

Friday, March 26, 1976

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

**WELCOME TO STUDENTS**

**MR. J. WIEBE (Morse):** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Members of this Assembly approximately 21 students from the Stewart Valley Public School. They are here today accompanied by their principal, Mr. Larry Pool, Mrs. Pool and also Brian Oakman.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome them to the Assembly. I hope they have had an interesting day and I look forward to meeting them later on this afternoon.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. R. N. NELSON (Yorkton):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to welcome some students through you and on behalf of this Assembly. They are students from the Ituna School. I am doing this on behalf of Mr. Kowalchuk who is absent today. They are 37 Grade Eight students and they are in the west gallery. We would like to wish you all an interesting stay in our Legislature and I will see you later downstairs at 3:15 in the Members' dining room.

With them are their teachers, Mr. Bill Hudema and Mr. James Fedrowsky.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MRS. E. G. EDWARDS (Saskatoon-Sutherland):** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Saskatoon Eastview (Mr. Penner) I should like to welcome and introduce to you and through you to this Assembly Grade Four students from the Alvin Buckwold School in Saskatoon. They are in the east gallery, 54 students, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Sadler, Mr. Buckert, Mrs. Parsons and Mr. Walsh.

I hope they have an enjoyable day and find it interesting and educational. I will meet them at 3:15 at the second floor rotunda.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. N. E. BYERS (Kelvington-Wadena):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the Hon. Member for Yorkton in welcoming the students from Ituna here today. While Ituna is in the constituency of Melville I expect that a number of these students come from Kelvington-Wadena constituency. This is the second group from Ituna that has visited the Chamber this year. A high school class was here at the earlier session. I want to join in welcoming them here today and I hope that their

visit is productive and educational.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. D. L. FARIS (Arm River):** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Gordon MacMurchy who unfortunately must be absent this afternoon, I should like to welcome 14 students from the Lestock adult upgrading course. They are accompanied by their teachers Arnold Tusa, Janet Vass and Jim Marchinko. I hope they will enjoy their visit this afternoon. I look forward to meeting with them after. I think I should say on behalf of Mr. MacMurchy that he hopes that Mr. Tusa will enjoy his visit to the Legislature and for a good number of years continue to enjoy it from the gallery.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives):** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and this Assembly three gentlemen from Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan. The reason that I am introducing them will become apparent in a moment. Mr. Jack Ukranetz from Hudson Bay, his brother, Joe, and Gerry Bonderchuk who are visiting here on personal business dealings with the Government of Saskatchewan. I am sure I present to them the greetings not only of our caucus but of the Member for Kelsey-Tisdale (Mr. Messer).

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

### **QUESTIONS**

#### **Welfare Cheques Unclaimed**

**MR. J. G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Social Services. The Minister is aware of my criticisms of the Department in the past and what I foresee to be some pretty lax management and administration. The Minister will recall that during the recent postal strike an office was set up in the city of Regina to hand out welfare cheques or assistance cheques because of the obvious inability to send the cheques out by mail. At the closing of the Regina office I am informed that 105 cheques were not picked up by welfare recipients or alleged welfare recipients. Would the Minister not admit that this indicates in Regina alone a substantial number of non-existent welfare recipients?

**HON. H. H. ROLFES (Minister of Social Services):** — No, Mr. Speaker, I would not admit to that. I will take the subject matter under consideration. If I can put as much credence in the Member's information as that of the Leader of the Opposition I have nothing to worry about. But I will take it as notice and forward him any information.

**MR. LANE:** — By way of supplementary. Has the Minister had cause to investigate similar situations in other offices that were set up to deal with the postal strike?

**MR. ROLFES:** — I am not quite sure what you are driving at. Have I had what to deal with? I don't know what you are referring to.

**MR. LANE:** — My supplementary was whether you have had occasion or have you commenced investigation to determine the number of such situations that exist in other offices that were set up to deal with the handing out of assistance payments during the postal strike?

**MR. ROLFES:** — Mr. Speaker, I am aware that we had other areas where we handed out cheques to welfare recipients. If he is referring to cheques that were left over as he allegedly says, I have said that I will not accept that as evidence until I have investigated it. I will take his question as notice and furnish him with the information.

**MR. LANE:** — A further supplementary. Is he saying that this was never brought to his attention by his officials?

**MR. ROLFES:** — Mr. Speaker, I did not say that. I simply said that I am not aware that this is the exact number. There were some we know that were not picked up and that will always happen. It happened under the former Minister and it will happen under our Government.

**MR. LANE:** — What investigation, by way of further supplementary, has the Minister undertaken to get to the problem that I have raised.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I am not convinced of the urgency of the matter. The Minister has said he will investigate. Next question.

#### **Employees Transferred by Department of Health**

**MR. L. W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Health. In light of the Minister's reply to the question I put yesterday and also in light of his answer to a question put by the Hon. Member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) on the same day. I should like to ask this question. Did the Minister at any time between 1974 and 1976 transfer 335 employees of the provincially funded Souris Valley Extended Care Hospital to an organization controlled by the Provincial Government funded out of SHSP?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I am not convinced of the urgency of this matter either. Next question.

#### **Hog Marketing Commission Plebiscite**

**MR. W. C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I know on the Order Paper there is a resolution pertaining to a plebiscite on the Federal Feed Grains Policy and it is now some three years since the Hog Marketing Commission was implemented in this province. At that time the

former Minister of Agriculture indicated that there would be a plebiscite by hog producers within three years concerning the future of this Commission. I would, therefore, like to ask the Minister of Agriculture what plans are now in effect for a plebiscite for hog producers.

**HON. E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture):** — Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that the former Minister of Agriculture could answer that question. I would like to say that as far as I am aware I know of no evidence to show that the former Minister ever made any commitments that there would be a plebiscite at the end of two or three years or any period of time.

**MR. THATCHER:** — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In essence then I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture that as far as you are personally concerned there will not ever be a plebiscite for hog producers, at least during your term of office as Minister of Agriculture.

**MR. KAEDING:** — I made no such statement. If I saw some pressure coming from the hog producers that they thought they needed a plebiscite but at the present time my indication from the hog producers is that they are very satisfied with the Hog Marketing Commission.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

### **Swine Influenza**

**MR. E. F. A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana):** — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health. Is it the intention of this Government in light of the fears of the swine influenza problem, is it the intention of this Government to direct plans or in some way see to it that inoculations take place during this year of all Saskatchewan residents?

**HON. W. ROBBINS (Minister of Health):** — The Federal people, Mr. Speaker, have been in touch with officials of the Department and we are looking at the problem. It is possible that there would be insufficient vaccines because of the demands in the United States and there are very limited supplies in Canada.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I understand from the British Columbia authorities, and tell me if this is correct, that in order to be successful inoculation must take place by November of this year in order to be successful in dealing with the swine influenza for Saskatchewan and Canada?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — I am not aware of whether or not that is a proper statement but I simply repeat that the vaccines may not be available, because of the large quantity of the vaccine being used in the United States.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Has this Government been approached by the Federal Government to co-operate in the buying of vaccine and to pool the purchase so that all Canadian vaccine would be purchased together by governments working in concert?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — The Federal Government has approached our officials and they will certainly get our co-operation.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — Last supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it a fact that the Federal Government has indicated that it is unlikely that the vaccine would be available before September of this year?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — I don't know that that is a fact. But I do know that they anticipate some severe difficulties in terms of getting sufficient vaccine in Canada.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — Mr. Speaker, I indicated a last supplementary and I hate to go back on my word. I wonder if the Minister would indicate whether that then leaves the people of Saskatchewan in a severe risk as against this influenza attack which as every one knows was a killer in 1919 when it last hit Canada.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — There are no greater risks than anywhere else in Canada because a similar situation holds true in all the provinces.

#### **How Many Positions Included in Personal Services Item**

**MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives):** — Mr. Speaker, a question directed to the Minister of Finance. In the light of my question yesterday pertaining to the transfer, if you want or the allocation of funds under other personal services in the Budget as compared to permanent positions. Would the Minister be prepared to take a glance under the Department of Health, under Item 11, Saskatchewan Dental Plan, and tell me whether or not or how many employees and how much money was allocated for how many employees under other personal services in the fact that it went from \$36,000 in 1975-76 to \$358,000 in 1976-77. How many positions were included in that item?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I would think that the Member should direct that question during Estimates because I am not convinced of the urgency of the matter with regard to the example the Member cites, i.e. the Dental Plan. I am unimpressed with the urgency of the matter. Next question.

#### **Credit Allowance on Leased Lands**

**MR. L. BIRKBECK (Moosomin):** — Mr. Speaker, I am persistent. We will try this one on you. A question to the Minister of Agriculture. Is it true that you are cancelling your breaking credit allowance on leased lands sales policy as of midnight February 16, which was initially to expire March 31, 1976?

**MR. KAEDING:** — I am sorry I didn't get the

question.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Is it true that you are cancelling your breaking credit allowance on lease land sales policy as of midnight February 16, which are initially to expire March 31?

**MR. KAEDING:** — You are referring to the SWEAT equity program under the cultivation leases. Yes, that is true.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does it not seem reasonable that an individual purchasing land after February 16, but before March 31, that had entered into a lease agreement and had land broken or cleared after April 1, 1975 be allowed to claim the clearing and breaking of land credit in the established purchase price of the land?

**MR. KAEDING:** — Mr. Speaker, I would have to check the exact timing on that one. I couldn't give you that one for sure. I should like to take that as notice and give you a proper answer tomorrow.

### **Farm Fuel Cost Reduction Program Reduced**

**MR. J. WIEBE (Morse):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In light of an announcement Wednesday night by the Minister of Finance that that the farm fuel cost reduction program will now be reduced from seven cents per gallon to four cents per gallon, is the Minister of Agriculture or can the Minister of Agriculture advise this House whether he is going to continue his blatant discrimination against farmers by also lowering the maximum amount that each farmer can qualify for under this program?

**MR. KAEDING:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't think we are discriminating against any farmers. The fact that there is a maximum amount there will only provide a little more assistance for those people who are on the lower end of the economic scale in farming. The people who are affected by the maximum are not basically small farmers. It may include some larger livestock operations. But basically they are large grain farmers who are affected. If we have a limited number of dollars to spend we think we should spend it on the lower income group.

**MR. WIEBE:** — A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. He failed to answer my question. Is the Minister going to leave the maximum grant payable at \$200 or will that be reduced as well.

**MR. KAEDING:** — That isn't determined at this time but I would expect that we would be reducing that amount as well. We would base it probably on a gallonage basis.

**MR. LANE:** — By way of supplementary. As the Minister indicated the program is designed to supposedly help the farmers at the lower end and not help the large grain farmer. Would the Minister not admit that the large grain farmer is seasonal in

operation and that the farmers that are really hurt by your cutback in your program is the small mixed farmer who has high fuel needs all year round?

**MR. KAEDING:** — No, I wouldn't admit that because the indications are that 83 per cent of the farmers who get the fuel rebate last year got the maximum amount. There were only 17 per cent who did not get the maximum. Our figures would indicate that most of those are larger grain farmers. There will be some larger livestock operators who will not have received the maximum.

### **Road Limit Restrictions**

**MR. R. A. LARTER (Estevan):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier in absence of the Minister of Transport. Because it is our information that most of the damage to municipal roads by overloading is done during the spring breakup, almost no damage is done during the winter months. As a compromise would the Government be prepared to consider placing the kind of load limit restrictions which they have envisaged on a province-wide basis not only during those periods of time when excessive damage is done to municipal roads?

**HON. A. E. BLAKENEY (Premier):** — Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice and ask the Minister of Transport to reply.

### **Young Voyageur Program**

**MR. N. McMILLAN (Kindersley):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. He may recall that during the last session I asked him a question about the Young Voyageur Program and whether or not this Provincial Government was prepared to pick up the federal financial share of that program to see that it would be continued. He told me at the time that he would enter into negotiations with the Federal Government to see if they couldn't convince the Federal Government to pick that program up again. I should like to ask the Minister of Education if in fact negotiations are being carried out with the Federal Government at this time?

**HON. E. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Education):** — Mr. Speaker, I indicated when it was raised during the last session that I had written to Mr. Faulkner, the Secretary of State at Ottawa, making our position clear and expressing our view that it was a good program and that it should not be discontinued. I have met with Mr. Faulkner as late as Friday last, I believe it was, in Regina where we discussed it again. I again mentioned it to him. And Mr. Faulkner is indicating that because of the Federal Government's cuts in keeping with their restraints program that the program will not be reinstated.

**MR. McMILLAN:** — In the light of that is the Provincial Government then prepared to pick up the federal financial share of that program to see that this most worthwhile program is continued for Saskatchewan students?

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — Mr. Speaker, we are not prepared to pick up the negligence of the Federal Government.

**MR. McMILLAN:** — By way of supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Education if he could tell me what the actual dollar sum would be of the federal financial share of that program?

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that as notice and give the Member information when I have it.

### **Gun Control Provisions**

**MR. S. CAMERON (Regina South):** — Mr. Speaker, a question of the Attorney General. I am wondering if the Government of Canada has made a request to the Government of Saskatchewan for its co-operation in implementing the gun control provisions in connection with the Bill now before the House of Commons.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — I would say in general terms the answer to that question is, Yes. There have been discussions at official levels and at one ministerial meeting which I was unable to attend late last fall, early winter, the effect of which is here the proposal to the provinces, how do you feel about it? If you think it is good will you co-operate with it. I think that is the nature of the request.

**MR. CAMERON:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering particularly if the Government of Saskatchewan has indicated its willingness to have its issuers of hunting licences, including municipal secretaries, issue the gun ownership permits that are contemplated by that legislation?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — We have not done so yet for a number of reasons. I think the most important reason is, as the Hon. Member, knows the proposals by the Federal Government particularly in the area of gun control, are very controversial, to put it mildly. We have some reservations about those proposals which we have communicated to the Minister. It may very well be in the light of some public statements that have been made recently by Mr. Allmand, that some changes may be forthcoming to that proposal and, accordingly, I think to instruct people to start issuing necessary documentation would be premature at this time.

**MR. CAMERON:** — A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Do you anticipate any legislative changes being required in Saskatchewan to implement the policy?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — I would have to be absolutely certain of this, but my memory tells me that during the course of a discussion with my officials the answer to that question is, No, that we will in all likelihood not require any legislative changes in order to



implement the policies.

**MR. CAMERON:** — A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister indicated the Government of Saskatchewan has expressed some reservations. Would the Minister indicate what reservations this Government has about the policy and pass them on to Ottawa?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — The reservations have taken form of both the communication correspondence and letters. I believe I have written a lengthy letter to Mr. Allmand, also communications on an ongoing basis at the official level. This is the nature of the representation. I think that answers the substance of your question.

**MR. CAMERON:** — One last supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I am wondering if the Attorney General would be prepared to table the correspondence he has referred to.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — I will consider that question. I see no objection to tabling that, but I would just like to check the correspondence, the nature of it, to see if there is any condition or any understanding that may prevent me from so doing in terms of communications between the two Ministers, myself and Mr. Allmand.

### **Co-op Cablevision**

**MR. W. C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

The Minister was reported in the press, about one week ago, as saying that the CRTC was having a difficult time in understanding the nature of the Co-op Cablevision people that had applied. In essence, was the Minister politely telling the people of Saskatchewan that he anticipates the proposal of the Co-ops to be turned down?

**HON. E. B. SHILLINGTON (Minister of Consumer Affairs):** — No, to both of your questions. I anticipate that CRTC will see the innate wisdom of the Co-op application and will grant the licences to the Co-ops.

**MR. THATCHER:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Has the Minister reconsidered the position of the Government in that, if their prodigies do not receive the licences from the CRTC, will the Government make the Sask Tel hardware available to whoever does receive the licence or is he going to deprive the people of Saskatchewan of whatever benefits there may be of cable television?

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — I object to your referring to the Co-ops in this province as proteges of the Government of Saskatchewan. They are independent institutions and if the Co-ops get licences they will be relatively large healthy institutions which the

Government will no more control than the Wheat Pool or the Federated Co-operatives.

I think that slur on Co-ops is just not warranted. In answer to your questions about whether or not Sask Tel will make the hardware available to anyone, it seems to me that would be a better question to raise in Crown Corporations where Crown corporations are dealt with.

**MR. THATCHER:** — A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps the Minister could tell this Legislature exactly how much these independent institutions have been funded in the past year in terms of dollars.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — I am not sure whether the Hon. Member was in the House as I did give that information in the last Legislature. And if you want the information again I shall be glad to provide it again. It will be done, in any case, in the Estimates which will be coming up shortly. But if you want it right away I shall be glad to give it to you right now.

### **High School in East Regina**

**MR. LANE:** — A question of the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker.

First of all I should like to warn the Hon. Minister who just sat down, that we will decide where we ask our questions and not from the Minister or the Treasury Benches opposite.

The question to the Minister of Education - in the last session I asked you whether or not your Department had made a decision as to a high school in east Regina. Has any decision been made by your Department?

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — No, we have had some discussions with the two school boards, in the city of Regina. I met the boards very recently at which time we pursued the matter further and no final indications have yet been given but they will, I suspect, in the not too distant future.

**MR. LANE:** — Mr. Speaker, by way of supplementary. You indicated when I asked the question in the last session that we could expect an answer in the not too distant future. You indicated to the parties concerned that an answer could have been expected prior to Christmas of last year. Can you tell the people of this province why you are stalling and why you are withholding your decision in this particular case?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order! I think I should ask Members in placing questions to not place them in an argumentative way. I think those are the rules of the Question Period and there have been a couple like that and I just want to warn the Members.

**MR. LANE:** — Could I rephrase it?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — No, I think I will not take

a chance. The Minister of Education.

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the argumentative question, I indicated to the Members at that time, I think it was in January, that I had hoped that we would be able to provide the final answer in the near future. We have had to have further discussions because there were other interests that were involved, different ideas that were being presented and we have had the opportunity to have some other discussions and as soon as we are able to arrive at the final decision now that the Budget has been presented, we will be relaying it to the Board.

### **Request for Ruling on Urgency**

**MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives):** — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, and I don't wish to take any time from the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald), but we would like to have a ruling from you on the urgency of our questions today pertaining to numbers of employees in the Budget. It is necessary for us to give an Address-in-Reply to the Budget Debate and we would like, on Monday, if possible, for you to give us a ruling as to why these were ruled non-urgent when they were pertaining to this year's Budget.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Yes, I will take that under consideration.

### **ADJOURNED DEBATES**

#### **Budget Debate**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. W. E. Smishek (Minister of Finance) that this Assembly do now resolve itself into a Committee of Finance.

**MR. C. P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that it is a real pleasure for me to rise today to give some intelligent comment on the Budget that was presented Wednesday. I've noticed around the province the response to date, and the criticism to date has been rather, in my estimation, at least rather weak.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to start off by saying that this Budget is both dishonest and unfair.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Smishek was handed the difficult task of bringing in a budget that would restrain government spending and still support essential programs and services.

He failed on both counts. He made this failure worse by being dishonest in his Budget presentation. I am going to expose both his failure and his dishonesty, that is my job as financial critic. However, Mr. Speaker, I will do more than just criticise, I will suggest positive alternatives which I hope the Government will consider.

Controlling inflation and at the same time protecting vital programs such as Health and Education is too serious for Members of any political party to play politics with.

During this Budget Debate and when considering the Estimates we in the Liberal Party will not only tell the Government where we think they are going wrong but at the same time will suggest positive changes to make it more effective.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Let me first, Mr. Speaker, deal with the Minister's attempts to mislead the people of Saskatchewan, his dishonest presentation on Budget Day.

First he compared last year's actual expenditures, that is the 1975 Estimates plus the overspending or supplementary Estimates with this year's Estimates and then claimed his Government was holding increased spending to 11 per cent.

The honest and proper comparison was to compare last year's Estimates of \$1,140 million to this year's Estimates of \$1,328 million.

This shows increased spending over the current year of \$188 million or over 16 per cent - not the 11 per cent Mr. Smishek tried to hoodwink the public with.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — If he wants to use last year's actual spending of \$1.195 million he must compare it to this year's stated Estimates plus what he estimates will be overspent in 1976.

Now, Mr. Smishek, nor no one else knows how much this Budget will be overspent. But we all know that every budget brought down in Saskatchewan for the past forty years has been exceeded by millions of dollars. The present NDP Government has overspent the last four Budgets by an average of \$63 million a year. If we add this figure to the 1976-77 Estimates it gives us a likely total spending for the coming year of \$1,391 million. Comparing this with last year's actual spending of \$1,195 million gives us a potential increase in Government spending of \$196 million or about 17 per cent.

Note, Mr. Speaker, no matter which set of figures you use, you compare 1975 Estimates to 1976 Estimates or 1975 actual spending to the likely 1976 spending, this Government will increase spending by 16 per cent in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, how often have we heard the Federal Government criticised for a 15 per cent increase in spending, and this Government deliberately tried to confuse and hide and mislead the public with their increase in spending over and above the federal estimates. If further proof is needed of Mr. Smishek's duplicity it can clearly be seen in his statement that this Budget . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Order! I hesitate to interrupt the Member. However, the Member has at the beginning of his remarks

referred to the Minister's presentation as a dishonest presentation and he has now again made a reference of that type. And he is also referring to the Member as Mr. Smishek, rather than the Minister of Finance. Now I think Beauchesne is quite clear on this on page 130, citation 155, you cannot use the word dishonest with regard to another Member. And I think the Member should withdraw that.

**MR. MALONE:** — On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the Member used the word dishonest towards the Member. I think it was towards the presentation that the Member made and made it very clear that that was the case.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I think the Member is splitting hairs. The person would have to be dishonest to make a dishonest presentation. I think that's quite clear. And the Member has said that, a dishonest presentation, I don't think he has a right to say that and he said duplicity just now too and I heard that as well.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, I say it is duplicity!

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order! I think the Member should withdraw the remark about a dishonest presentation. That is an offence against the rules of this House quite clearly.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, simply for the fact that I don't want you taking the time for this Budget Debate.

**MR. STEUART:** — Right!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! The Member will withdraw it not because of that reason but because it's an offence against the rules of this House.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, I said I withdraw it. I will repeat this Budget is a duplicity. It can be clearly seen in this statement where this Budget calls for increased spending on Health of 25 per cent.

I have here in my hands the supplementary Estimates for 1975-76, so does every Member, so does the press and if you turn to page three it says Health increased spending of \$23,800,000 almost \$24 million. For example the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan \$12 million. The Medical Care Commission almost \$4 million. Mr. Speaker, this increases the Health Estimates so that of actual spending this year, the increase is less than the Federal Government's increased guidelines that he was so anxious to criticize in his presentation when I came back to him.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — This is a false statement and the Finance Minister's own figures prove that he has only budgeted for an increase of 15 per cent for health needs in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, I'll give you the figures and their exact location in the Budget Speech. On page 36 of the Budget Speech it shows that total spending on Health for the year 1975-76 was \$270 million. On page 19 of the same speech, Mr. Smishek states that during 1975-76 the Government paid out an added \$23 million for increased health costs. This brings the total money spent for Health in 1975-76 to \$293 million. Returning again to page 36, of this Speech we find that 1976-77 the Minister has budgeted for \$338 million, for the Department of Health. Subtracting the \$293 million spent on health for the current year from the \$338 million budgeted for next year gives us an increase of \$45 million or about 15 per cent not the 25 per cent the Minister claims on page seven of his Budget Speech.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — It is interesting to note that when the Finance Minister was boasting about restraints to fight inflation he threw in all the overspending for last year, including election expenses and extra money for health and then compared this to his Estimates for next year. But when he wanted to show how he was protecting our Health Plans he conveniently forgot about the added \$23 million he gave that Department this year so that his increase for next year would appear that much higher.

Mr. Speaker, he won't fool the hospital boards who already know the bad news and are cutting staff and closing down beds. He won't fool the sick people who are now being forced to wait months to get a hospital bed and will face an even longer waiting period thanks to this Budget.

However, he did fool some people, notably the Editor of the Regina Leader-Post and from what I understand, the Star-Phoenix. Last night the Leader-Post had a long editorial praising the Minister's Budget to the skies. They admired his work in holding the overall increase to 11 per cent and they praised him for giving Health 25 per cent more for the coming year.

If I didn't know the Minister was in the House, I would swear he wrote that editorial himself. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think he really did. All the Editor did was to take the Finance Minister's speech, condense and paraphrase it and call it an editorial. I say it was a disgrace to an independent newspaper.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — It is designed to give the appearance of restraint but in reality it is a cop-out. It is the biggest transfer of financial responsibility ever proposed by a Budget in this Assembly.

I say it deliberately - with intent - with deception - with premeditation it transfers the responsibility for fighting inflation from the NDP Government to local government and to individual taxpayers in Saskatchewan. It is the biggest shift in taxes ever perpetrated by this Government.

I find it all flap and throttle. The pilot has misled the citizens of Saskatchewan. He pretends to show restraint, but when the truth comes out he shifts the entire burden to those who have neither the responsibility for inflation nor the power to control it. No, Mr. Speaker, I oppose this transfer of responsibility - this tax shift with all the vigor at my disposal.

To fight inflation this Budget must do three things:

1. Cut back expenditures in all non-essential programs in Government departments, Crown corporations and agencies.
2. Ensure that priorities of spending are directed to those vital programs such as Health and Education so that we do not transfer increased costs to local government.
3. Ensure that the burden of supporting Government programs is not shifted to the individual citizen by increasing taxes directly or indirectly.

In other words to combat inflation this Government has a responsibility to assess the total provincial impact of this Budget. Unfortunately for Saskatchewan this NDP Government does not have the backbone nor the fortitude to recognize this responsibility.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — When you strip the NDP verbiage, the glowing political self-indulgence from the Minister's Budget and examine it with care - these proposals will have disastrous results. On local government, on individual taxpayers and of course on the unfortunate and the sick in our hospitals. All the while this shift of taxes, this transfer of cost takes place, the Provincial Government goes merrily on its way spending money like a drunken sailor on oil wells, potash mines and government office buildings.

This year, 1976 will be known in Canada as the year that Canadians attempted to battle inflation and bring it to its knees. Every government, every citizen, every institution, every company has been asked to share in the sacrifices required. All, but for some strange reason only the NDP in the Province of Saskatchewan failed to co-operate.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Let me demonstrate the shallow, weak, insecure effort of this Government.

First, Mr. Speaker, let no one be mistaken the governments of this country are major contributors to inflation - not just the labor unions, not just the corporations - the governments, both federal and provincial. They are not only the chief contributors to inflation but they are the chief beneficiaries. As inflation rises - tax revenues increase - as tax revenues increase government programs increase. Once down the road of new expenditures governments are caught up in their sins of the past. They cannot retreat. Like an octopus government grows and grows - big government is the curse in Canada today. Let me also agree that Ottawa is responsible for a large part of this inflationary spiral - the increased money supply -

increased national spending cannot be ignored. But let us make no mistake the national government has also been the excuse to ignore our provincial responsibility.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, is this more true than with the NDP in Saskatchewan. Galloping inflation is a fact of life in Saskatchewan.

No government has a greater fetish to own, control, manage the lives of its citizens than the NDP in Saskatchewan. No government in Canada has a greater thirst for power over the economy than the NDP in Saskatchewan. No government has a greater reliance on bureaucratic administrations than the NDP in Saskatchewan.

The civil service and the Cabinet are the only two groups that initiate government spending. The NDP have been willing partners of the senior bureaucrats in spending public funds. Bureaucrats build empires - it is their role in life. Profit and loss are not part of their evaluation of success like an ordinary businessman. Their standard of success is the amount of the public purse their branch, agency, or department can spend. Only the Cabinet has the power to restrain them - the NDP in Saskatchewan have refused, instead, they have been their accomplices.

As program after program has been developed in Saskatchewan, they grow and grow with increased demands in tax dollars - the initial programs have no relationship to the eventual costs. Once established the Government is caught up in the mad efforts to keep it alive by pouring in more and more tax dollars.

What has this done in Saskatchewan? It has resulted in NDP Cabinet Ministers defending unconditionally program after program. They defend the spending increases and they defend the necessity of the program itself. It has resulted in a wholesale raid on the treasury. Its impact has been disastrous. Here is what has occurred. We have watched the development in four years of eleven new Crown corporations, seven new government departments and agencies, ten new boards and commissions, all in a province that has lost population - all in a four year period of galloping inflation.

What does it mean to the average working man? Mr. Speaker, in 1971, the total tax dollars spent on civil servants' salaries, services, gratuities was the following:

Salaries - \$73 million, on travel \$5.8 million, for a total of \$79 million. And the public accounts just tabled in this House for the year 1974-75 the following was spent:

Salaries \$138 million, for travel \$11 million, for a total of \$150 million. You add 15 per cent for salaries in 1975-76 and the additional civil servants and the total amount will be close to \$180 million. Add 20 per cent contained in this Budget for increases in the salaries of civil servants, increased gasoline and other travel expenses and we will be paying in excess of \$230 million just to pay the salaries and travel expenses of civil servants in Saskatchewan.



But look at the astounding increases in the expenditure of the Department of Government Services over the past few years emphasizes that this Government is out of control, it's running away with itself.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — It is requiring more and more money just to take care of itself. Look what is occurring in the Department of Government Services. In their annual report just tabled in this House, there is \$59 million estimated for new projects an increase of 120 per cent from 1972 to 1975. Private consultants are up 45 per cent in the three years. Space leased by the Government has increased an astounding 36 per cent per year for the last three years for a total increase of nearly 150 per cent. But the astounding figure is that the ordinary expenditures in the Department of Government Services went from 8.9 million dollars in 1972-73 to \$32.2 in this Budget.

The increase in the last year alone went from \$17.2 million to \$23.2 million or an increase of 34 per cent in one year. Thirty four per cent to maintain the civil service but little or nothing for local governments or hospitals. But worst of all, Mr. Speaker, is the increase in capital spending by the Department of Government Services, they have decreased capital spending for Agriculture, Education, Health, Highways, Northern Saskatchewan, Social Services, Tourism but have almost doubled it for Government Services.

Capital spending for new buildings for Department of Government Services to house civil servants went from \$10.7 million to \$19.1 million, an increase of 78 per cent. And then, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that figure, they will spend more than \$19 million in their own back yard on the new building in Regina. No, Mr. Speaker, this is where a real cut could have taken place - here is where we could have used some restraints.

This Government is now in the process of building a new government building to house civil servants in every city in Saskatchewan. What in hades is going on in Saskatchewan? Does the average working man realize that it will take over \$300 million out of this Budget to pay the salaries, provide transportation, build or rent space for the civil servants in Saskatchewan. Do they realize that this is more than the sum of all the following taxes that he paid in the year 1975-1976:

Personal Income Tax - \$169 million; Corporate Income Tax - \$43 million; Succession Duties - \$4 million; Tobacco Tax - \$7.3 million; Mineral Tax - \$6.8 million; Gasoline Tax - \$44.2 million.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, all of these taxes on the backs of individual citizens in the Province of Saskatchewan are being used not for health, not for education but to pay the salaries of civil servants in this province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — When you realize that this does not include the salaries or related costs of people working in Crown corporations, it is absolutely frightening. If we did include Crown corporations it would take every individual tax paid by citizens. These hard

earned dollars are not going to help in education, it is going to support the bureaucracy. I tell the Premier and the NDP it is time they stopped to consider what is happening.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's look at their attempts to control inflation in the public sector in this Budget and in their overall anti-inflation program. All of Canada last year with the exception of some big labor unions and some big business corporations agreed to combat inflation with every tool at their disposal on the national problem. As always the NDP shifts the blame to the national government and refuse to accept their responsibility. They criticize the Federal Government for spending 15 per cent more and then they increase their own expenditures to 16 per cent. Where is their battle against inflation? They sat on their hands for months and then they established their own Anti-inflation Board. They called it the Saskatchewan Prices and Compensation Board. The Board is comprised of capable, reputable people in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately this was a smokescreen to give it an aura of respectability. Then, Mr. Speaker, it gave them terms of reference that are a disgrace. It proceeded to tie their hands and make it not only ineffective but deliberately made their efforts futile and a complete waste of time.

With organized labor, their financial and electoral supporters on their backs, they deliberately established a board that was a sham, a farce, a public buffer, a scapegoat for their refusal to enter this all important Canadian battle.

Let me examine with you their terms of reference to illustrate the cop-out. The compensation guidelines of ten per cent, number one, will not be applied to settlements reached after October 14, 1975, where the settlement is the same as an offer made before that date. What have been the results, Mr. Speaker? Not one single settlement in the public sector in the Province of Saskatchewan has been settled within the national guidelines before or after the 14th. I repeat not one single settlement. In fact what has occurred is the opposite - every single settlement has been almost 100 per cent above the national guidelines or even more and here are some examples:

- SPC and Members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers are now reaching accord on a 20 per cent increase. Reports are it is as high as 28 per cent on a 16 month contract.
- The Workers' Compensation Board between eight per cent and \$100 per month which is an increase in areas of up to 27 per cent announced on February 14, 1976.
- White collar workers and the Government settled on February 27, 1976 for between ten and a whopping 31 per cent.
- Liquor Board Employees and the Government announced settlement on November 29, 1975 for an increase of between 17 and 28 per cent in a 15 month contract.
- On September 15, 1975, Saskatchewan Government Employees Association Blue Collar Workers settled for an increase of 30 per cent. They even established a minimum wage for

Government workers of \$3.60 while the rest of the people of Saskatchewan have a minimum wage of \$2.80.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on. I would ask the citizens of Saskatchewan to watch carefully what is going to happen in the future settlements. But the point I want to make is that settlements, some before October 14th, the majority after, completely ignored any anti-inflation guidelines in Saskatchewan or in Canada.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — How can we expect businessmen or companies to fight inflation when the Government refuses to follow it themselves. When they establish their own guidelines designed to frustrate and ignore the federal guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, let me go on and give you some comments on the other guidelines. The terms of reference of our Saskatchewan Board allow it to make historical relationships on a prairie wide basis. It is another attempt to do what they want - to ignore the federal guidelines. I suggest that not one settlement in Saskatchewan will be a catchup settlement and bring parity with the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, but will be an open excuse for the Government to break the national guidelines and their own guidelines.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — A third term of reference, Mr. Speaker, is to exclude increments from the Saskatchewan guidelines. This, Mr. Speaker, is merely adding five per cent to every salary settlement in Saskatchewan where increased increments are part of an agreement.

Fourth, the Board is then given no power or authority to roll back excessive increases. It can review and study but if it objects it can only refer it to the Cabinet. It is a straw man, Mr. Speaker, whose only responsibility is to provide a shelter for a government who refuses to accept their own responsibility.

Five, then Mr. Speaker, it refers to the Cabinet - What does the Cabinet do? Does it roll back the prices or wages? Does it fine those who refuse to comply? Oh, no, Mr. Speaker, of course not. Why would Premier Blakeney put himself in that embarrassing position. He refuses to act, he refuses to interfere, what does it do? It refers it to the Legislative Assembly. Can anyone imagine, calling the Assembly back to roll back a government agency's wage increase that has been granted by the Government, and the Government must call the Assembly together.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, can you imagine, I will wager with the Premier or any Cabinet Minister that this Assembly will never be called back to roll back an increase in wages or prices by government within the public sector in Saskatchewan. It is a sham, a farce and a cop-out.

Second, Mr. Speaker, what else can it do? It can refuse to grant that agency funds. Imagine the NDP refusing the

Workers' Compensation Board the money to operate so it can look after the injured working men in Saskatchewan.

No, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have done two things in their anti-inflation fight:

1. They made the terms of reference so broad that it made it impossible for any group not to have complete freedom to do what they want and to successfully tie the hands of the Board to have the authority to take any remedial action.

2. They made absolutely certain that if the Board does disapprove that they as a Cabinet or as a government will not be responsible to protect the people of Saskatchewan. Like cowards they hid behind the skirts of this Provincial Assembly.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Everyone in Canada is being asked to fight inflation except the NDP Government in the Province of Saskatchewan. They left the door wide open for the Government to hide behind. The Premier invited any and all - unions or management to do as they please. He had neither the courage nor the leadership to take his place in this fight. Then came the payoff, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) who had a direct responsibility for this program announced publicly that the Government would back down from any union who put them under extreme pressure. I quote from the Leader-Post of Saturday March 6, 1976:

In reply to a question Mr. Smishek agreed that the provision could be used to stop a crippling strike by giving the striker more than the national guidelines would allow.

He openly invited unions to use the pressure of the strike to break the guidelines. Is this the kind of leadership required by a Provincial Minister of the Crown?

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to the tax shift and the transfer of responsibility which is so apparent in this Budget and which has been so overlooked by those who have assessed it.

First of all I should like to talk about tax increases. The first real casualty of this Budget is the individual taxpayer of Saskatchewan. At a time when the cost of living continues to rise all governments should attempt to lower taxes and place additional revenue in the hands of consumers. The anti-inflation fight is a two-edged sword. Not only must it restrain wages to a reasonable level but it must prohibit prices from rising beyond reasonable cost increases. How can the NDP ask any corporation and they have been very vocal about this right across Canada and in the federal House of Commons, to hold prices in line when they themselves are the worst perpetrators of the rising cost of living in our province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — With reckless unconcern this NDP Government has used its Crown corporations as an instrument of confiscating income from the poor, the rich, the young, the old, the well and even the sick. As people struggle to manage their incomes and provide for the necessities of life, this greedy Government has raised every

indirect and hidden tax at their disposal. Never have the Saskatchewan taxpayers been hit as hard as they have been in 1975-76 by this Government.

And not only that, Mr. Speaker, the increases in some cases have been astronomical in their size and their amount. If any private corporation raised rates to the extent of Sask Tel or Sask Power or SGIO, the NDP would have demanded a national inquiry.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The real tragedy is that most of these increases were brought about for political reasons. There was an election last June and increases that should have been scheduled a year or so ago were put off to save their political hides. Mr. Speaker, not only are these increases astronomical but in some cases the announcements were downright misleading in the amounts outlined by the Minister.

Let me take auto insurance. I want to quote the Minister, Mr. Whelan, in the Leader-Post as of February 19, 1976 and I quote:

The increases in automobile insurance rates that average 14.3 per cent were announced by Ed. Whelan, the Minister in charge.

He later indicated on television that there were some of those fairly expensive sports models that might go up as high as 100 per cent. Mr. Speaker, it was not only the expensive sports cars that went up but the small inexpensive working man's car, like a Mini-Minor and the Morris, and some farm trucks, these were even 100 per cent and beyond. Let me give you some examples: Plymouths, and these are rates on comparable makes of cars and they went up the following:

Plymouths - 33 per cent; Cougars - 40 per cent; Mustangs - 40 per cent; Vegas - 19 per cent; Dodges - 26 per cent; One ton farm trucks - 89 per cent.

This is another example of the NDP saying "Do as I say but not as I do." Mr. Speaker, it made no difference whether you were a student, a farmer, a union employee, a small businessman, the NDP took a fantastic slice out of your income. SGIO rates up, Sask Tel rates up, Auto insurance rates up, Power rates up, Gas rates up, Grazing leases up, Land Bank rent up, Tuition fees up, Board and Room at university up, Beer prices up, Liquor prices up, Drivers' Licences up. This list, Mr. Speaker, goes on and on. These increases range anywhere from 10, 15, 25, to even 100 per cent. Anyone paying Sask Power rates knows, every family in Saskatchewan knows, the fantastic increase that he is paying this year even in a mild Saskatchewan winter.

Here is a report from the Leader-Post. It indicates that Saskatchewan Power rates are the highest in western Canada. Here are the rates as compared to some of our sister cities in the West. The average cost for industrial and commercial users in the West is as follows:

Regina 2.11 cents per kilowatt hour; but in Winnipeg it is only 1.56 cents per kilowatt hour. In Calgary it is only 1.84 cents per kilowatt hour. In Vancouver it is only 1.84 cents

per kilowatt hour.

Domestic users also fell prey to the increase by the NDP. Please, will one of the Ministers opposite tell me why a socialist government should treat its citizens that way with its own Crown corporations?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — No, Mr. Speaker, it is not the grocery store or the businessman who is causing inflation in Saskatchewan, it is this NDP Government. They limit price increases to ten per cent by their anti-inflation program. Why not the NDP in Saskatchewan? An illustration of the NDP unconcern for the cost of living in Saskatchewan is Sask Tel.

Last year they made a profit of \$15 million and increased their reserves to \$81 million. Despite this they dramatically raised their rates last fall. Under questioning in the Crown Corporation Committee the Minister admitted that in the year 1976, Sask Tel would have made a profit of \$7 million with no increase in rates whatsoever. I repeat a profit of \$7 million with no rate increase. How can the Premier justify this kind of an increase at a time of restraint. It is the NDP who talk of no control over rising prices but they have completely ignored it themselves.

Because of this blatant disregard for the interest of Saskatchewan consumers, I have written to Judge Boychuk the Chairman of the Saskatchewan Prices and Compensation Board. I have asked him to call all Crown corporations that have increased their rates before the Board to justify their increases. I want to read and table that letter:

Dear Sir: During the affairs of the examination of the Saskatchewan Telecommunications by the Legislature's calendar year, 1975, it became evident that Sask Telecommunications substantially increased its telephone rates effective November 1975. The Minister in charge of Sask Tel admitted that Sask Tel's profit for 1976 would have been \$7 million without any increase in rates whatsoever. He admitted further that the increased rates will generate a 1976 profit of \$17 million. We believe that in view of these facts the Prices and Compensation Board ought to review these inflationary increases in rates with a view to rolling them back.

As you know SGIO recently increased its rates for automobile insurance. We have instances where these rates increased as much as 85 per cent. I believe this is the case for one ton farm vehicles. Other vehicle rates increased 17, 24 and in excess of 30 per cent. Again these increases are distinctly inflationary and should be examined.

Power and gas rates, lease rentals, have also been increased recently. The Minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Government Printing Company disclosed to the Select Standing Committee in Crown corporations that their printing rates were increased a full 20 per cent in November. The printing rates of the Queen's Printer were raised 20 per cent.

May I suggest that the Board consider reviewing all these Government-inspired rate increases, that they are not only inflationary but come at a time when the Government is calling on others for restraint. It is indeed enforcing restraint on many, including landlords. They are by this action eroding what little confidence the people have left in government itself with its lack of self restraint.

I want to take that letter, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, in this Budget they have also increased taxes directly on Saskatchewan people. For instance, taxes on cigarettes up six cents; a surcharge on incomes of over \$21,000; a three cent increase on gasoline. Mr. Speaker, they are also going to have a little surplus. First, Mr. Speaker, to increase any taxes this year is inconceivable. The worst increase of all is that the farmers' rebate on fuel is to be reduced from seven cents to four cents. It is another example of their disregard for the farmers' rising costs of production.

The surcharge on incomes is unfortunate. The amount is insignificant. The net effect considering the \$100 tax reduction as the Minister indicated last year is that a man making \$30,000 will pay an additional \$20. But what is important is that once again it increases the cost of living in Saskatchewan as compared to other provinces. First they drive out the capital and now they are driving out the brains. Saskatchewan is now short of professional people and skilled tradesmen. This tax will make it even more difficult to attract people to our province.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this Budget transfers the responsibility of fighting inflation to the backs of individual taxpayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about local government. Mr. Speaker, if there is any area in this Budget which will be subject to examination and criticism in the months ahead it is the attitude of this Government and its treatment of local government.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — I say that the major casualty will be local government. Faced with increased costs as a result of inflation in provincial government action they remain tied to the economic base of property. As costs continue to gallop they find themselves with only two alternatives. One, to raise the mill rate; two, go hand in hand with their begging cup to the door of the Provincial Government and ask for a bigger handout. This situation is not only insulting, it is absurd. It is a result of our archaic constitution that makes our municipalities the creatures of the Provincial Government.

It is absurd because today in Canada municipal government needs and spends more than provincial governments. The demands for service in urban Saskatchewan and the needs of rural revitalization are facts of life that this Government must face.

It is time the NDP Government looked on local government as

a partner and not as an offspring. It is time they decided to share revenues on an accepted formula from taxes that rise according to inflation and productivity. I believe it is time that they received a commitment from this NDP Government that they will receive a share of taxes related to the ability to pay.

I refer to income taxes, gasoline tax or sales tax or any number of taxes including resources, that rise with inflation and rise with increased costs.

**MR. COWLEY:** — Take the 1970 budget.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — How has this Budget responded to the needs of local government? I'm going to come to it, Mr. Member for Biggar. It has transferred the burden to their shoulders and continued to treat them as second class citizens. Nothing could emphasize this more than the delay in presenting this Budget. Education boards and municipal governments cannot even strike their budgets until they are informed of the amount they would receive from this Budget.

And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? Let me first take Education.

Education costs have increased to the point where boards of education are faced with two choices.

One, they must reduce programs and quality of education or increase dramatically the mill rate to support the growing demands of quality education in Saskatchewan.

Two, convince the Provincial Government that its action in negotiating teachers' salaries, increasing fuel costs, raising minimum wages, increasing power and gas rates, is forcing their costs to skyrocket out of control. It is their responsibility to provide grants that will enable them to continue to provide an education for our children.

How has the NDP Government responded? They increased grants from \$140 million last year to \$167 million or 20 per cent.

What has happened in our education system? Last year the cost of operating the school system was approximately \$246 million according to the school trustees.

To provide for a 20 per cent increase in salaries will cost, according to the school trustees approximately \$30 million. Already my information is that they have offered over 17 per cent on the grid plus the increments, which according to their own figures is 5.6 on a provincial average. I predict this negotiation will end up at 25 per cent for both grid and incremental costs.

**MR. COWLEY:** — . . . grant . . .

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Oh, but unfortunately the grant won't even look after the increased salary costs. That's the problem.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!



**MR. MacDONALD:** — It will do nothing for plant maintenance, it will do nothing for fuel costs, it will do nothing for bus services, it will do nothing to the additional increased costs in education.

Mr. Speaker, I predict that in addition to all of these costs that about \$20 or \$25 million will have to be picked up by local taxpayers by increases in property taxes across the province.

No, this Budget is an albatross around the neck of school boards that will result in sharply reducing the quality of education and most important of all, a huge increase in the local mill rate. I suggest that the biggest fight that's going to be in this House in this Session is next week when we hear from school boards just what the increased tax rate and increased local mill rate will be, because of the grants of this Government to look after the increased costs of education.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — What's astounding to note, Mr. Speaker, is that in 1971 in our last session with my colleague, Mr. Steuart, we brought down a budget in this House, 33 per cent of that budget was devoted to education. Look what's happened in 1976-77. Despite the fact they initiated kindergarten, a Department of Continuing Education, a community college program, this NDP Government will only spend 23.9 per cent on education.

The people who are suffering for this cheap short sighted approach are the children. This Government has completely ignored the priorities of education. But that isn't the problem. The real problem is going to be in the municipalities.

No one can question the fact that urban problems are the challenge of the future. Pollution, parking, serviced lots, streets, transportation, law and order. These are where provincial governments must look with ever increasing awareness.

Increased costs in these vital areas are continuing to escalate beyond the power of local governments to cope with. The NDP Budget has refused to accept this responsibility.

Let me point out what has happened in the expenditures for the Department of Municipal Affairs.

The allocation to this vital department last year was \$76 million, \$76.4 million. This year they have increased it to \$80.2 million. It is a measly increase of not quite five per cent. I repeat, the Department of Municipal Affairs gets an increase of less than five per cent and the Department of Government Services 34 per cent. Strange priorities, Mr. Speaker. Thirty-four per cent to keep the Provincial Government in operation and five per cent to assist local government.

Then, Mr. Speaker, if I were to play the game of the Minister and include the supplementary estimates on Municipal Affairs, like he wanted to do, and there is \$6 million in here of Municipal Affairs Estimates. The department of Municipal Affairs would in fact have a minus two per cent in this Budget as compared to last year.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — And I want to repeat, Mr. Speaker. A minus two per cent for the Department of Municipal Affairs, for actual expenditures last year in comparison with this year.

I don't have to remind Members that last year municipal taxes increased right across the province. Here are some examples. This is the combined municipal and school mill rate increases last year. Regina, my friend the mayor, 18 mills. Saskatoon, 11.6 mills; Swift Current, 8 mills; Yorkton, 11 mills; Moose Jaw, 8.6 mills; North Battleford, public 9.3 and separate 18.9 mills; Prince Albert, public 17 mills and separate 10 mills.

This year the city of Regina is struggling with a 22 mill rate increase. From what I am told this does not include this year's salaries. I have already received my tax notice of a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker, when you find those tax increases last year and the local mill rate, they will be minute, compared to the provincial average increase of mill rates in 1976-77 and that is the weakness and that is the albatross of this Budget.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Poor Henry, the NDP have never promoted him, have been trying to dump him for many years, they never succeeded. But the Minister's Budget is going to do it for him this year.

This Budget will generate the most enormous increase in local taxes right across Saskatchewan for both school and municipal purposes. It has abandoned local government. It has transferred inflation from the province to the ratepayers. Surely this Government could direct to local government a sufficient increase in grants to prevent this staggering load when people are attempting to fight the rising cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, now let me turn to service to people. This is the next casualty of this Budget.

The senior citizens and the sick who need hospital and medical care. This Government has attempted to convince the people of Saskatchewan that it has a concern for people. It turns on its propaganda machine to tell everyone the NDP is the friend of the sick and the old and the unfortunate.

What are the facts?

Let me look at the Health budget for 1976-77. This Budget has allocated \$33.6 million to health care, an increase of 15 per cent.

In presenting the overall increase in government spending the Minister included supplementary or money spent during the '75-76 fiscal year that was not included in the budget estimates of one year ago. Instead of a six per cent increase, he claimed it was 11.

When he came to Health, he did the opposite and I want to repeat it. He conveniently omitted the \$23 million additional

money that was required during the fiscal year to keep the health programs operating. He sanctimoniously proclaimed an increase in health expenditures of \$68.5 million, a 25 per cent increase.

Here, Mr. Speaker, I have the supplemental Estimates for the Department of Health. Let me enumerate them for you. General administration, \$338,000; regional health services, \$333,800; health services program, \$582,800; cancer commission, \$293,000; psychiatric services, \$554,000; Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford, \$811,000; psychiatric centre, Weyburn, \$400,000; Yorkton, \$186,000; alcohol commission, \$180,000; medical care commission, \$3,800,000; SHSP, \$12,100,000; university hospital, \$4 million; SAIL, \$154,000. A total of \$23,862,200.

These, Mr. Minister, are built in costs of health programs that are locked in. They are not special grants for abnormal conditions, they are to pay for the health care of citizens of Saskatchewan who are sick.

It brings the total health costs of last year to \$293 million, not \$270 million that the Minister conveniently used in his budget address.

It means an increase of 15 per cent. In this presentation designed very cleverly and very subtly, to mislead the public, to stifle criticism that is now being directed at his Government. It was done deliberately and the people of Saskatchewan deserve an explanation.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — It is especially repugnant after the Minister's vicious attack on the Federal Government in the same speech and which the editorial in the Leader-Post phrases so much for him. Let me quote what the Minister said:

The Federal Government's proposed cutbacks in medical and hospital funding are threatening the provision of health services in Canada.

Another one.

Many provinces are being forced to close hospitals and reduce available hospital beds.

This is the statement of the Minister.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, right here in the Province of Saskatchewan the NDP are not giving as much as the Federal Government guidelines.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — That's the bare 15 per cent. It is the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at health costs for a moment.

The writing has been on the wall for many years about spiralling health costs. The Royal Commission on Health Services, 1965 warned all Canadians about impending financial

difficulties.

The Liberal Government of Premier Thatcher was criticized by the NDP for its attempts to face the issue. His policies, economically right were politically unsound and his government was defeated.

The present NDP Government in the face of all warnings about spiralling costs have refused to face the impending crisis. Instead they preferred to blame the Federal Government. They removed the hospital and medical care tax to buy votes for their promise of free medical and hospital care. It was like being invited to a free lunch, but there was no food. Our health plans are in a dangerous financial position.

They have stacked new programs, hearing aid, dental, SAIL, pharmacy, without any concern regarding costs. Our basic health services are now in danger of collapsing.

How many people realize that this Government that pretends to be the champion of the sick spends a lower percentage of its budget on health than all other Canadian provinces other than Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick according to DBS.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The DBS statement illustrating health expenditures is a percentage of estimated gross expenditures for '76. Nova Scotia spends 25.4 per cent; Quebec, 25.4; Ontario, 27.4; Manitoba, 28; Saskatchewan, 21.6; Alberta, 23.2 and British Columbia, 23.8 per cent.

Yes, I repeat, despite the fantastic new and expensive programs, Saskatchewan spends a smaller percentage of its revenue on health services than other provinces. No wonder our health programs are being deleted, no wonder we are having problems. This is the priority.

At the present time hospitals are in the process of preparing line by line budgets which will form the basis of budgeting in the years ahead. At the present time hospitals are being told by SHSP to cut staff, nurses, nurses aids, dietary housekeeping and every level of service is being savagely slashed in every major hospital across Saskatchewan.

Here is a clipping of last week, March 19, from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix. It is headed "University Hospital to Reduce Staff". It begins as follows and I quote:

University hospital is cutting about 82 full time positions from its staff as a result of a tighter budget imposed on it by the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan.

It will remove 41 nurses and another 32.5 positions for hospital workers. It will result, according to the article in reducing its in-patient workloads by four and a half per cent.

This is the most hypocritical move ever made by the NDP Government. It will destroy the level of care. It betrays their claimed policy of people before dollars. It will effect the

sick, the old, the blind.

In addition unions are demanding a shorter work week. I want to tell the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance, that doctors and nurses and those people in the health field in Saskatchewan will not stand for a reduction in the quality of care thus diluting our health programs.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — It will have only one result, Mr. Speaker, it will close desperately needed beds in every major acute care hospital in Saskatchewan. The waiting lists are at record levels in most major hospitals right now, before this vicious action takes place.

I suggest that the action of the Minister of Finance in this Budget, giving a lower per cent of increase to health than even the federal guidelines, that he criticizes, will close more hospital beds in the Province of Saskatchewan than Gordon Grant would have done in ten years.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate citizens and their families are desperately seeking health care in their time of need. This NDP Government instead of providing realistic solutions to fragmented and totally inadequate delivery of health services, prefers instead to put millions of dollars into government buildings and maintaining the bureaucracy in Saskatchewan.

Let me turn to another area that is a shift of responsibility from the Provincial Government to the senior citizens of Saskatchewan. I don't know how many people noticed the absence of any comment on this this year in the Budget. One group of people and a very large group of people in Saskatchewan. No heading, only a passing mention. Senior citizens. Senior citizens, those people of a fixed income. Completely absent from this Budget. Completely absent. Remember the great plans the Government had last year?

Mr. Speaker, in this last Budget the NDP provided assistance to senior citizens in special Care Homes, according to the Minister outside the House and in his speech. Last year this grant was \$105 and \$135, now it has gone to \$121 to \$362. What has happened to nursing home rates?

They have increased dramatically in the past year and let me give you several examples. I want to point out that these examples are not the exception but the rule right across the province. And if the Minister can find any contradiction to this I shall be glad to hear from him in his reply.

In one rural nursing home in northeastern Saskatchewan the rate increased as follows:

February 1975 - \$225 for Level I; February 1976 - \$415.

In another home in Saskatoon the rates for Level III were the following:

May 1972 - \$300; October 1975 - \$795.

In this home the rate increased \$205 last year. Not because of bad management but because of increased costs. Many homes ended up being unionized over the past year, wages were low and tough negotiations brought about improved conditions for the workers but also higher rates to the inmates.

Here is another example. I have a letter from the Assiniboia Pioneer Lodge outlining their latest price increases. In the Rosco-Payant Nursing Home the rates increased as follows:

Level II March 1975 - \$310; March 1976 - \$480;  
Level III March 1975 - \$510; March 1976 - \$700.

What else has this Budget done for our senior citizens? Well for one thing, it did away with the Senior Citizens Home Repair Program. It is down from \$4.6 million to \$688,000 with 18 employees. Please tell me, Mr. Minister, what will those 18 people do?

The Budget for some strange reason fails to mention our senior citizens. There is no improvement at all for those people on a fixed income.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time of restraint. People in Saskatchewan are demanding cutbacks in Government spending. Where then should this spending cut come from?

Priorities - this Government is busy spending our money attempting to own and control our economic lives rather than to alleviate our social problems.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The NDP's accelerating expenditures on both current and capital spending is a clear indication of its growing intrusion into the business and lives of the people of Saskatchewan.

This Government's spending estimates, over-expenditures, capital requirements and their record borrowing to meet these demands point clearly to the size of the dimension of government activities. Statements by the NDP about capital investment in Saskatchewan are the most misleading in this Budget.

Capital investment has become a very misleading economic indicator in terms of the NDP. It is interesting to note that public and private investment in statistical accounts are always lumped together. Investment capital has always been looked on as an indication of growth and new jobs. In Saskatchewan it is different.

A few days ago the Minister of Finance told this Assembly that Saskoil had just borrowed from the Treasury \$23 million to purchase Atlantic Richfield, an American oil company. This non-job producing capital investment has left the province to create jobs in another country. It has not produced one job, one more barrel of oil or one more dollar to the Treasury. It merely takes the taxpayer's money to Washington, New York or London.

This is not the only capitalist venture that this Government has invested in, capital that could have been used for other needs. They spent \$10 million on Intercontinental Packers that left Saskatchewan for California in the pocket of Mr. Mendal.

They spent \$4.5 million to purchase IPSCO shares that did not create one job, they spent \$1.8 million to purchase the holdings of Canada Northwest Land Limited.

Premier Blakeney has just returned from the United States in attempting to spend millions on a potash mine. This Government gives a million dollars to a number of companies, including the huge German Corporation Uranex, in a joint venture agreement in the North without disclosing for what purpose and to whom or any other information. In no way can the people of Saskatchewan judge if this money is being squandered or not.

The real point, Mr. Speaker, is that this investment program that all it does is a change of ownership. It is not creating one new job to build and develop Saskatchewan. Who is investing these millions of dollars on our behalf? It is the civil servants, who have never risked capital of their own, have never been in business before, have never faced a competitive market. What is their record?

The best assessment of this socialist government's success in the business field is to examine the record of SEDCO. The Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation that invests in Saskatchewan business and loans public funds to assist business to be established.

Not only is it jeopardizing taxpayers' funds but is on the verge of a public scandal.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — In the last months at least six companies, and no doubt more, that SEDCO invested taxpayers' money in, have gone bankrupt or placed in receivership. The people of Saskatchewan are on the verge of losing all or part of their investment in these companies. Let me enumerate those companies and the amount of money loaned by SEDCO to each.

Meadow Lake Wood Industries, that manufacturers doors, SEDCO sunk \$2 million or \$1.9 million to be exact in this venture, and it is a colossal mess.

Fleury Industries, a bus manufacturing company in Saskatoon, I am not familiar with the exact loan. SEDCO is up to its ears in this company which has been floundering.

Sportsman Campers and Trailers Manufacturing Company of Saskatoon received a loan of \$180,000 in 1973 and it is bankrupt.

Circle 4 Feeders Limited of Regina, received \$400,000 in 1973 and 1974 and it is bankrupt and SEDCO has only \$110,000 in security.

Continental Bedding and Furniture Company of Saskatoon, SEDCO put around \$150,000 into this company. It has gone bankrupt.

Daluma Campers, thousands thrown to the winds of this venture, it is bankrupt.

How many more companies have been loaned money and are in financial trouble is difficult to assess. The NDP refuse to give information about SEDCO on individual loans and individual

companies. It hides much of its financial affairs. But this much is clear - two years ago under the management of Dave Dombowsky, now the NDP's new manager of Saskatchewan Potash, under his management they paid more attention to quantity and appearance of activity than to quality or to sound business management.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The rush into publicity producing ventures to create the impression that this Government was on the move is proving to be a farce. We are now reaping the rewards in the form of consistent losses of millions of dollars. Now the Minister is investing \$300,000 in the movie, "Who has Seen the Wind." It will probably turn into another version of "Gone With the Wind", as thousands of Saskatchewan dollars are blown away.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, in the eight years preceding 1973 SEDCO loaned and guaranteed on an average of \$12 to \$13 million. In 1973 it rose to \$40 million and in 1974 to \$50 million. It was pumping out the dollars as though the financial well had no bottom. And where is the 1975 report?

It is nearly three months since SEDCO's financial year was completed and we still have no report. In view of the bankruptcies we can only conclude the financial report for 1975 is a great embarrassment to the Government.

In view of what is happening to SEDCO backed ventures we should not entrust this Government to invest our money. In view of their bad judgment, mismanagement, ineptness I would not trust them with a set of tinker toys.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — It is a typical example of Government interference in private business. Yet this is the same Government which wants us to invest hundreds of millions in oil and potash. In Atlantic Richfield they did not even get an outside appraisal of the company's value. They are becoming known as the suckers in the resource industry.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — That brings up another matter in this Budget or rather the lack of it. It has always been the practice of indicating in the Budget the anticipated borrowing level for the coming year. This year the Budget Address told us the NDP borrowed \$213 million last year, but nowhere that I can see, did the Minister indicate what he intended to borrow this year or for what purposes. He also indicated that they recently went to the Canadian Bond Market to borrow \$75 million at 10 1/4 per cent. This is the highest rate of interest ever paid by the Saskatchewan Government.

Why are we not told how much they intended to borrow and for



what reason and they are embarking on the biggest risk ever undertaken by this Government, the purchase or expropriation of the potash industry. Surely the people of Saskatchewan have the right to know what debt this Government is placing on their backs. Surely the Minister has no right to hide this risk from the citizens.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — This is particularly dangerous when we consider that in the potash bill which passed in this House last fall no limit was placed on the borrowing of the Potash Corporation. The Corporation was given a blank cheque by this Government.

When we look at their record - in SEDCO, in Intercon, in Saskoil, a record of bungling and waste and extravagance it is vital that they lay before this House their intentions for borrowing for 1976.

Let me turn to another aspect of this Budget that I think is evident duplicity. I refer to the number of people on welfare. Let me quote the Budget:

Mr. Speaker, the caseload of the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan has maintained a steady decline. From September 1973 to September 1975 the total caseload decreased by 19 per cent while the number of persons receiving assistance decreased by a dramatic 35 per cent over that period.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from the speech of the Minister of Social Services, given a few days ago, March 17, and I quote:

You asked in January the first, 1972 the last year you people were responsible for the Budget - we had 59,000 people on SAP, January 1, 1976 we had 36,000.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the report of the Department of Public Health just tabled in this House.

With the introduction of the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan on April 1, 1966 all categories (and I repeat) all categories were as nearly as possible combined under one program. Actual need became the criterion upon which eligibility was determined. After this the caseload increased from 28,645 in 1965-66 to 42,964 in 1966-67 to a maximum in 1972-73 of 71,351. However since 1973 it has been steadily decreasing. In 1973-74 it was 65,565 and in 1974-75 the average caseload was 55,406.

Who, Mr. Speaker, is right? Mr. Rolfes, or the Department of Health? It is the Department of Health and let me explain.

When the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan was introduced it was to be a comprehensive plan to look after all needy people in Saskatchewan. We were the Government at the time, we transferred the old age supplementary program, blind person's allowance, handicapped allowance and so forth, under one comprehensive umbrella. For example: thousands of our senior citizens who were concerned about their health applied for social assistance and received little or no money but received a health card. Today, they do not apply to the Social Assistance but under the

Saskatchewan Income Plan. Last year they made a total of 609,000 grants under this program. In the past these people would have applied under Social Assistance and I challenge the Minister to deny that fact.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — They all receive the federal supplement and all or most would qualify for the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan.

Farmers today, who a few years ago, applied for assistance from Social Assistance in months of low quotas and low incomes today they apply under the Family Income Plan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when I was the Minister of Social Services I had the Department do a study of the number of farmers on social assistance and I challenge the Minister to table that document.

In addition, the Social Assistance Program supported many people under the extreme hardship clause that were employed. And I challenge the Minister to table those regulations. Today, according to the Minister a few days ago in his speech, there are 16,900 families receiving the Family Income Plan. That is a total of well over 50,000 people. The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan had an objective of one all inclusive program for all persons receiving assistance from the Department of Welfare. The NDP changed this, for good or bad, some cases good.

Now there are three programs - Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, the Family Income Plan and the Saskatchewan Income Plan.

Mr. Speaker, a rose by any name smells the same. I say the Minister is again being dishonest with this House.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — More people are receiving assistance from the Department of Welfare in 1976 than at any time in our history. That is why, Mr. Speaker, our expenditures have jumped from \$39.4 million in the Estimates for 1972-73 to an astounding \$150.5 million, an increase of 280 per cent in this Budget. It is not only the increased benefits or additions to the Department, there have been some, but rather the fantastic number of people who are receiving assistance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about agriculture. Agriculture continues to be the major economic base in Saskatchewan. Our farmers continue to provide the impetus to the prosperity our province has experienced over the past few years. The price of grain on the international market has resulted in the net income to farmers rising very substantially.

When the farmer in Saskatchewan prospers every other sector of business prospers. The corner grocery store, the machine dealer, the hardware merchant, the local garage all share in the return of the farmer. Our farmers have demonstrated they are the most efficient in the world. However, Mr. Speaker, farmers in Saskatchewan are disturbed at the treatment they are receiving from this Government. This Government is continuing to contribute to major increases in their costs of production.

In 1975 according to Agriculture Canada, estimated cash receipts for Saskatchewan were a record \$2.4 billion. Net

income, however, will be only \$1.3 billion. It is expected to decline to \$951 million in the year 1976. Farmers will be faced with declining incomes, but their costs are continuing to rise at record levels of between 18 and 20 per cent. What disturbs farmers the most is that much of this increase is a result of this NDP Government deliberately raising their costs for a variety of essential requirements.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — What does this Budget do for agriculture in Saskatchewan?

The total vote for agriculture has been cut by 16 per cent. A reduction of 16 per cent in our basic industry. In 1975-76 the total for ordinary and capital was \$57.9 million and this year it has been reduced to \$49.9 million. The worst aspect of this reduction is that most is in areas that will directly affect the farmers' costs of production. I refer to the decrease in the rebate from seven cents to four cents for the fuel he requires to farm his land. This will reduce the rebate from \$12.7 million to \$3.5 million, or a reduction of 130 per cent.

Let me next turn to the Land Bank. A few weeks ago the Minister announced that Land Bank rentals would be increased by 65 per cent. When this program was first introduced in 1972 the Liberal Opposition called it a 'land grab'. They said it was a socialist scheme to grab control of the agricultural land in Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — We also pointed out that the insidious part of this Act was that it was designed to fleece the farmer. A clause in the Act states that rents would be based on market value rather than purchase price would have only one disastrous result - young farmers would pay more to rent their land from the Land Bank than to buy it through the Farm Credit plan.

Mr. Speaker, this wholesale fleecing is now a fact. Land values in Saskatchewan have doubled in the last three years, and that is the statement of the Minister of Agriculture.

On January 30, 1976 the Minister just increased the rate to 65 per cent. This means that by 1977 or 1978 the renter of the land will be paying a 100 per cent increase because it is on an average of a three year average if the price of land has not declined. In other words the Land Bank will increase its rent 100 per cent. What does this mean to the young farmer renting land?

If the price of land was \$100 per acre in 1973 and the purchase price had been borrowed from Farm Credit on a 29 year mortgage - the farmer would be paying an interest rate of \$8.14 per acre to retire that debt and would own the land in 29 years.

Under the Land Bank the market value has doubled to \$200 per acre at five and one-half per cent rental rate which means he will be paying \$11 per acre by 1977 if the land prices stay exactly the same.

**MR. THIBAUT:** — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of

Order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — What is your Point of Order?

**MR. THIBAUT:** — Could I have leave to introduce a group of students.

### **WELCOME TO STUDENTS**

**MR. THIBAUT:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald) for permitting me to introduce a fine group of students. I didn't want to interrupt you on the air time. The students are from Wakaw High School, led here by their bus driver Mr. Mihilewicz, which is similar to a common name in hockey, and Mr. Bob Zadworny, school teacher, the vice-principal of the high school, his wife and chaperon Stella Zadworny. Wakaw is the largest town in my constituency. They have been touring the city today. I am sure it is a very educational tour and the speech from the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley will be very educational as well. I am sure that their visit here this afternoon will certainly be appreciated. I will meet them in a little while. I also want to wish them a safe journey home.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

The assembly resumed the interrupted debate on the Budget Debate.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — I want to tell the Member for Kinistino this is the first time I have appreciated any comments he has made. He gave me a chance to catch my breath.

Mr. Speaker, I want to continue with the Land Bank rent. If the price of land goes up 300 per cent, and in some places in Saskatchewan it has not increased 250 per cent but 300 per cent. No question about it the former Minister of Agriculture and the present Minister would agree with that. It will mean that a farmer will be paying to rent his land about \$16.50 per acre, on that land that he rented in 1973. Sixteen fifty to rent, \$8.14 to purchase. This is the future prospect of the young farmer under the Land Bank at that particular period of time. What is even more important these young farmers are angry, disillusioned and disappointed. Because, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to paying for that land, they will pay it at the appreciated value and this Government will be making millions and millions and millions of dollars on the backs of these young farmers.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Because of the appreciated increase in the value of that land and doubling the rent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to resource development, a key to economic prosperity in Saskatchewan. It is interesting to note that this Budget outlines resource revenues but completely ignores increases in productive capacity. The real test of growth and expansion is the increase in productive capacity in tons of potash - in barrels of oil - in cubic feet of gas - in tons of coal and so on.

They have been ignored with good reason. If these figures were released they would show that resource development has gone backwards in Saskatchewan. In some cases it has reached disastrous proportions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The Budget outlines in the Estimates the total amount of mineral and resource taxation for the coming year. If I added it up correctly it will come to a staggering \$182 million. No one questions that oil has jumped from \$2.50 to around \$12 a barrel on the international market. No one questions the jump in the potash, or coal, or timber or other minerals. But this, Mr. Speaker, this alone has been responsible for increased revenue to the Saskatchewan Treasury. It has not come as a result of increased capacity, exploration or development. In fact the opposite is true.

There has not been one potash mine in Saskatchewan that has proceeded with expansion plans. Millions of dollars worth of planned expansion has been cancelled at a time when world demand was on the upswing. Now, Mr. Speaker, with the downturn in the market it could be a long way off. No new jobs, no new investment.

In the oil industry it is frightening to realize that our oil reserves are being depleted and within the next 10 or 15 years unless the situation changes, we will be a net importer of oil and gas. At a time when energy is in a national and international crisis, Saskatchewan exploration has come to a virtual standstill. Since Bill 42 was passed by this Assembly seizing oil rights, imposing crippling taxes, the private sector has avoided Saskatchewan like a plague.

In the previous 10 years preceding the passing of Bill 42 an average of 1,000 wells were drilled each year in Saskatchewan. Millions of dollars of private capital was invested to explore and develop this valuable resource. Last year in Saskatchewan 277 wells were completed. One hundred and five of these were oil wells, 82 gas and the remainder dry holes. Of the 277 SPC and Saskoil took out 62 licences. No, Mr. Speaker, the private sector has left this province with their equipment, their expertise and their money never to return.

It is also interesting to note the production figures which are an indication of employment as well as investment. In 1971 - production 88.5 million barrels; in 1975 - estimated production 58 million barrels. A decrease of 52 per cent. No, Mr. Speaker, the oil industry is in a disastrous position in Saskatchewan.

The same holds true in the uranium industry. With demands for nuclear energy on the increase Saskatchewan is at a standstill - only Wollaston Lake and Cluff Lake, two Liberal developments are now coming on stream.

I don't have to tell you about the timber industry. It is stagnant because of the Forestry Act.

The real question is why is resource development in the state of collapse in Saskatchewan. The answer is obvious, since 1971 the NDP has tried to do two things.

1. It has been completely preoccupied with Government ownership and equity. They have sacrificed jobs and expansion in favor of socialist philosophy and party doctrine.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The people of Saskatchewan and Canada have been the losers.

2. They have raised taxes on the resource industry to the level of confiscation. They have deliberately forced taxes to the level where it is uneconomic to invest or expand in this province. They have done it with the design to drive out private capital and leave the entire resource field open to government control and ownership. Once again the people of Saskatchewan and Canada will pay the price for this greed in the years to come.

Make no mistake the Liberal Party believes in private development. Make no mistake the Liberal Party believes that the resources belong to the people of Saskatchewan. Make no mistake the Liberal Party believes in a high but fair rate of taxation but make no mistake we will not squander millions of dollars on established companies that take millions to other provinces and countries. We object to spending a billion dollars on the potash industry that is already here. We object to spending \$23 million for oil wells that are already producing. We object to spending \$10.2 million on a packing plant that is already established. We object to spending \$4.5 million for shares in IPSCO that is already established. We believe investment should be directed to new jobs, new industries, to growth and development.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to the Minister's comments on the potash industry. Once again it was a vicious and misleading attack to justify their intention to take over this industry.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — The Minister's statements were not only misleading but half-truths and if it wasn't for Mr. Speaker, I would say no truth at all. It was a continuation of the NDP propaganda to discredit an industry whose only crime is that they object to government takeover. Let me quote the Minister's speech.

After a period of 12 years in production, the potash industry has extracted \$1,650 millions in potash but had paid only \$170 million in royalties and other revenues to the province.

What hogwash, Mr. Speaker! What the Minister conveniently left absent from his remarks are the following: municipal taxes paid; federal taxes paid; operating costs of wages, transportation, supplies, maintenance and a host of others. Most important of all the level of profit if any by any or all companies who went through some extremely difficult years.

You know, like those NDP ads on the radio and television, that kind of a statement will only bring ridicule down on the Minister and that of his Government. Like those NDP ads - I think this is stupid - they won't convince any objective viewers. In fact I believe they are on for only one purpose. They know

they are in trouble and they want to bolster up the NDP faithful, some of whom even oppose their action.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Next he claimed that the potash industry owed the Saskatchewan Government \$30 million. I say that is false. Here is what I have been able to gather from the industry.

1. About \$9 million . . .

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — There are two sides to every story. The Minister didn't give any side.

About \$9 million is related to prorationing that has been declared unconstitutional.

2. The remainder is related to the reserve tax and is a disagreement on the interpretation of the Act. This disagreement is over two factors. I will be very interested when the Minister of the Potash Corporation participates in this Debate, if he does to explain.

The first disagreement I am told is the industry average selling price of potash that is an essential part of the tax formula. The Minister and the industry do not agree. Surely the industry knows what the selling price has been, what the average is, and surely the Government can calculate this correctly. Simply for the fact, Mr. Speaker, that no other government demands proof but they accept the word of anybody they tax. If they feel that they are being hooked, then they have an opportunity to take them to the courts.

The second disagreement is related to the investment in plant that is also included in the taxation formula. The Government has not yet finalized the investment figure to be used in the formula.

The ridiculous aspect of this, and I want the Minister of the Potash Corporation to comment on this. They have not finalized according to the industry the amount of plant investment for '74-75 which is plant investment of December 31, 1973. One company that I am aware of opened their books in July to determine the value of capital investment and the increase from the previous year. The Government has not even as yet agreed to that figure. It is time the Government told the truth about the entire potash taxation story. It is time they stopped this misinformation.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here to defend the potash industry, they have got their lawyers, they have got their accountants, they have their public relations officers. But I am here to ask for the truth.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to a most important aspect of any and all government expenditures, waste, inefficiency and extravagance.

The one factor that we tend to forget when we discuss a provincial or federal budget is productivity. What is the civil service standard of efficiency and quality of service. We fail to ask ourselves, is it possible to analyse and come up with reasonable explanations for expenditure of public funds. How do we in fact determine whether there is waste and extravagance. We can only take examples - and I want to bring two blatant examples to your attention.

In the Public Accounts just tabled in the House in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan there is a list of costs for hiring of taxis, the amount in one year is in excess of \$100,000. I want to repeat - \$100,000 for taxis. With all the government cars, air traffic, trucks and other means of travel they have paid out over \$100,000 in taxi bills.

Another example of this irresponsible squandering of public funds is this Government's plan to construct a large building in every city and large town in the province. This policy is not only wasteful, and inflationary but is political bribery.

Mr. Speaker, these communities welcome the announcement to locate a costly public building in their area. Why shouldn't they? As one councillor said to me and I quote:

If this NDP Government is going to keep on throwing money around by the pailful they might as well throw some our way.

A typical case is the proposal of the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation, better known as the Timber Board, to build a 12 storey head office building in Prince Albert. The cost is to be nine or ten million dollars. This Crown corporation has now a total of 29 employees in their head office. This number will increase to 32. The Saskatchewan Forest Products has not made \$10 million since its inception in 1945.

In other words the Premier is going to build a 12 storey \$10 million building for 32 people, about two employees per floor, for a company that hasn't showed a total net profit of \$10 million during the 31 years of its existence.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Another shameful example of business stupidity and Government irresponsibility.

These are the same NDP who ask us to trust them to run the billion dollar potash industry in a business-like and successful way.

Mr. Speaker, we could go through the public accounts and come up with example after example. Why does a Minister require two and three executive assistants, why does the Department of Highways take four years to build 40 miles of highway. The point is where in this Budget is there an effort by this Government to improve productivity - eliminate waste and so on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make some recommendations to the Minister. If I were to say where, I would suggest to give a little more money to the Department of Health. A little more money to the Department of Education.



1. Page 28 - Item 3 - Grants to the Saskatchewan Educational Communications Corporation - \$1.4 million.

From the efforts in the Sask Information this will be nothing but propaganda. And I am sure the Education Department can use it for school grants.

2. Page 43 - Item 25 - Eliminate the three cents per gallon subsidy from Fuel Petroleum Act to Automobile Insurance Act - \$11 million.

You have just raised SGIO rates so high, surely to heavens this year you don't need that \$11 million.

Page 46 - Government Services - \$22.8 million slow down the lavish public building program.

Freeze all government building for a year. Just do the essential ones. Forget about those government employees and giving them plush offices. Take that \$22 million and give it to the Department of Health. You won't have to close down hospital beds.

Page 61 - Industry and Commerce - grown from \$2.6 million to \$6.1 million in the last two or three years. Cut that in half. Because it might save the taxpayers many millions more. Your experience in business was certainly very disappointing and the kind of a thing that we can't say was good business management.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the Budget. I therefore move the following:

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

“this Assembly expresses its regret:

- (a) At the Government's failure to provide leadership in the fight against inflation by not restraining the growing cost of the provincial government.
- (b) At the Government's decision to increase dramatically the cost of services by Saskatchewan Crown corporations.
- (c) At the Government's failure to protect our health programs by providing sufficient grants to maintain their quality of service.
- (d) At the Government's decision to transfer the fight against inflation to local government in Saskatchewan and regrets the increase in local mill rates that will result.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition).

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment.

**MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to commend the Minister of Finance and in fact the entire Government of Saskatchewan for the exceptional selling job which they have just performed in the presentation of the 1976-77 Budget.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. COLLVER:** — It ranks in scope with the sale of the Brooklyn Bridge, the Sting, and the sale of Edsel motor cars. It will rank in history as one of the greatest cons of our time.

Look at the obstacles that the Minister of Finance had to face. Here was a government committed in the time of inflation, to spending at least 16 per cent more than they planned to spend last year and even more than that if you include supplementary Estimates, as much as 25 per cent more, in fact. This is a time when all Canadians are attempting to hold inflationary increases to somewhere between 8 and 12 per cent, and if they aren't they should be. Here's a government committed to spending at least 300 per cent more than was spent five years ago. A government facing a Saskatchewan populace that expects a balanced budget at a time of inflation. The Government committed to continued expansion of government administrative control of the affairs of the province. A Government which is already in trouble over the nationalization of potash and doesn't want to raise taxes in any real sense, because then people might guess the truth. That the takeover of the potash industry will cost them individually taxes out of their pockets. And he has been able to present this year's Budget as one of responsible restraint, and so far they have bought it.

Now, how he has been able to be convincing may raise some questions from some quarters of our community. Questions about the integrity of government, perhaps, questions about misleading information, questions about comparisons between apples and oranges, questions about levelling with the people of the province. But, that doesn't matter now because it just sounds like Opposition sour grapes now. Not it's just an Opposition attack on the Government's integrity again and nobody is going to believe that because it happens too often. Now, it sounds just like differences of opinion because in the minds of the people that Government has been responsibly restrained in its Budget for 1976-77.

I should like to take just a moment to examine how this selling job has been accomplished for the information of all Members and for the information of anyone who will listen.

First of all to be convincing make a wonderfully glowing speech, looking cheerful and confident, with all of your Members enthusiastic and wearing flowers.

Second to be convincing always include in your speech a way out of any question that may possibly be raised about facts which you are presenting such as, and I quote, "Mr. Speaker, a Budget is not simply an accounting exercise, it is a financial expression of a plan." So that if anyone says your accounting is terrible, if anyone says the facts don't

bear out your arguments, then you can always say, well, I said in my speech that it wasn't an accounting exercise and all we're really doing is expressing a plan. Then you make outrageous check to pieces of accounting information, but, do so in a clever way that is not immediately evident. So that at first glance it appears that the people are not so badly off after all.

How do you do this? Well, you overestimate your revenues and underestimate your expenses so you show a balanced budget instead of what in reality will be the case. There is going to be the most significant deficit ever experienced by the Province of Saskatchewan anywhere from \$50 to \$100 million and don't forget this to get a \$50 million deficit you only have to make one-half of one per cent on revenues and one-half of one per cent on expenses, not a big margin for error.

Look for a second at the revenue side. Okay, you estimate that you are going to receive an increase of 51 per cent in individual income taxes over what you planned to receive in 1975-76. Or if you want an increase of 20 per cent over what you actually received in 1975-76, and no one quite knows that because it's just mentioned that we expect to get that much, knowing full well that the maximum impact of the increase in gross farm increase has already been felt, while at the same time the cost of agriculture operations have been going up, and therefore, net farm receipts are going down. Therefore, nothing closely approaching the estimated receipts for income tax is mentioned in this Budget, and will in fact come to pass. For example, you indicate that you are going to receive 24 per cent more sales tax than you planned even though you know full well that inflation is biting into the purchasing power of everyone's income. And the actual sales in the province will go up nothing like enough to being about the 24 per cent increase in sales tax. It won't even bring about a sixteen per cent increase sales tax over actually what you received last year.

For example, you state you are going to receive the same revenue from potash and from petroleum in this Budget. And then afterwards you say, "however, we may not receive this much because our calculations may be wrong." The big bad companies may not pay and so on and so forth. Knowing full well that this assessment of potential revenue is already maximized without taking into account any of the potential hazards of the market place.

Now take a look at expenses. When you set your Budget for expenses you don't take in any of the Supplementary Estimates when you know full well that special warrants are going to have to be issued during the period which will approximate 50 to 60 million dollars or more. Knowing full well that in the past few years Supplementary Estimates have been anywhere from 4 to 8 per cent of the budget. So you use that method of allowing for increased salary costs and wages. And you don't bother budgeting for the full increase in salaries and wages which you know you have to have to operate the departments of government because you have built in increases in labour contracts which are not totally taken up in your Budget. On top of that you don't include enough salary increases for any government employees for the contract signed in October 1975 and in addition you include no provision for salary increases for the contract from October 1, 1976 to March 31, 1977.

Thirdly to be convincing, because you don't want people to know that you are increasing the size of government and the civil service administrators, you transfer employees from departments where they are counted as civil servants to municipal authorities funded by the Government of Saskatchewan and controlled by them and sections of the Budget where they are not counted as civil servants. This little trick you pulled last year.

For example, over the last two years you transferred close to 500 employees from the Department of Health to hospitals and the like funded by SHSP. This type of increase shows your tremendous concern for the people, the health of the people, because you have increased the budget for SHSP.

And you can boast about how much you allocate to health and to the health needs of the people. Even though the 500 employees are still doing the same jobs as before. And you can indicate, as well, how efficient you are by the fact that the civil service has not grown by that many positions that you have transferred.

Another way to cover up this particular thing is to allocate the money for employees under, quote, "other personal services" in the Estimates where you don't have to count civil servants, as was done in this Budget, by anywhere from 400 to 500 employees. By deleting the money for these employees from the section marked permanent positions, then you don't have to count them. Then delete the number of positions from the rows of the civil servants. Thus, instead of showing an increase of say, 325 civil servants as is actually the case, you indicate that the number of employees will go down by 75 and they believe it. Another way to be convincing is use words like responsible, reasonable, fair, restraint as many times as you can in your Budget Speech, because if you repeat those words often enough the people will buy it, even though the facts don't bear out your presentation. Then you make the presentation forcefully knowing full well you are going to get first crack at the news, and you make sure that everyone in the press gets advance copies of the Budget, but not the MLAs, whose job it is to criticize three Rs, reasonable, responsible, restraint, gets maximum coverage.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, the Minister's three Rs may be reasonable, responsible and restraint, but it might be more factual to have suggested ridiculous, reprehensible, and rip-off. But, Mr. Speaker, the Minister says that this Budget is not an accounting exercise and he's right. The Minister says that it is the financial expression of a plan, and he's right. Plan to take over the day to day lives of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister says the real measure of a Budget is how well it faces the challenge of long term needs. The long term needs of whom? Certainly it doesn't meet the long term needs of the municipal governments and local school boards, doesn't meet the long term needs of the individual citizens of Saskatchewan and it doesn't meet the long term needs of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, who are going to have to pay the \$50 million to \$100 million deficit that is going to ensue. And it doesn't meet the long term needs of the people of Saskatchewan who expected the Government to tell the truth, to face reality and to allow facts to be the bases of their arguments.

Not the dream world of fantasy or the never, never land of theory.

The Minister says this Budget reflects the future based on sound policies of financial and resource management. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is wrong, dead wrong. This non-budget is based on unsound policies of finance and resource non-management. It is a non-presentation of non-facts postulated on the theory that if the con is big enough and cold war enough that it will be believed and so far the Minister has been successful. Responsible, reasonable restraint preached all over the province in the news media, everywhere. People believe it because it doesn't hit their pocket books, today, yet. But it will.

Postulated on the theory that bankruptcy will never arrive. That there will always be some way of manipulating the books, or borrowing money or blaming someone else. Or transferring the liability to municipal governments, or transferring the liability to the Federal Government. But never, never, never allow the buck to stop here. They believe it.

For this I commend the Minister of Finance and all of his troops, who have taken a sow's ear and sold it as a silk purse. Beauticians of the year, a little dab of lip rouge here, a little powder and a couple of foundation garments there, and a heck of a lot of silicone injections and the transformation is complete. Good cosmetic surgery, and they believe it. The silicone may cause cancer or at the very least a dramatic sag but once the product has been presented, who cares what the Opposition says. Because the impact of that beauteous product is already made in the minds of the people. They will always believe that first impression. Or so believes the present Government of Saskatchewan. So congratulations, Mr. Finance Minister, for a selling job and a con job well done. Mr. Speaker, I have much more to say on this matter, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

#### **STATEMENT - QUESTION PERIOD**

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Before I accept the Minister's motion I just want to put on the record a statement which I didn't do earlier today.

During the Oral Question Period yesterday, the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Sutherland (Mrs. Edwards) asked a question which I ruled out of order. I was asked for a detailed ruling at that time.

Citation 17(c) and (d) of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Fourth Edition, Page 147 prohibits questions which are slight variations to questions already asked. The guidelines of the Interim Report on the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures prohibit questions which provoke debate.

I have had an opportunity to review the verbatim transcripts and find that the Hon. Member asked the same questions on March 23, 1976. The wording of the questions yesterday was in my opinion in such a manner as to suggest an answer and to provoke a debate.

**MR. E. C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview):** — May I make a comment on your decision, Mr. Speaker. I feel that this Question Period is just not working properly. I am not trying to suggest that you are to blame. But I am suggesting that we are having difficulty on this side of the House knowing what your rulings are going to be or how you are going to approach questions. Giving a ruling on the matter I raised yesterday and that is fine we accept it. But again the Member for Nipawin brings today the question as to what you consider of being public urgency. I am wondering if you can give us some indication, not now of course, but the next day we sit, as to what you feel is of public urgency. Because if you take a very narrow interpretation of what this means obviously we can't ask practically any questions. I think that the Members at least on this side of the House are getting more and more frustrated because we don't know just what position you are going to be taking on these various things. In due course as well it seems to us that the Ministers are giving very lengthy answers and not answering the questions but we are being restricted to asking very specific questions. I say this in good faith and I am not saying it in a manner at this stage to be critical of you. But we are growing as I say impatient and frustrated on this side as a result of some of the decisions and perhaps the best way to solve this is to get together privately with the Whips and other party representatives to hash this out. I say this at this time because my Members on this side of the House in the official Opposition are growing concerned about the matter.

**HON. J. R. MESSER (Minister of Industry and Commerce):** — Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the Interim Report on the Special Committee on the Rules and Procedures and I want to preface some of the quotes that I want to make from the Report. This is a trial, it is an experiment to try and work out which will hopefully end in being a better Question Period for future legislative sessions. And keeping that in mind, I think that all Members should undertake to reason with the problems that the Speaker has in trying to exercise the decorum within the House while we go through what I think is considered to be a pretty flexible and a pretty broad running Question Period. I quote here, Item B:

Questions must be brief and to the point.

And I think from this side of the House we could certainly take exception to that, but I think the Speaker has undertaken to try and qualify whether or not the question can be adequately interpreted by the Government, if there is not some additional comment made in regard to the question which sometimes lengthens it. I recognize the Member for Lakeview's concern that sometimes the answers are long. Again, the Minister perhaps is not comfortable in answering the question shortly because he doesn't feel he has told the total case and only some experience will bring about some improvement in regard to that. I further quote (c) in the Interim Report:

Questions should be asked only in respect to matters of sufficient urgency and importance, to require an immediate answer.

This is another concern that the Member for Lakeview has registered. But surely it takes some experience from both the Opposition and the Government side of the House and the Speaker

to decide and to try and relate to what in fact is of an urgent nature. I think that we have to put our faith in the Speaker so that he can undertake to evaluate whether these questions are in fact of an urgent nature. I think, that from my point of view, some of the questions that I have been asked certainly aren't of an urgent nature, nevertheless the Speaker has ruled that they should be asked and I am perfectly willing to live with that and I think the other Members of the Legislature should be as well. (d) of this Report says:

Questions must be stated without preamble or speech or to be in the nature of debate.

And certainly from my point of view and I think all Members of this Legislature would agree with me that certainly some of them are prefaced with a considerable amount of preamble. Again, I think that we should undertake to live with the problems that the Speaker has in trying to evaluate whether or not this preamble is needed in order to adequately answer the question.

(E) says:

Questions must seek and not offer information to the Assembly.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I am going to provide the Chair's view now on brevity of comments.

I appreciate the Hon. Member for Lakeview's comments. Interestingly enough his comments did not deal with the ruling that I just made with regard to provoking debate.

Now the Members will recall, today, when the Member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) was asking a question a couple of words were said which I think the record will show were provocative. Suggested that they were. The Member wanted to rephrase it but I didn't allow the Member to do that. The problem is once the provocative words are out it puts me in the position that other people on the other side are going to want to respond in kind. This makes it difficult for the Speaker. I regard some of that as "salt on the salad", it improves the whole thing but when it gets carried away it makes it very difficult for me to deal with it.

The question that the Member for Lakeview raises with regard to urgency. I sent a private note to the Member for Wascana (Mr. Merchant) the other day with regard to the matter of urgency on an issue that he had raised, I think the Member for Wascana would agree to make that note available to you. I said in the note, in effect, that "urgency" was a highly subjective thing anyway.

I said that I will get a ruling for the Member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) with regard to the issue he brought up.

With regard to the Question Period I might say that I was especially impressed with the Question Period on Budget day. I don't know what I should attribute that to, to the fact that we had an audience or did the Members, out of good conscience, do more work on preparing the questions and Ministers in phrasing their answers. I think that maybe if we had every day as Budget day we would have good questions and good answers. I don't know whether the House can stand that. It may be too

difficult. Maybe the populace can't stand that either, however, I appreciate the Member's comments.

I have called a meeting of the Special Committee, a luncheon meeting, I believe it is next Wednesday, where we will sit down and discuss the Question Period and a couple of other things among the Committee members.

I appreciate the Members' remarks. I will try to take them into consideration when I am making rulings or statements during the sitting of the House.

**MRS. E. G. EDWARDS (Saskatoon-Sutherland):** — Mr. Speaker, may I speak to your ruling?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — A brief comment.

**MRS. EDWARDS:** — As a new Member in the House without the legal training and without the benefit of a great deal of experience in posing and wording questions, I find at times it is difficult to get the answer that you wish. I think the Ministers often evade the question and so I found it the other day. In my opinion the Minister did not answer the question as I put it and whether he interpreted differently or whether I didn't word it correctly, and therefore that is why I posed it again trying to reword it another way. And if it was repetitious in bring up a subject that had been previously discussed, I guess it was, because I didn't feel that it had been answered.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I didn't go into more detail on it because I made reference to March 23, 1976. I didn't say in the ruling that, at the time, you had asked a question and two supplementaries, the Member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) had asked two supplementaries, the Member for Moosomin had asked another supplementary, all with regard to the same subject.

It would appear that the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland was attempting to get the Minister to answer the question in a certain way and Ministers are sometimes contrary about the way they answer questions. They don't want to answer them the way the Member asks it.

If you look at the structure of the question you asked, I think that will bear it out. In connection with that I had a discussion with someone who suggested it is that old question, "have you stopped beating your wife", when the question is advanced the person who has to answer the question is in a very difficult position.

I will be glad to talk to Members about it individually, if they have any questions about phrasing questions. Additionally I am sure that you have some experts right around you who would be glad to assist you.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:00 o'clock p.m.