. Minister — can you explain your government's decisions to close rural hospitals and inadequately fund regional hospitals that has left people all across this province feeling vulnerable, frightened, and without a safe and reliable health care system?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member again my surprise that the Liberal caucus House Leader, on the day after the provincial budget — the first budget, balanced budget, in Canada, which has gained national attention — that the House Leader of the Liberal caucus is not addressing that issue today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, somehow this caucus, its leader, and now its back bench, are walking all sides of the street. Today the member is suggesting, I believe what he's suggesting, is that we should be putting more resources into health care. Now I've heard his leader, in the last 24 hours, in the last 24 hours, say you've got to cut government, government's way too big.

Mr. Speaker, where will the Liberal caucus have us cut in the Department of Health? What is the answer to where the cuts should be undertaken in the Department of Health? When the member stands up and when his leader stands up and tells us where those cuts should be taken, then we can have, I think, a good debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Budget Provisions

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. Madam Minister, you're taxing people more and more. You're spending more and more in this government. You're taking from farm families, as we've seen in the budget. You're leaving huge profits in Crown corporations to be used for . . . that could've been used for paying down the debt of this province or directing it towards tax cuts, while at the same time you are saying Saskatchewan has entered a new day. Editorialists around this province disagree with you, Madam Minister.

And I'll just quote from one editorialist, Bruce Johnstone, and he says:

So, at the end of the day, Saskatchewan will still be the same old place it's always been: a small, overtaxed, land-locked province waiting for its ship to come in.

Just sitting around waiting for its ship to come in. Madam Minister . . .

The Speaker: — I won't make a comment from the comment made by the member from Estevan, but I could not hear what the Leader of the Opposition was asking. Order. Order, order.

I'd like to have the Leader of the Opposition put his question again so the minister can hear it and answer the question. Order, order.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I know that your back-benchers don't like to hear about the kinds of things you're doing to farm families or the kinds of profits, the huge profits, you're leaving in Crown corporations, Madam Minister. And that's why the Provincial Auditor is saying that you're not telling the whole story. That you're purposely, purposely leaving money in Crown corporations. At the same time you're taking from farm families, you got this big election slush fund that's just ready.

That's the question, Madam Minister. Will you admit to the people of Saskatchewan today that you are building up huge profits in Crown corporations, all the while you're taking from farm families, just in time for the next election campaign for whenever the member from Riversdale decides to drop the writ?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to follow the line of reasoning. Have they already conceded this election to us and they think we're building a slush fund for the

next election? I mean if this is a slush fund and this is an election budget, why aren't we spending the slush fund? I don't know, this is like Tory numbers.

But he likes quotes; so do I. Let me give him a couple. Dale Botting, hardly a consistent admirer of this government: how can you criticize a budget that puts a down payment on our total gross debt, balances the budget last year, balances the budget this year, looks at balancing the budget for the next four years, and provides tax relief?

Let me finish with a comment made nationally by Mike Duffy, and I think he said it best. He said it best. He said: so what you're saying is zero deficit, the goose egg, and he, our Premier, is now paying down the debt? A remarkable achievement and the result of having some political courage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, order. I will ask the Premier and the former premier to please, if they wish to have a discussion, to do it outside of the chambers. The minister couldn't even hear the Bill that was being introduced. Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure once again to enter into the debate on the budget.

As we have been talking about all through question period, Madam Minister, and Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, there's lots of people that have lots of concerns about your budget and we're just beginning to see that now.

And, Madam Minister, we're seeing where the Provincial Auditor is saying, you haven't been clean with people. You haven't been up front; you haven't been straight with people. And we're also seeing other editorialists saying the same thing, Madam Minister.

We'll start with the Provincial Auditor where he says that the Crown corporations, there's huge amounts of profits that are being left with Crown corporations right today, Madam Minister, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan I think can only wonder why that's the case.

And they're talking about . . . were talking about a slush fund being built up for the next election campaign for the NDP. And

I think that's very obvious. And the minister makes light of it and says that they're building it up for the next election campaign after this one. Well what kind of ridiculous notion is that? Everyone knows, Mr. Speaker, that what they are doing is hiding away Crown profits, so when they come into an election campaign, they can trot out the goodies to the people of Saskatchewan and try and buy their votes once again. The exact same way they've always tried to buy the votes of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. The way they did it in every election campaign in memory, Mr. Speaker.

It all goes . . . we see the same, exactly the same thing, happening in Saskatchewan today that we saw back in 1982 and earlier, where a government felt more concerned about the Crown corporations of this province than the families of this province, Mr. Speaker. More concern, more concern about the Crown corporations, the family of Crown corporations, than the real family of this province.

Particularly when you look at what has happened in agriculture. It's no surprise, Mr. Speaker, farmers are getting bills in the mail every day, it turns out, right now. They're getting a bill in terms of their GRIP premiums; they're getting a bill in terms of the adjustments with their crop insurance right now, Mr. Speaker. Most farmers have got two bills from this government in the last little while — two bills farm families have.

And now they see the balancing of this budget has been done on the backs of the farmers. And they see it and they don't like it. I was in a meeting last night out in Last Mountain-Touchwood and the moment that the farmers of that community found out where this budget was being balanced, they all of a sudden turned on you, Mr. Premier. Prior to that they thought, well, not a bad job; balanced the budget.

But as soon as they found out that \$189 million of it was recorded as other income, and when the people found out that that other income was GRIP premiums, they turned on you, sir. They turned on you, sir. They said, this Premier is wrong to do that. This Premier was wrong to take from farm families. This Premier was wrong to cancel GRIP contracts. This Premier doesn't know the value of a contract. This Premier has not been straight with the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier, they're asking, Mr. Speaker, is he going to tell all that on Sunday when he talks to the people of this province? Is he going to stand in his place and say to the people of this province, yes, we have balanced the budget; here's how we've done it; we've taken from farm families and we've left huge profits in Crown corporations?

I challenge the Premier that on Sunday when he's talking to the people of this province, tell the whole story — tell the whole story — so farmers across this province know what has happened to them and what the rest of the people are being asked to bear the burden as well in huge profits in Crown corporations and utilities, Mr. Premier. Tell them everything on Sunday. Talk about those kinds of things. Talk about how you broke their contract, to begin with.

And talk about gambling; that's another good question. VLTs (video lottery terminal) in this province, income is disputed. We understand, Mr. Speaker, that the average VLT machine is taking somewhere in the neighbourhood of a thousand dollars a week — a thousand dollars a week on average — is what is being taken by the average VLT machine that's out there.

You go into a small community. There might only be a hotel left in lots of communities. I can think of one of them, White Bear, Saskatchewan, where the former minister of Agriculture, within his constituency, he knows all about White Bear, Saskatchewan. All that's left there, all that's left there is a hotel. And they have four VLT machines in there.

Four thousand dollars a week is being drained out of that community by this government, \$4,000 a week. And at the same time, they're draining from the farmers of that community, around that community, Mr. Speaker, GRIP premiums and overpayments in crop insurance, draining that out of them and, at the same, Mr. Speaker, they've closed their hospital. At the same time. Decimating rural Saskatchewan, that's what you people are doing to rural Saskatchewan these days.

And that's why when you go around to rural Saskatchewan and you talk about all of these kinds of things to the people of rural Saskatchewan, they know now that you can't trust this Premier. You cannot trust this government because they've seen . . . they have had proof positive time after time after time about what this government is prepared to do them.

And the minister from North Battleford there, he knows all about that because I think he's been out in his communities and that's why he's not going to run in a rural constituency. He's going to take North Battleford as his constituency because he knows that that other constituency of Cut Knife-Battleford he wouldn't have a hope in because the farmers out there at mad at him. We were talking to them out there.

We were out there earlier this week and they're very upset with this government because they suspicioned all along, suspicioned all along that their premiums were going to be directed to balancing this budget. And we've seen that now.

That's why editorialists are saying some of the things that they're saying about this government. That's why, I suspect, the Premier thought he was going to get glowing marks and the Finance minister was going to get glowing marks for this budget. But now when the light begins to shine on how they did it, now the people of this province are beginning to come forward in opposition to it.

And that's why editorialists are saying things like:

So, at the end of the day, Saskatchewan will still be the same old place it's always been: a small, over-taxed, land-locked province waiting for its ship to come in.

Waiting for its ship to come in.

And the Finance minister stands — I couldn't believe it — the Finance minister stands in her place and says that what they have done to the farmers in this province is better than what has happened in Alberta and Manitoba. Incredible.

Where is the money that is in Alberta and Manitoba with respect to the GRIP? Where is it? Where is it? It's in the farmers' hands, that's where it is. And the Economic Development minister knows that.

The farmers of Manitoba and the farmers of Alberta have had the money and they've used the money, and that's why agriculture is booming in those places because they've been able to reinvest into their operations.

And that's why we see things like 79,000 jobs in Alberta today because they're reinvesting into their communities and into their operations and into farm business, Mr. Speaker. That's what is happening in Alberta where people have had the benefit of a program that was set up to benefit farmers, not the provincial treasury, like is happening in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's little wonder that the Provincial Auditor is saying that the picture of this budget isn't clear, because it isn't clear to everyone else in this province either, Mr. Speaker. But it's becoming clear, it's becoming clear the farm families will find out about this around this province. They will realize what this government has done to them. People that are in small towns will realize what gambling is doing to them. It's just beginning to happen, Mr. Speaker.

It's just beginning to see where a thousand dollars a week is being drained by the average VLT machine from each community. A thousand dollars a week. Could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, what kind of revenue that's taking out of the average small community in rural Saskatchewan these days, what it is doing to them? What it is doing in terms of the moral fibre of that community? What is it doing to the resources and finances of people in those communities?

The evidence is very clear, Mr. Speaker — VLT gambling is addictive, the most addictive form of gambling there is, according to gambling experts. The most addictive form of gambling there is, because it's all of the lights and whistles and bells and all of those kinds of things and it happens so quickly, it gives the gamblers that gambling rush, that gambling rush that they all seem to have to have in order to continue going.

And they're plugging them in, loonie after loonie after loonie, and it's just draining out of their community into the Finance minister's pocket, Mr. Speaker. Draining out of their community into the Finance minister's pocket.

Saskatoon, Regina, we see casinos, big mega-casinos going to be built in this province, on-reserve gambling, maybe off-reserve gambling. No one knows where it's all going to go. No studies to indicate whether they're going to benefit this province, in fact very little evidence that there will.

Most studies have shown in other jurisdictions when gambling is brought in that actually there's economic decay rather than opportunity, Mr. Speaker. They're holding out the promise to the people of this province, that when you plug in a dollar maybe there'll be a windfall at the end of the day. No wealth creation whatsoever, just the hope, just the dream of hoping that when you plug that loonie in that there might be a pail of money flow out at the bottom. Just an unreasonable dream.

Everyone knows that people's efforts would be far better spent if they were using that money for their economic well-being, rather than just plugging it into another machine and watching it go down the drain. And that's what's happening in Saskatchewan all across this province today, Mr. Speaker, where the dream of VLTs is what the . . . the only hope that this Finance minister and this government is giving to the people of this province. That's the only hope, Mr. Speaker. And that's why people across this province are rebelling. That's why they think that they should have been looking at different things, Mr. Premier, as solutions to the problems in this province.

They should have been looking at cutting spending, Mr. Speaker. They should have been looking at starting at the top. They should have been looking at cutting the cabinet. They should have been looking at cutting the Premier's office staff.

They should have been looking at cutting the Premier, the Premier's own million dollar pension. Should have been looking at that. If they wanted to cut a million dollars, I could find a million dollars for the people of Saskatchewan in one fell swoop — the Premier's pension alone, Mr. Speaker. They should have been looking at reducing the number of staff that that Premier has.

They should have been looking at eliminating the provincial secretariat. When we mentioned that last night in the meeting, I couldn't believe the response. People don't even know what the Provincial Secretary is, Mr. Speaker. It's the highest paid secretary by far in this province. Seven million dollars is the budget of the Provincial Secretary — \$7 million. And that budget has increased by 200 per cent, 200 per cent since this government took over — 200 per cent.

What it's used for, as we all know, is political polling and all of those kinds of things, the kinds of things that this Premier operates on and the way he makes his decisions; the kind of political polling that is telling him right today that he's made some mistakes. He's made some mistakes in terms of health care reform, he's made some huge mistakes in agriculture, and he's made mistakes with gambling too. And that's what that polling, I suspect, is telling this Premier.

They should have been looking at, Mr. Speaker, eliminating things like third-party grants, business grants, Arts Board grants. Those are the kinds of cuts that are meaningful. They should have been looking at reducing the civil service in this province.

They should have been looking at welfare reform, Mr. Speaker.

They should have been looking at welfare reform where you're asking the able-bodied people of this province to contribute to the well-being of this province. The kindest and most compassionate thing that you can do for someone on welfare, Mr. Speaker, is not just hand them a cheque but teach them how to earn a cheque. That's the kindest and most compassionate thing that you can do for someone on welfare.

(1100)

And the NDP don't operate under that philosophy, and we know that because they want to keep people down. They want to reduce people to the lowest common denominator where people are dependent on government, dependent on people like themselves to give them something, to promise them something, to constantly be able to be the be-all and end-all, the cradle-to-the-grave mentality that permeates the benches opposite; the cradle-to-the-grave mentality that they say, we will protect you. Don't worry, we're the government; we can look after you.

We can look after you. We can keep the realities of the big, bad world from happening here in Saskatchewan. That's the kind of mentality that's always been part of the NDP philosophy.

He should have been looking at a 5 per cent cut to all government departments — 5 per cent, just as you took as a salary decrease and I took as a salary decrease. A 5 per cent cut wouldn't hurt any single department, and you know it, Mr. Minister, and Madam Minister, and Mr. Premier. Everyone in this province knows that there's 5 per cent can easily be cut from any budget, just as when you're asking farm families or households around this province.

When times get tough, what do they do? They cut back on spending. What does a business do when times get tough? They don't go in and increase their prices. They work harder; they cut their spending. That's what they do. And that's what this government should have done. It should have worked harder at cutting spending rather than taxing more and more and more.

You're spending . . . The revenue in this government — the revenue, the amount of taxation that this government takes in is up \$425 million over last year. Four hundred and twenty-five million dollars, almost a half a billion dollars, is being drained out of the economy of this province to satisfy the spending habits of this Premier.

That's what's happening, Mr. Speaker. Spending is up \$117 million on top of that. Projected tax relief by 1999 is \$82 million, less than one point off the PST (provincial sales tax). You're asking the people of this province -- cut back, cut back, cut back, cut back, but we're going to increase spending and we're going to keep on the profligate standard of government. It just says, spend more and more and more and more, without any indication of how that's going to change, Mr. Speaker.

You've balanced the budgets on families' backs. You've balanced the budget on the backs of Saskatchewan families.

And the editorialist, Murray Mandryk, he points out a real life situation where these folks in . . . Kathy and Larry Dolter in Regina, a fire-fighter, and his wife works as a teacher-administrator. They have a combined income of \$60,000, Mr. Speaker. And they say, we used to dream of earning \$60,000. Now that we do, it isn't so great. Because they see their taxes just increasing and increasing and increasing.

They have four kids — three of them teenagers. They don't drink. They don't smoke. They don't drive big, new cars, and they don't gamble. Fortunately for them, they don't gamble as well, or they'd even have more taxation on them by this government. In fact, the only thing out of ordinary is that they spend \$5,400 to educate their children in a Christian school. That's the only, what might be considered discretionary spending.

And what do they see? They see more and more of their money going towards taxes. More and more and more being drained off by this government on every single occasion. They see their income tax going up, they see their contributions to UIC (Unemployment Insurance Commission) and CPP (Canada Pension Plan) and everything else going up and up and up because of the philosophy of government to ask more and more and more from the people of this province. We see their utilities going up and up and up. Gasoline taxes going up and up and up.

And all the while, all the while, Mr. Speaker, they believe the Premier of this province when he said back in 1991 that he was going . . . there would be no new taxes. And that \$4.5 billion was enough of spending. That \$4.5 billion was enough, and if any premier couldn't operate on that, they don't deserve to be in government. I didn't say that. It's the member from Riversdale and the Premier of this province who made that pledge during the election campaign.

And I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province will remember that in the next election campaign. They'll remember this Premier who has said \$4.5 billion was enough and now is spending over \$5 billion. And the spending just keeps going on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Premier, I think he is wrong. I think he's wrong. I think the people will recognize it. I think the farmers of this province will remember. And I know that all rural members on that other side are hoping that farm families don't find out about the GRIP surplus and where its being directed today, and where their GRIP premiums are being directed today.

And the member from Biggar today sits there with a smile on his face. But I suspect the electorate is going to wipe that smile off your face, sir, because you were always one of the big proponents of help for agriculture; sat there and talked about it during the election campaign, talked about all of those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of this province will recognize this budget for what

it is. I think they will recognize where it's come from. I think they'll recognize that it's come from taking money from farmers and not taking money from Crown corporations. I think instead of taking it from the Crown corporation family of this province, they have taken it from farm families and everyone else, every other family in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, I think at the end of the day this government will reap its just reward in the next election campaign. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in this Assembly today and to enter into the debate on the budget speech. Mr. Speaker, I want to start out by congratulating our Minister of Finance for bringing forward yesterday the day that many of us have worked for for a lot of years. That's the day of the balanced budget, a balanced budget in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time I want to congratulate and thank our Premier for his excellent leadership, for his fortitude, and for his vision in being able to deliver to Saskatchewan to this great day. This day, Mr. Speaker, is truly a great day in Saskatchewan and it makes me proud; it makes me proud to be a Canadian, proud to be a Saskatchewan citizen, and proud to be a New Democrat.

Mr. Speaker, to bring forward, to bring forward the first balanced budget in Saskatchewan in over a decade is truly an achievement, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the first province in Canada to achieve that. Once again Saskatchewan is leading the way. As we have in the past, we are in the future leading the way to straightening the affairs of this province and straightening the affairs of this country so that we can once again enjoy the quality of life that Saskatchewan people and Canadians so much deserve.

But this budget, Mr. Speaker, was more than just a balanced budget. It set forth a plan for another five consecutive balanced budgets; a half a decade of progress, a half a decade of forward thinking government. And for that, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure no one will deny that all the credit goes to the fine people of Saskatchewan.

The fine people of this province who in 1991 recognized the need to change the direction of this province and called on the New Democratic Party to do that. They recognized that they needed the New Democrats to once again pull Saskatchewan out of the doldrums of deficits and debt that hung over our head and hung over this province like a dark, dark cloud.

Mr. Speaker, I give all the credit for the achievements of the past three and a half years to the people of Saskatchewan who pulled together, who made the sacrifices, who worked so cooperatively in order to see this great day dawning in Saskatchewan.

And all through this three and a half years, Mr. Speaker, I've often wondered why the other guys in the opposition benches criticized and criticized and criticized. What really made me wonder, Mr. Speaker, is why they would criticize the obvious, the bare, bold-faced facts, facts that have been substantiated by third party independent agencies.

And then it came to me, Mr. Speaker. It came to me why they would stand in this House and criticize the first balanced budget in Saskatchewan in over 10 years. It came to me, Mr. Speaker, simply by looking at their track records in government.

The Tories here in this province, when they were the government, delivered 10 straight deficit budgets. Deficits, deficits, deficits. Then we look at the Liberal track record in other provinces where they are the government and we see a similar thing. Deficits, deficits, and debt.

Then we look at the recent federal government. And I'll draw your attention to some of the news announcements of yesterday in regards to Moody's, a bond rating company in New York, looking and suggesting that they're going to review Canada's credit rating. And we know what that means, Mr. Speaker. It'll likely mean a downgrade.

That then tells me, Mr. Speaker, that the philosophy, the thoughts, the ideas, the intentions, and the hidden agenda of whether you be a Conservative or be a Liberal is exactly the same thing. That, Mr. Speaker, leads me to wonder why, if there is a difference between the two, then why when we check the voting records of *Hansard*, we see that they always vote the same way — further evidence and further proof that there is no difference between the two.

But this budget, Mr. Speaker, this budget shows that Saskatchewan once again is rising from the ashes of ruin by the other guys to a new day dawning. This budget, Mr. Speaker, not only is a balanced budget, but it also lays out a plan of debt management. Debt management, Mr. Speaker, that has hamstrung this province for the half a dozen years, hamstrung this province and left us at the whims of international bankers.

But thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, for this government and this government's long-term vision, and this government's fortitude to make the right decisions that will deliver Saskatchewan from the claws and the grips of the international bankers, and provide us once again with a financial freedom so that we can continue to pursue the establishment of programs, establishment of facilities to support the people of Saskatchewan. But not just the facilities and programs, Mr. Speaker, but programs and facilities that are on a leading edge, and leading the way, because that is what Saskatchewan people deserve — the best that's available.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, lays out a plan that is solid because it is built on what has already been accomplished. It has been built on the very principles, guiding principles of the vast majority of people of Saskatchewan, and those are the principles of cooperation, compassion, and community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — It has been those principles, Mr. Speaker, that have been the guiding light for this government. It has been those principles upon which we have built the turnaround of the Saskatchewan economy. And it is those principles that will sustain the Saskatchewan economy into the future, to meet the challenges of the future as we enter into a changing world.

Jobs, Mr. Speaker, are a clear priority in this budget, for we recognize that in order to have a strong economy we need the business investment, and with that business investment, Mr. Speaker, will come jobs. That, Mr. Speaker, has already started.

As I'm proud to say and draw your attention to StatsCanada figures which already indicate that there is 7,000 more jobs in Saskatchewan today than there was in 1991. Why, Mr. Speaker? Why it's simple. It's simply because the business world has confidence in Saskatchewan. They have confidence in Saskatchewan because they know that there's a government at hand and in control of this province that is a progressive government, and is looking forward to developing the economy that will allow business to grow and will allow jobs to be created and benefit the entire province.

But this, Mr. Speaker, has not been done along the lines of what the former government did or what the Liberals would do and that is cater to the corporate sector, cater to the big business by giving them . . . basically by giving away the store.

(1115)

No, Mr. Speaker, we have adopted the principles of community. We know very well, Mr. Speaker, that the communities in Saskatchewan are the backbone of our province and are the backbone of our economy. We know that the strengths of Saskatchewan lies in the people spread across this great province. We know that those are the people who will make the difference in Saskatchewan because they are committed to this province.

We've seen that start to happen, Mr. Speaker, through community-based industries being developed. An example I'll draw to your attention is Norquay Alfalfa Processors, Mr. Speaker, a three-year-old company that has created 70 jobs in that community.

I'll also draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to a recent announcement by Sask-Can Fibre which is a community . . . which is a cooperative, a straw cooperative, community-based group in Canora who have recently signed an agreement with Cargill to form a venture company, Dura-Fibre, to further explore the ability to take oil-seed flax straw and process it into commercially viable fibre.

To this ends, Mr. Speaker, they have established a pilot project in the town of Canora that will create five jobs during the lifetime of the pilot project which will be approximately two years. But from that will grow the technology necessary to

establish a full-fledged flax straw processing operation in the town of Canora. That, Mr. Speaker, will create a number of other jobs.

But the desire, Mr. Speaker, of Saskatchewan people to be in control of their own destiny and to have their own ability to finance themselves can be seen in a lot of sectors over our economy, and agriculture not the least.

As we've noticed in the last three years in particular, Mr. Speaker, a number of intensive hog operations springing up across Saskatchewan. Most of these hog operations are as a result of communities and individuals within those communities getting together and forming a community corporation, making their own investment in their own community, attracting financing and partnerships from larger companies throughout Saskatchewan to develop these operations. Many of these operations create 15 to 20 jobs each directly, but also create a tremendous number of spin-off jobs. It also creates the economic opportunity for farmers to get involved by producing feed grains to sell directly to those operations, which gives the farmer the fourth option or fifth option in his crop rotation and also gives him an increased cash flow.

Mr. Speaker, those are just a few of the things that are happening in Saskatchewan as far as economic development is concerned. And one other that I would be remiss if I didn't mention it, is the expanding livestock operations, expanding livestock operations, particularly cattle. In my neck of the woods, Mr. Speaker, just recently with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, a breeder-feeder co-op was formed.

That breeder-feeder co-op enables individuals who are presently involved in a cattle operation, and in some cases individuals who have not previously been involved in cattle operations, to start up a cattle operation. To this ends, Mr. Speaker, over this last three to four months in the Norquay area in particular, some 300 bred cows have been imported into that area as a result of this program. Further, Mr. Speaker, further supporting agriculture and further supporting farmers out there in their diversification attempts and enabling them to have a cash flow that will allow them to maintain a solid, strong farm operation.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Saskatchewan experienced a very good crop last year, with the exceptions of the odd spot in our province where weather conditions weren't conducive to the production of a good crop. But overall, Mr. Speaker, farm net income last year is at \$925 million, Mr. Speaker, a significant amount of money. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is 69 per cent higher than the previous 10-year average. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers are making the business decisions out there that will strengthen and support their operations and their industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was because farmers made those decisions to diversify, but made those decisions based on market signals and not on fickle government-support programs, is the reason that Saskatchewan's net farm income is the highest it has been

in the average of 10 years, but it's the reason why Saskatchewan is leading the way in agriculture diversification and why Saskatchewan is suggested by many of the agriculture economists to be on the verge of a major breakthrough and a major windfall in the agriculture economy.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that the world is changing and the world of agriculture is changing and is changing quite dramatically as a result of changes in global marketing and changes in global communications, and Saskatchewan farmers have recognized that, and Saskatchewan farmers are leading the way to meet those changes, to meet the challenges and to position themselves in a very good position to take advantages of the new markets that are expanding elsewhere around the world.

Mr. Farmer, there is no doubt — Mr. Speaker, pardon me — there is no doubt that farmers in Saskatchewan have recognized the fact that agriculture is changing and that change is being escalated by the global impact and by the changing marketplace. No longer, Mr. Speaker, can we be hewers of wood and carriers of water. In this world, this ever-changing world, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at value added, because no longer can we continue to produce a raw product here and ship it elsewhere to be value added . . . by that shipping away, the value-added benefits and the jobs.

Mr. Speaker, to this end, this budget supports that concept of value adding here in Saskatchewan, here in this province, keeping the value added benefits here, keeping the jobs here. It supports that, Mr. Speaker, it supports that by the reduction of the corporate income tax for manufacturers and processors. That, Mr. Speaker, has been reduced from 17 per cent to 10 per cent — the lowest of any province west of Quebec.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that this province is leading the way, leading the way on the recovery of Saskatchewan by setting an example and setting the trend for the other provinces in Canada to follow. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the present federal Liberal government could take a page out of our book.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I'm a farmer from Pelly constituency, and I think we all know the — for those of us at least who live out in rural Saskatchewan and do much of our business in our small communities — we all know how vital the small-business man is in our communities in providing us with the services and to act as a centre of that community and keeping that community alive and keeping the agricultural area around it serviced and alive.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, small business, we know, creates about 72 per cent of all the jobs created in our society. To that end, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance of the small-business man by reducing the small-business income tax to 8 per cent — the lowest provincial rate west of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that small business is the engine that drives our economy. And, Mr. Speaker, we as government are doing all that we can afford to do to assist small business in putting fuel in their tank to feed that engine that drives our economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Truly, Mr. Speaker, a good, solid foundation to build on, to create a provincial economy that is sustainable not only for today but for future generations. That, Mr. Speaker, is what's laid out in this budget. It's a lot more than just a balanced budget for today. It's a lot more than just a balanced budget for the next five years and for a half a decade. Mr. Speaker, what it is is a blueprint for success, prosperity, and opportunity for future generations in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — As the economy grows, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan trained workers will be needed to fill the various jobs. Those jobs, Mr. Speaker, will be created to meet the challenges of the future. As we know, the traditional jobs of the past in many cases may not be here, but they will be replaced with jobs of greater . . . requiring greater skills and greater educational levels.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that, and we've introduced a program called JobStart. JobStart, Mr. Speaker, that will provide work-based training programs, that will provide the opportunity for individuals to receive their training right in the workplace, hands-on experience to meet the needs of the various companies and corporations that they work for.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that the opportunities of the future will require specific training, higher qualities of education; and that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide the ability for post-secondary graduates with small . . . to find jobs with small and medium-sized firms that will benefit both ways. The individual students will have the opportunity for employment and the small and medium-sized firms will benefit from the expertise that these graduates bring to their companies.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we all agree that we live in a changing world, we live in a changing economy. And to that end, Mr. Speaker, we have to be prepared to meet the challenges of the future. And those challenges, Mr. Speaker, will be met best with an educated workforce.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, we are endeavouring in every way possible to provide financial assistance for the youth of today, to gain that opportunity to further their education so that they can be educated leaders of tomorrow. To that end, Mr. Speaker, we have created, or will be creating . . . this budget lays out a plan to create 2,400 new jobs for summer students.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Those jobs, Mr. Speaker, will assist these students in paying for their education, providing them the opportunity to earn some money, not only to help through the summer, but to provide them with the opportunity to save some dollars to assist them in their education throughout their classes.

Mr. Speaker, greater student aid to better reflect the cost of living and the possible increased costs of secondary education is first and foremost. As we noticed, Mr. Speaker — as we noticed, Mr. Speaker — the reports on the news over the last few weeks have indicated the real intentions of the federal Liberal government to turn their backs on the youth of Canada, and in particular the youth of Saskatchewan, by offloading their responsibilities to funding our post-secondary institutions, and forcing those post-secondary institutions to increase their tuition fees, and thusly increasing the cost to students to obtain their education, and thus limiting the number of students who would be able to achieve that.

Mr. Speaker, any forward-thinking government recognizes that a strong economy and a good quality of education is required to maintain a good quality of life. We recognize that, Mr. Speaker, and we are doing everything we can as a province to provide the educational opportunities for our youth.

(1130)

Mr. Speaker, high quality of life means high quality of health care. High quality of health care is what Saskatchewan people are going to get once again. Quality health care comes about as a result of change. Mr. Speaker, in this term of government we have embarked upon the road of changing the delivery system of health care in Saskatchewan. Change, Mr. Speaker, is what we've always been about. For without change we would have never had hospitalization in 1947.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, from looking at history books, we know what the Liberals of the day said. The Liberals of the day, Mr. Speaker, went around Saskatchewan saying that if hospitalization was ever introduced, it would be the worst thing possible because there would be no hospitals left in Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Liberals said, at the end of the day when hospitalization was introduced, Saskatchewan ended up with more hospitals and more hospital beds per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

For without change, Mr. Speaker, in 1962 we would have never had medicare. And I can, Mr. Speaker, even at my tender young age, I can remember, Mr. Speaker, the circumstances surrounding the introduction of medicare in 1962. I can remember what the Liberals were saying. The Liberals went around Saskatchewan and said that if medicare was introduced there wouldn't be a doctor left in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals took a leadership role in going around Saskatchewan and into almost every community and organized KOD meetings — Keep Our Doctors. At these meetings, Mr. Speaker, they would bombard the public with misinformation, half-truths, and stirred the public up. They worked with the

doctors, Mr. Speaker — and not all, but some of the doctors here in Saskatchewan — and encouraged them to withdraw their services for a period of time.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, the rallies that took place in the front of this legislature. And I even remember the leader of the Liberals at that time, Mr. Thatcher, kicking at the door of the legislature — kicking at the door of the legislature, Mr. Speaker. He was the leader of the Liberals and he was kicking at the door of the legislature. Why? Because he wanted to get into this legislature and destroy medicare.

Well, Mr. Speaker, medicare was introduced in 1962. And when at a later point in time Ross Thatcher was the premier of Saskatchewan, even he couldn't with one fatal swoop of the pen remove medicare from Saskatchewan. He tried, though, to chip away at the foundations. He tried to chip away at the foundations by introducing utilization fees and deterrent fees. And personally, Mr. Speaker, I well remember those times.

But recently, Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention by some of my wife's family members, of a personal experience that their family went through during that particular period in Saskatchewan's history.

My wife had an aunt, Tillie Bury, who in 1970, Mr. Speaker, lost her battle with cancer. She lost a five- or six-month battle with cancer that found her hospitalized for four to six months. And, Mr. Speaker, she lost that battle by leaving us and leaving this good world.

And at that time of her departing, Mr. Speaker, her husband and her family were all with her in the hospital room there in Canora. And as the tear-struck family was leaving the hospital and walking past the admittance desk, the nurse there reached out and said, Mr. Bury, come over here, please; you have a bill to pay. You have a hospital bill to pay, Mr. Speaker; you have a Liberal death tax to pay.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what Liberals are all about. That, Mr. Speaker, is what Liberal health care programs are designed for. Mr. Speaker, that will never happen here in Saskatchewan as long as there's a New Democratic government at the helm of the ship of state of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying how proud I am, how proud I am to be a part of this forward-looking, progressive, compassionate government. And, Mr. Speaker, how proud I am to be a part of this history, a part of a new day and a new dawn breaking all across Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to get a chance to speak in support of this quite remarkable budget. But before I do, I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome you and

the other members back to this House. I didn't get a chance to speak to the throne speech, so I'll take that opportunity just now.

It's nice to see you up there, sir, and I look forward to a productive session with you and colleagues on both sides of the House. Why I've even got used to the faces of those guys on the other side there. It seems the appropriate place for them, and I must congratulate the member for Kindersley for his new post as Leader of the Opposition, and I hope that he spends a happy and productive lifetime leading the opposition.

I'd also like to congratulate our new Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. J.E.N. Wiebe. I'm sure that he'll make a good job of it and I hope that he will enjoy his tenure of the office.

Personally, I consider it a great honour to be asked to perform this office. It may well be a political plum, but even so there are many people who get passed over. And the person who does get it, I consider a great honour to them to get it. And really I envy them the position and I hope he'll enjoy it.

He said in his opening remarks of the throne speech that in 1991 Saskatchewan did indeed face one of its darkest hours, and he was so true. We suffered the effects of a decade of Tory misrule in this province, piggybacked on top of the decade of Tory misrule down in Ottawa — that everybody in the country had to put up with — and that was adding insult to injury.

Anyway, we have turned this province round, sir. Whether the opposition likes it or not, we've done so.

And the opposition tells us we're lucky. And I'm sure it's true. But I firmly believe that we make our own luck. I think that is what is meant by the expression "fortune favors the brave" because the New Democratic Party and its predecessor, the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation), have been brave and brave and brave, time and time again.

I get the same impression living in Saskatchewan as I did living in England during the Second World War, during the Blitz. Our attitude then was, do your worst; our turn will come. It certainly did. And part of it was because we got people like Winston Churchill and David Lloyd George and Clement Atlee who got together and formed a coalition to face the common enemy, the common trials, and the common disasters.

If we could do that in this House, we'd be further forward. Unfortunately, we do not get the cooperation of the two opposition parties. And on top of the baying of the opposition hounds, we have the bleating of a little quailing.

Nevertheless, we have managed to balance the budget. And I hope that this means that perhaps we can get a little bit more money for rural services in general and for health care in particular. An announcement of \$20 million extra has been made and I'd like to see where that goes when the time comes that it is distributed.

The effects of the cuts out on the periphery really have been devastating on so many of our little towns and our inhabitants. I get a lot of this in feedback, particularly because I'm a physician, and people expect me to understand and know something about it. And they bring their medical problems to me.

If they don't bring their agriculture problems to me, it's because I can't tell the difference between a blade of wheat and a blade of oats. And that's fair enough. There are other members in the caucus here who can deal with that. But medicine is something that I know something about, and people bring me their medical problems.

So we did have a stroke of luck. But if that particular stroke of luck we had had not appeared, another one would have. Fortune favours the brave. It happens over and over again. But when the luck comes, you have to be waiting for it and ready to grasp it.

We had planned to balance the budget next year, sir, 1996-97. But as Shakespeare put it in *Julius Caesar*: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

And this applies to government as well as to individuals. It applies to premiers and it applies to ministers of Finance. At least the flood came to Julius Caesar. We were in rather a difficult position, sir, because not only was there no flood, we had to wade down through the mud to the lowest ebb in Saskatchewan's history and provide our own flood before we could even attempt to take it, whilst for 10 years the Tories sat around like so many Mr. Micawbers, waiting for something to turn up. Do they not read, sir, or is it just that they do not understand?

Perhaps they are like the vampire in Rudyard Kipling's poem of 1897. And it goes like this:

And it isn't the shame
And it isn't the blame
That sears like a white hot brand.
It's coming to know that they never knew why
(Seeing at last they could never know why)
And never could understand.

And what do we get, sir? Not just a balanced budget forecast in '95-96 and for every year into the foreseeable future, but as a bonus we get a balanced budget for the year '94-95. Surprise, surprise! The shock I got at the briefing yesterday morning to find that we got a balanced budget for this year as well was incredible — two for the price of one. Yes, sir, we are lucky.

And if you look back to previous NDP administrations, you'll see that they've always been lucky too. Go back beyond that to Tommy Douglas and the CCF and Woodrow Lloyd and more luck, sir. And now we know why.

This doesn't mean that I cannot be critical, but there's a difference between positive criticism and negative criticism. If I

tell you, sir, that I like your hat, that's positive criticism. If I tell you that you've got muddy boots, that's negative criticism. But there's a difference also between constructive criticism and destructive criticism. So as I go on to say that your boots are muddy but take them off and put these slippers on, then my negative criticism becomes constructive.

Let me read you a definition of the word critic from *Gage Canadian Dictionary*: "a person who makes judgements of the merits and faults of books, music, pictures, plays, acting, etc." I assume that we can add policies to that, but note the words used, "merits and faults", not just faults. That's just for the knockers up in that gallery there, sir, who like Kipling's vampire never will understand the point of government and the way this particular government works.

The new Governor General, Romeo LeBlanc, at his installation put it very succinctly to the press. He said, remember fellas, there is good news as well as bad.

And the dictionary defines criticism as an art, but for those who normally sit up there who have turned it into pornography, sir, perhaps you've heard of the four major bones in the body. As an anatomist I know this quite well. The wishbones who wish that things were easier; the jawbones that sit around the coffee pot and talk about everything; the knuckle-bones that knock everything; and the backbones that get under the load and move it.

(1145)

The Tories were the wishbones for 10 years; the Liberals are just jawbones; the knuckle-bones are up in the press gallery; and the backbones are the cabinet of this province, sir.

I like the idea of a balanced budget and I like the idea of balanced budget legislation combined with flexibility, the way it seems to be laid out, as long as it really is flexible. Sometimes we lose the real meaning of terms in the same way as people talk about criticism as being entirely negative and never positive.

For some reason or other, a gentlemen up there decided that I'm a dissident. I don't know what the opposite to dissident is — maybe a consonant. Certainly I'm a dissenter as a Protestant. And as being a non-Catholic of course, that makes me automatically a heretic.

But I wish people would look up the words in the dictionary though before they use them rather than say silly things. And the photograph was lousy, too.

But we do have problems with definitions. But if we have real flexibility and use it the way it should be used, meaning you can go either way not just one way only, and don't use it hypocritically as sometimes words like compassionate can be overused and abused.

When I have a contractor to do a job in my house there's going

to be a mess. I expect that. But part of the contract is that he will clear up that mess after he's finished, and if he doesn't, then I don't pay him.

And in government there are times when you need to borrow and get into debt. But I see no obvious reason why the government shouldn't work in the same way as a contractor. The contractor makes a mess, he clears it up. The big mess in government is getting into debt, and they should be forced to clear that up before they call an election.

So they borrow for a year or two to get things organized, their programs put into place, but they should balance the budget in the last year. And I think this is the sensible thing.

And if they balance the budget in the fourth year, expecting an election, and something happens that they decide to wait for the fifth year for an election, then obviously they're going to have to balance the budget in the fifth year too. And that is a plus for us. And I think this is a sort of unexpected side effect of a balanced budget over a four-year period.

And another side effect of this is that it would prevent a snap election. If somebody gets . . . if government gets into trouble after a couple of years and they're in a mess financially, they can't just throw up their hands and go through an election and say, damn it, somebody else can get in and fix it. Because they wouldn't be able to go to the election unless they had a balanced budget.

So they'd have to bear this very much in mind. This would be an added protection to the people in the province and another incentive for the government to be careful with its financing. The problem is of course that there's no way we can guarantee that the Tories won't ignore this like they ignored the maximum five-year term in 1991 and went over.

Mind you, I doubt if they'll get a chance to trash the place again within my lifetime, sir. Once bitten, twice shy.

I remember speaking in an earlier budget debate two or three years ago — I forget exactly when but it's in *Hansard* — when we introduced the idea of a four-year budget plan. At the time, sir, there were howls of derision from the opposition benches. And I said at the time that the howls were not because they doubted we could do it, but because they knew we could do it and we would do it. And we have, sir. We have, in spades.

Each year we cut approximately \$300 million from the year's previous deficit until we've arrived at this happy event when we can announce not only that we intend to do it but — surprise, surprise — we have already done it. No fuss, no big drums, no fanfare of trumpets, no cheerleaders, no drum majorettes. We just did it quietly and competently.

So maybe the Tories' champion in Alberta will announce a balanced budget when he gets his chance in a week or two's time; or the Liberal idol down in New Brunswick will do the same — will announce that they're going to be balancing the

budget for '95 and '96. And we could just sit back here and smile very contentedly and tell them, so what, we did it last year. The bliss is incredible, sir.

And the long faces over there during the budget yesterday . . . It's great to sit in this particular place. It may not be very important, but you see everything. And the faces getting longer and longer and the expressions getting blacker and blacker as each new successful part of the budget came out was a triumph, sir.

And there is a difference between them and us. Sometimes we get to think that there isn't; that if there is, it's very minimal. But there is a difference, and that is in the word competence. And I don't think we have to say anything more on that score because we have proved it and we will keep on proving it, sir.

Sir, we shall be reducing the corporate tax on small businesses whose total manufacturing and processing is in Saskatchewan, and if part of their manufacturing is in Saskatchewan we'll reduce the tax on that. For DeCap's Trailer Manufacturing in Lafleche and Keith Brown's Custom Ag Industries in Gravelbourg this should result in a reduction of tax from 17 per cent all the way down to the 10 per cent because they are confined to Saskatchewan. They're Saskatchewan-born people, Saskatchewan-bred people, and they've devoted their whole lives to Saskatchewan farming and business.

And Sunset Solar Systems in Assiniboia who deal in solar equipment and they also manufacture windmills which are sold all over Canada and the United States, they should benefit from this too. And this is exactly the sort of stimulus our economy needs. And it's directed to the right sector of manufacturing, the small guys struggling along in our small towns — not the nationals and the multinationals that have enough already. Why should we give them money?

If there's money to be given away in Saskatchewan, let's give it to the people who live here and work here and will be buried here, not people who simply step over the border with their hand out and when you fill it they say, that's not enough, fill the other hand too. And this I think is very positive and I should be very happy to tell people about this in the constituency — in the present constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and the new constituency of Wood River.

Yes, the opposition is going to tell us we're lucky. And they're right — we are lucky. And why are we lucky? We're lucky because we plan ahead. We plan ahead and we make good plans and then we nail our colours to the mast.

Now to you landlubbers, perhaps that doesn't mean anything, so I'll explain. Before engaging in a naval battle each ship of the line runs up its national flag so its own ships won't fire upon it, of course. And it runs this up to the top of the highest mast and the signal for surrender is for it to strike its colours and pull the flag down. And that means to the opposition, don't fire on us any more; we're surrendered; we're captured; we won't fire at all again.

But the tradition in the Royal Navy has long been to send a sailor shinnying up the mast after the flag with a hammer and a mouth full of staples. And his job is to staple the flag to the mast so it can't be struck; it can't be pulled down. Then they get the choice: you either fight and win, or you die. And out in the middle of the ocean there's nowhere to run unless you can walk on water. And we as a government have fought and won, sir, and we lived. And this is where the member of Shaunavon is seen to be such a sad man, sir. He struck his colours, turned and fled before the enemy was even in ranging distance.

My sources tell me that he joined the New Democratic Party way back in 1978. In the fall of 1991 through his own efforts he won the chance to do something for his home town and the people that he lived with, but when the time came he failed. In 1993 he sold his birthright for a mess of potage that's worth maybe \$5,000 a year. As it says in the good book: "O ye of little faith." It's really rather sad.

Over the time his friends and colleagues I'm sure will forgive him, but will he forgive himself, sir? This is the real question. Twice they've called and decided on a nominating convention, and twice they postponed it. His enemy is not me, sir, his enemy is not a Tory even, but a fellow Liberal. One that, unfortunately for him, can't be bought off by being given a Senate seat because we have none available in this province, and in any case they're not government either.

As a matter of fact, I wish him well and hope he wins his nomination, sir, because it's going to be a lot easier to beat a turncoat than Gerry Ruess who, if nothing else, at least is an outspoken and, I hope, honourable Liberal.

And this is the Liberal quandary. He has served his purpose, which makes him disposable, I'm afraid. But fortunately for him, he has two motherly ladies looking after him. So let us just watch what happens, sir, when the tin roof gets hotter in the spring sunshine, because I understand the cat's claws are notoriously tender.

And if I wander off the point, sir, let me get back. To repeat, we are lucky because we plan ahead and we plan well. And safe within our plan, when a bit of luck passes by we can reach out and grab it and incorporate that luck into our plan. When we planned to balance the budget, we left a little bit of room for luck, knowing that something would come by. And when that luck came, and it doesn't matter whether it's in the form of increased gas and oil permit revenues or a bumper crop or gold or diamonds — what difference does it make? — we took that luck because everybody likes a bit of gravy. And I'm looking forward to the next year when we have that meal.

Now I'd like to talk about one or two things in my own area, Assiniboia-Gravelbourg constituency and Wood River. The big problem in Gravelbourg of course is the nursing home. It's been promised and it's been promised and it's been promised again. Three members of this Legislative Assembly have either battled with the problem or not battled with the problem. How do we know whether they actually tried or whether they didn't? But

nevertheless each of them in turn failed to get it going. It's been designed, it's been redesigned, and it's designed over and over again.

Do you know, we spent over \$800,000 in plans, in pieces of paper with pictures on them. You know, those plans are almost as valuable as Rembrandts or Van Goghs or Salvador Dalis. Architects are retiring on the proceeds of Gravelbourg alone. It's ridiculous, sir.

It was way back in 1978 that the government of the day, and that was the previous NDP government under Allan Blakeney, they agreed that our hospital was too old — it was built in 1928, sir — and our nursing home was a fire trap and both needed replacement. And it took 16 long frustrating years to get the go-ahead. And we've been working on it solidly since then.

(1200)

And now, thanks to the present government, the walls and the roof are on and we're working inside, and we're very happy that we have got this. And I thank the Minister of Health and the previous minister of Health and the Finance minister, who found the money, and the Premier who was quite insistent that this go ahead.

And we have a letter, signed by the deputy minister of Health, Duane Adams himself, dated June 20, 1994, instructing us to start building a 50-bed long-term facility.

I also have a document dated September 28, 1993 which was produced by the district support branch of the department, which states, and I quote:

. . . 50 replacement beds in Gravelbourg meet the target range of 120-140 beds (per)/1000 population aged over 75 for this district.

I even have a letter addressed to me as the mayor of Gravelbourg dated December 1, 1988 — a long time ago — when we were offered 75 beds. And he cut it down — 50 and we accept that, okay, no problem. We all need to draw in our horns.

But on November 8, 1994 a meeting was held at St. Joseph's Hospital. Members of the Department of Health, the district health board, our local hospital board, members of the medical staff, and myself were present. A certain Bob Croft, who is an ex-employee of the Department of Health and now a consultant employed by the department, told us quite categorically that if we did not accept the cut-back to 43 long-term beds, we would get no acute care beds.

Now you can imagine what the hospital board and the local people think about this. We consider this blackmail, sir, that somebody like that, after it's been decided by the department in 1993 that 50 long-term beds are within the 120 to 140 limit and then we get a letter from June 20 from the deputy minister himself telling us to go ahead with 50 beds, I cannot understand

why some twit like that comes to us and tries to strong-arm us into making do with what you see.

What are we going to do with the other seven who were there, sir? This is the problem. As it is, our facility is for levels 1 and 2, and the government sensibly decided to make this a level 3 and level 4 because every member, every resident, is level 3 and level 4. And we do not have room for those other seven. We can't send them to Assiniboia. They've got 50 level 3 and level 4 in a level 1 and level 2 home already. And they're going to have to leave that building open and in use until we can find places for those 50 people.

It doesn't make any sense now to cut back after a decision is made and redesign the building at so much extra cost. And we've already got 37 people on the waiting-list who are sitting in the area at home.

I wouldn't accept this sort of treatment from the Tories or the Liberals. There's no way I can accept this sort of treatment for the people that I have lived amongst for 18 years, and worked with and worked for, without some acceptable explanation.

The NDP has always been, in my opinion, honourable, truthful, and compassionate. That's why I joined in the first place. I wrote, protesting, pointing this out. The letter was not even acknowledged. Sir, we can and we must do better than that. Credibility depends upon our reliability. And I am prepared to risk my seat in this Assembly to ensure that we live up to our obligations in this respect.

I joined the New Democratic Party many years ago because I was convinced that, under Tommy Douglas and Woodrow Lloyd and Allan Blakeney, this party had done an excellent job of running this province. However, I feel it is time for some small boy to point out to the emperor that if he goes outside in his new suit of clothing, he's going to get frostbite in some very interesting places. Where I was raised, we were taught to tell the truth and shame the devil.

But I'd like to know where the member from Shaunavon was during all this. The member who was so horrified of our hospital closures that he scuffled across the floor to hide behind the skirts of a surrogate mother. He seems to have been rather subdued until the last couple of days, sir. I don't know why, maybe it's the nomination coming up that's sort of galvanized him a little bit. Why didn't he stay over here and help me if he had problems with health care in rural Saskatchewan? He never mentioned his problems once, and in the caucus vote on the matter, if I remember rightly, he voted for it. He seemed to agree with the policy then, sir.

Only when the session was ended and everybody had dispersed did he show his true colours. He did not have the courage to make a declaration in this House and walk boldly across the floor. No, sir, he waited till everybody had gone. No discussion with the Premier, no notice to anyone, just a surreptitious press conference with his new armour.

Despite my loudly expressed doubts about health care cuts, he never once approached me to make common cause or suggest further debate. I went with him to the Penteix meeting in his constituency where it was explained, and I went with him to the Kincaid meeting, to support him at their explanation. There was no mention of problems then from him. There were mentions from the audience, but not from him.

And now he faces the moment of truth; now he faces a nominating convention. Now he faces the Liberal candidate he defeated in the '91 election, and as I say, he's put that meeting off twice. And what's he going to do? I think Shaunavon is going to vote for Mr. Ruess. And this makes the present member a very sad and desperate man, shunned by the party he deserted, and mistrusted by the party he fled to. I doubt if even the Tories would want him now — used goods, I think the term is, shop-soiled.

There was another chap in this House not too long ago, a few years ago, who had a name very similar to the previous leader of the opposition there, although he's not related, who played the odds and skipped from party to party. And where is he now? Does anybody ever hear of him? He seems to have disappeared from sight.

But the member from Shaunavon points out in his diatribe on Monday that there's no cabinet member south of Highway 1, sir, which is true. And I wonder if that's the reason for that member's defection, sir. Perhaps it's because he didn't get the agriculture portfolio and the opportunity to implement the famous McPherson plan for the province, but had picked up his marbles and stomped off disgruntledly to play in a corner by himself, hoping maybe that he could impress the blonde.

Somebody pointed out yesterday the new arrangements for the Liberal seats over there. And one wonders why. Is there some power struggle going on that somebody won't accept the back row? I don't know. I could say more, but I'll leave it at that.

The member for Shaunavon takes great delight in mocking me for what I've written in the press. I assume he's never heard of the concept of informed dissent. There are anti-abortionists in the New Democratic Party, sir, and pro-choicers. Nobody, but nobody, is pro-abortion, I'm sure. I wonder if that is not the case in the Liberal Party.

There are people in this party who are against nuclear energy development and further mining of uranium; others oppose gambling, the casinos, one-armed bandits. Some of the best parliamentarians in memory — Whig and Tory in the 18th century, Conservatives and Liberals in the 19th century, Winston Churchill in the 20th century, and some of the back-bench Labour members in London, in Westminster — have been notable dissenters. If the Liberals get over . . . more than two and a half members next time around, perhaps the member for Shaunavon will come to understand that, and perhaps the press gallery will too.

There is always room for dissent and discussion in a democratic party and there always will be, but that dissent has to be logical and it has to be backed up by facts and figures. I am very pleased that the member has read these quotes from my letters into the proceedings of this House and I'd like to give him a couple more.

I published a full-page article in the Canadian Medical Association journal in 1976 entitled: The Joys of Rural Practice, in which I laid out the advantages of rural versus urban medical practice. The dean of medicine at the time gave copies of this article to all senior medical students in the University of Saskatchewan medical school. And in 1990, the same Canadian Medical Association journal, which is the senior medical journal in Canada, published an article of mine, a full page, entitled: Saskatchewan Needs Its Small Hospitals, which was written in response to the Schwartz report which had been published not too long previous to that.

And I have not changed my tune, sir, unlike the member opposite who reeled into a lament, and then sprung a hole in his bagpipes and now just drones along. From being a back-bencher, a member of the government with a direct contact with the cabinet, he has skunked off to be a back member of the third party in this House with access to absolutely nothing unless possibly he hopes to become a latter-day Senator Hazen Argue.

The member asks me what influence I have with the Minister of Health. I would like to turn that question back on him and ask him what influence he has with the Minister of Health, over there in the peanut gallery.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I have a letter here dated February 10, 1995, from our new Minister of Health. I'd like to read a couple of sentences from it to you for the benefit of the member for Shaunavon and the opposition. It's addressed to me personally and signed.

To assist . . . with the task ahead, I write to ask that you share with me a brief note with your assessment of health reform (in) . . . your constituency.

I look forward to working with you as we continue revitalizing health care in our province. Please don't hesitate to be in touch if I can be of any assistance.

I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, if the member for Shaunavon has a similar letter or perhaps he just has a promissory note from the leader of his party.

And if we really want to get down to motives, sir, let me quote Edmund Burke, author of *Reflections on the French Revolution*. He was a great dissenter, member of many governments, but a dissenter just the same:

It is not what a lawyer says I may do; but what humanity, reason and justice tell me I ought to do.

There's much more I could say on this matter, sir, but I shan't. I think my point is made.

But I would like to make some suggestions to the member opposite on what I think we need by way of medical service in the Wood River constituency. All we got from him on Monday was second-hand and third-rate rhetoric. Let me give you some real reasons based on medical logic, sir. Let's get a proper debate started on this instead of just set speeches. There's a difference between a series of musical songs and an opera. Let's get an opera going if we really want to make some noise and have some beautiful music.

Mr. Speaker, sir, in this area there used to be nine hospitals. Seven of those have been closed, converted, inverted, diverted — whatever you'd like to call it. But as we do not need a grain elevator every 10 miles, we do not need a small hospital every 20 miles. However the closures and the consequences in my opinion have not been properly thought out. From the U.S. (United States) border south of Mankota to Moose Jaw is 160 miles — and that's miles, not kilometres, sir. And the closest acute care beds are at Gravelbourg which is about a hundred miles away.

Originally the department had offered us in Gravelbourg 18 acute care beds. Since then, all acute care funding has been withdrawn from Mankota, Kincaid, and Lafleche, and now the department wants to cut us back to six acute care beds. And I consider this to be quite inadequate.

(1215)

The alternate route from south of Mankota is through Ponteix to Swift Current, a distance of 120 miles, sir. And again that's miles, not kilometres. There are no acute care beds at all because of the denial of acute care funding to Mankota and the closure of Kincaid and Ponteix hospitals. And I know that we say that Kincaid and Ponteix are converted and not closed, but when you go there at 7 o'clock at night or 7 o'clock in the morning and the doors are locked and it is in darkness and there's nothing there but a telephone, I fear our constituents are going to consider that closed whether we do or not.

I think we need acute care beds every 50 miles or so. And it doesn't have to be many — a couple would probably do it — which would mean acute care in Coronach, Mankota, and Ponteix. Coronach has a special need, sir, because of the coalmine and the power plant. These can be very dangerous. There's lots of accidents and people need care and attention.

There needs to be more funding at Climax too because of its great distance from anywhere and the problems they have in winter with blocking of the Frenchman River bridge by snow or floods. There are problems like this that simple number-crunching does not reveal. You have to go there and travel the road and look at the countryside and measure the distances on your clock to realize what the problem is.

I think we need more flexibility, sir. And I base the distances of

50 miles on the fact that about 50 per cent of people who have a heart attack die within two hours of the onset of symptoms. I get these figures from a Professor John Hampton of Nottingham University; he's a cardiologist.

Obviously, sir, if I was to drop dead in this House at this minute, it wouldn't matter if the hospital was in the next street; you'd never get me there.

But with ambulances at highway speeds we could get patients to medical care within the hour and allow another hour for a doctor to work on them. While the ambulance rides are dangerous too, you're stuck — you've got no doctor at one end and you've not arrived at the doctor at the other, and you're sitting in a tin can which is bouncing along our highways.

And I quote a study by Dr. Black who spent many years in the outposts of Newfoundland and said that acute cardiac care could be given in the outport hospitals just as well as in St. John's and the death rate was just as good. They couldn't get out; there was just no way.

I see no reason why Dr. Berry — just to quote an example — in Mankota could not give intravenous streptokinase under the direct supervision of specialists in Moose Jaw or Regina by instant phone line transmission of ECG (electrocardiogram), blood pressure, and pulse, without actually leaving the emergency room.

And on page 6 of this year's throne speech, sir, we talk about SaskTel and Internet and the information highway. Let us make a start, sir, and link all our small hospitals together and to our city hospitals.

It's fine that SaskTel International is working in Europe and the Philippines and in Africa. This is tremendous and I agree with this, we should do. But how about doing something in Saskatchewan as well where our people can actually see it?

There's a tremendous opportunity here to lead the world and the people will see it as, the old saw goes: justice was not only done, it must be seen to be done.

We can do this. Now people will see it and will accept it. And it would bring in a lot of economic development benefits too, because if we could get this going, we could sell the system to Alberta, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Utah, Florida, anywhere. If we could set up this system we could sell it to them and make a lot of money and create a lot of jobs and really be at the forefront.

Just picture it, sir: say Dr. Unarket at Rockglen, just as an example, and he has a puzzling patient in his emergency room, an emergency room that has a computer, a TV camera, and a telly screen. Perhaps the patient has a rash that is giving problems and Dr. Unarket has problems making a diagnosis. So he can have the patient there under the TV camera, send in the signal to say Dr. Ann Grahame or Professor Roberta McKay, dermatologists in Regina, and they can have a three-way

interactive consultation where signs and symptoms and treatment can be discussed all at the same time.

They would see the patient on their screen in Regina and the patient would see the doctor's screwed-up face on their screen in Rockglen. It would save all the trouble of consultations and travel. It could be done there at the one session.

I think that sounds sensible, and it's certainly feasible in this day when we can have surrogate sex by wearing a pair of goggles and a fancy control glove. Let's do it with real people.

And I think that once we get the equipment set up, it's going to be very cost effective. All the hospitals have been computerized already for accounting purposes and they're going to be linked up to each other and to the centre. All we need is a compatible program which would do the clinical work. SaskTel has the cables. We could use fibre optics. How about satellite link-up or microwave. These things are all available in our province. We could do it. Whichever is the best we could use. And we deserve the best. How about that for real health care reform, sir?

And I challenge the member for Shaunavon to make some other suggestions. Let him bring something up. On Monday he didn't tell us anything. He just complained. He had nothing to put in its place. I'm offering this. If it's of value, fine. At least we can discuss it.

And imagine how this could revolutionize health care up in the North, sir. You could have a portable system. I think all you would need would be a nurse practitioner and by satellite we could link up with the hospital in Prince Albert, specialists in Saskatoon, do a lot of diagnosis without people leaving their own village. Just in the same way as we send the TB (tuberculosis) vans around and now the breast survey van. Why not a portable system? And we could use our nurse practitioners only.

Now, sir, is this criticism? And the answer, of course it is. But is it positive criticism or is it negative criticism? Is it constructive or is it destructive? And if on Monday, you find that my seat has been moved from here and I'm holding hands with the member for Arm River, you'll know what the Leader of the House and the whip think, sir.

The nearest ambulance to Mankota is in Gravelbourg and that's over an hour's drive away. And when the ambulance travels, it travels for an hour or more empty toward . . . to Mankota and I think this is a dangerous delay.

I would propose that an ambulance be stationed in Mankota and another one in Climax, possibly in Coronach, too. This would reduce the waiting time enormously. If the patient had to be transferred, that would be one hour less it would take for that patient to get transferred to the city.

And it needn't be terribly expensive, sir. It can be owned by the district board or they could lease it and reduce the capital outlay. And I propose the Ponteix hospital be open 24 hours a

day with the same four multi-purpose beds as in Rockglen and in Lafleche.

There is a silly semantic game going on out there where after 12 hours, a patient with pneumonia or kidney infection must be transferred out. But there are no beds in Swift Current or Moose Jaw, so they have to consult another doctor by telephone who gravely advises them to keep the patient in convalescent care for another 24 or 48 hours. Now this really is not terribly sensible, sir. A patient with pneumonia or pyelitis is acutely ill and is not convalescent. They can be in grave danger and to classify them as convalescent is simply a semantic game and an insult toward everybody's intelligence. Convalescence is the recovery phase after the acute care is over.

We have a problem here that . . . I understand that the agreement with the coalition for rural health care is not being honoured by the boards. I spent several days in the past couple of weeks out in the small hospitals, in my small towns, asking about this. And apparently the agreement that called for 24 to 48 hours observation is not being honoured. They're still being restricted to 8 to 12 hours.

Again, that's a criticism, sir. But I think that if we honour the agreement and allow these people 48 hours observation assessment, most of our troubles will be over. I know for years, when somebody brings a sick kid into my hospital, I've always told him two sleeps because it takes the best part of 48 hours to get enough penicillin into a baby to bring the temperature down. It takes 48 hours to get over the initial pain of a fracture or a pleurisy. And for somebody in a department to say it isn't true, is just not acceptable.

But I bring these up to you at this time because these suggestions involve finances, and of course the budget debate is the focus of provincial finances. And I suggest that some of the 10 . . . what \$20 million that has been announced for rural health care go towards solving some of these problems, sir.

There is an initiative that I agree with entirely in the purview of health care. It came up in the throne speech. I didn't get a chance to speak to it. I'd like to mention the business of midwifery right now, sir. Again it'll cost some money so it has to be debated in the Committee of Finance.

I learned all my obstetrics from nurse midwives — mostly Irish — in Glasgow many years ago. And I specify nurse midwives. The system then and there was three years to RN (registered nurse) and then a full year to midwife status. And that full year was a full year, sir. It wasn't a university year of eight to nine months from 9 o'clock in the morning to 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It was full time, 12-hour shifts, seven days a week if necessary; Saturdays and Sundays were never off. And it was all hands-on, real, live women with real, live babies, not blackboard drawings and models.

There's a big problem in the western European and North American world where sex and pregnancy have been taboo for so many years. And this has led to the problem that the ultimate

outcome, labour and delivery, have become medicalized unnecessarily largely because women are terrified of the process of delivering. And it's a dirty subject and it's taboo and I think we have a problem with our attitude to the whole matter. Because whenever I want to empty my bladder, sir, or my bowel, I don't go and see a doctor. I only go and see a doctor when I have problems emptying my bladder and my bowel. The uterus empties itself naturally after 40 weeks, generally without any interference and without any problems, if we will simply stand back and allow it to do it.

And I've had over 30 years experience and delivered upwards of a thousand babies and I can assure you that this is the situation. But there are times when one needs to get in and one needs to get in fast. I've never used a fetal monitor. I've never even seen one. And I'm glad to say that the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada have come down against using fetal monitoring in normal pregnancy because it leads to too many forceps deliveries, too many Caesarean sections, and too much expense and it makes the delivery abnormal and leads to problems in future deliveries.

But what is normal pregnancy? What is normal labour? This is where the physician comes in. The physician's job is diagnosis and treatment. Even our good friend, Dr. Rachlis, agrees with that. You'll find it quoted in *Strong Medicine*. The midwife's job is to conduct the lady in labour and assist her to complete what is a normal physiological process that started with Eve. Women have been having babies, sir, long before doctors were invented. And if they hadn't done a good job of it, the race would have died out before Hippocrates and Aesculpius were even born.

Having said that, sir, I'm convinced that the only sensible place to have a baby is in a hospital, where all the dressings, the cleaning materials and solutions, the equipment, is gathered together in one place for ease of access. And the delivery room is designed for this purpose and it's also easily cleaned of the incredible mess that you get in even a short and easy delivery — our homes are not, sir; they're just not suitable.

(1230)

Most deliveries are simple and they're safe. But each delivery is nevertheless a catastrophe just waiting to happen. When a catastrophe does happen, it happens incredibly fast, within seconds, and there's just no time to wait for an ambulance or the doctor. The doctor should be within easy reach at all times during labour and he should be supervising it; that's his job. But he should be supervising out of sight most of the time because this, sir, truly is women's work and they understand delivery and pregnancy and childbirth in a way that no man, however sympathetic, will ever realize.

When my children climbed trees, sir, I never told them to stop. I just sauntered over and stood underneath, ready to catch them if they fell. And this is the doctor's job in a normal delivery — stand by and ready to catch if there's any problem.

Now on May 12, '94, in question period, the member for Shaunavon asked the question about the 52 small hospitals that have been closed and converted in the province and the answer received was that only warts were removed in small hospitals and he accepted that reply meekly as a lamb. Now I don't accept that reply, sir. In Lafleche Union Hospital, which is only an eight-bed hospital, I did appendectomies regularly. I did tonsillectomies, hemorrhoids, tubal ligations, vasectomies, and hernias. I also reduced and set most of my own fractures and dislocations. The doctors in Kincaid, Mankota, Ponteix, Vanguard, and Assiniboia, they did the same with the assistance of each other.

Dr. Barretto, a classmate of mine, came to Ponteix in 1968. And he and I burned up many a mile travelling 44 miles from Ponteix to Lafleche or Lafleche to Ponteix to help each other with operations and difficult deliveries any time, day or night. Any limitation that there was, or has been, has been imposed upon us not by the government, sir, but by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. And our patients, who are also my voters, know it. And I believe, sir, that I owe it to my rural medical colleagues and to my loyal patients to apologize to them for this slack.

I'd like to give you a quotation again from Edmund Burke, the 18th century statesman and member of several governments, that I've already quoted. He told the electors of Bristol:

. . . it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect, their business, our unremitted attention.

He goes on to say, sir:

Authoritative instructions, mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contradictory to the clearest convictions of his judgement and conscience . . . arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

He is talking about the Connaught Constitution of the House of Westminster, of course.

Nevertheless, I agree fully with this sentence which, stated in modern language, means a parliamentarian's duty and loyalty is to his constituents, and that he owes them not only hard work, but his best thinking on policy as well.

As a physician, my patients' interests were always foremost in my mind. And if the choice came between taking the wife out or attending a delivery or an emergency, then my wife knew and accepted that that medical or surgical emergency would come first. And if you didn't get out, that was too bad. And now that I'm a member of this legislature, it is my constituents to whom I pledge my loyalty.

To come back to the budget, sir, just for a brief moment. I'm pleased that there will be no cuts to education spending in the year of '95 and '96. I know that in the budget projection that we announced some years ago, there were 4 per cent cuts for '93-94, '94-95, but none in '95-96. And of course I pointed out this fact to the teachers and the principals and the school boards in my district. But the way it is, you know, people are sceptical. When I reassured them, they said, well maybe; we'll see.

And now I'm pleased that in this budget there are no cuts to education spending and that they will see and I shall be very happy to demonstrate to them that we have kept our word on this. And not only that, but as an earnest of good intention, we have announced that there will be a 2 per cent increase in the year ahead, '96-97. I think this is another demonstration that we are thinking ahead, planning ahead, and informing our constituents of our plans so that they can plan ahead too.

Openness is essential to good government. And by this method of forward thinking, planning in advance, and informing municipalities and school boards so that they can do the thing, we shall make the government process understandable to all. And this will allow time for our suggestions to mature. And perhaps there'll be alternative suggestions can be made by those municipalities and school boards, etc., that are affected before it becomes too late to modify our costs. There are always things that we can do to make things better.

And, Mr. Speaker, sir, I will be voting gladly in favour of this budget, as I voted in favour of the throne speech. I think we're doing a good job and I congratulate the cabinet and the Minister of Health, our new Minister of Health, who I knew very well many years ago because he was my pastor in Gravelbourg at the United Church and my wife and family and I used to go there.

We used to go regularly — maybe not as frequently as he'd like — you know, because Christmas comes regularly once a year. The joke always used to be: what religion are you? C and E. You mean C of E — Church of England. No sir, C and E — Christmas and Easter.

But before I sit down, sir, I would like to take the opportunity to adjourn this debate, if that meets with the House's agreement. Thank you, sir.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:38 p.m.