

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Eighteenth Legislature

November 21, 1977.

The Assembly met at 2:00 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. E.C. WHELAN (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to introduce to all members of the Legislature, 40 Grade Twelve students from O'Neill High School in Regina North West. They are seated in the west gallery with their teachers, James Hudson and Harry Berezny. I plan to meet with them later.

We extend to them a warm welcome and we congratulate them for their interest in the proceedings. We hope their stay here is both pleasant and informative.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

STATEMENT – NDP CONVENTION

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Conservative Party): — Mr. Speaker, I would address this question to the Premier. In view of your statement on the weekend to the delegates of your party's convention that the people of Saskatchewan have too much on the plate right now of your government's policies, is your government prepared to take steps now and to announce now that you are going to cut the level of government spending and back off buying any more potash mines until and unless the people of Saskatchewan indicate their approval for your government's acquisition of 50 per cent of the industry as you have stated is your policy?

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question was prefaced by a statement of alleged fact that I indicated that the government has too much on its plate. I made no such statement, I make no such statement. I do not believe that to be true and since the following question was predicated upon misinformation which the hon. member apparently had, I think the question is no longer relevant.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Since in that same statement you said it was your government's failure to communicate with the people of Saskatchewan the so-called benefits to be derived from your policy of centralization — and I might say I witnessed that statement on television myself — are the advertisements about the Saskatchewan family of Crown corporations part of that communication which you refer to, and if so, why should the people of Saskatchewan through increased rates on their power, gas and telephones pay for your party's political failures to communicate the party's political message? Furthermore, since the Crown corporations have already committed to spend over a half a million dollars on this advertising program to communicate your party's philosophy, is it not true that the Crown corporations in the next year, the coming year, have allocated even larger sums for this particular advertising scheme?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks a number of questions once

again predicated by alleged statements of fact, this time that he alleges that he saw. I made no such statement that we have failed to properly explain our programs of centralization. That's what the hon. member said. I made no such statement and I have made no such statement. What I have said is that we have not fully explained government programs, we as a party or we as a government. And that is correct and we intend as a party, and I speak here not for our party but for the government, and our government intends to explain government programs, intends to continue to explain government programs. I am of the view that the program of advertisements by the Saskatchewan Crown corporations is a good program, a program explaining what Crown corporations do for the people of Saskatchewan and is in the same category of institutional advertising as much of the other advertising one sees on radio and television sponsored by commercial firms with other ownership patterns.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, of what possible benefit to the Crown corporations or to the people is the huge expenditure of public funds on advertising since in the case of monopoly corporations such as Sask Power, the people must use the service, they don't get a choice, and furthermore there is another advertising campaign being put on by Sask Power to encourage people to cut back the use of the service in order to save energy. Would you not agree that these advertising schemes are diametrically across purposes and therefore a waste of money?

MR. BLAKENEY: — I would not agree with the hon. member at all. I believe that the advertisements by the Crown corporations, in fact, encourage people to think well of the Crown corporations as commercial enterprises, encourage them to look at other Saskatchewan Power Corporation advertisements with favor, encourage them to believe that they should conserve energy, if that's the message under the other Saskatchewan Crown corporation advertisement, that let us say with Saskatchewan Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, the advertisement is there to achieve precisely the same purpose as the advertisements sponsored by the International Minerals and Chemicals Company when they sponsor broadcasts of the Saskatchewan Roughrider football game. I think that the IMC puts on those ads because they believe that it is in the best interests of IMC and the business interests of IMC. Similarly, I believe that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Power Corporation put on advertisements because they believe that it's in the best business interests of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: — I'll take the final supplementary, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley.

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Would the Premier be willing to indicate to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan, whether he intends to continue to use government funds and taxpayers money to explain the political interest of the NDP, as for example when the Attorney General got on the radio and extended an invitation to all the people in the communities to attend a political NDP meeting after the Cabinet meeting in Davidson a few weeks ago, and is it a fact . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Saskatoon Eastview.

BUDGET DEFICIT

MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question I would like to direct to the Minister of Finance.

The 1977 Budget document indicated an anticipated deficit of something in the neighborhood of \$40 million. I wonder if the minister would care to give us an indication of what the projected deficit is now, and the prediction that it is likely to be between triple and four times what had been anticipated in the 1977 Budget.

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, tell the hon. member that on the revenue side, because of the federal calculations — now the hon. member doesn't even know what it is that the federal government deals in the case of the revenue aside for the provincial governments. They made calculations that were high in as far as federal payments to all the provinces, not just Saskatchewan; they over-estimated what the payments would be to the provinces, including Saskatchewan. On that side of the revenue, it would appear that from the income tax, as far as the federal government is now calculating, that we will likely receive less money.

There are indications that in other revenues, we will receive more than we had initially calculated. We are managing the expenditure side very much on target, except for certain unforeseen expenses, and it always happens, for example, the fire in northern Saskatchewan, which had cost about \$3.5 million considerably more than we had estimated. The amount of money that has been spent on drought programs in the spring was something that was unforeseen. We also had to add about a million dollars to the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources because of the problems of vandalism in our parks and other policing needs that had to be considered by the government. Then those are the three areas of the expenditures being, well unforeseen, that the Budget expenditures are very much on target, some areas less, some areas more, but in general the projections that we made in the Budget Speech of March 10th of this year, we expect that we will be very close on target.

MR. PENNER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of the non answer to my question, I am going to assume, Mr. Speaker, that my suggested prediction of a deficit that is approximately triple what had been proposed, is reasonably accurate.

I would like the minister what it is that his government is doing to try to keep the expenditures of his government in line?

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I can go through the whole process again because either the hon. member was not listening, or he doesn't want to listen, or he just doesn't understand. I understand he is going to be the financial critic for the Liberal caucus and it appears that we haven't really changed very much. Mr. Speaker, I did say that on the revenue side, in the case of income tax, because of the federal calculations, it appears that we will likely receive less money. But from other sources, revenues are going to be likely higher.

On the expenditure side, we have three things that we did not foresee. One was the fires in northern Saskatchewan, two was the Drought Assistance program, three was the added assistance that had to be provided for the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources, particularly for park policing. Those are the three areas where we did not foresee the expenditures.

In the case of the other expenditures, they are very much on target. In some cases they are a little higher and in some cases, lower. We expect to end the fiscal year very close to what the estimates were; about a 40 million dollar deficit. Does the hon. member now get the answer, not some hypothetical figure that he is trying to grasp at?

MR. PENNER: — You finally came close to giving some sort of answer. Would the minister care to comment about the extent to which any department in government today is using the concept of zero base budgeting, and if so, where?

MR. SMISHEK: — I wonder if the hon. member can explain to me what he means by zero base budgeting so that I can be able to do it, because there are different concepts and understandings or misunderstandings of that.

GRANT FOR WATER & SEWAGE IMPROVEMENTS

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Minister, you are aware that there are several of the smaller villages and hamlets in Saskatchewan this past summer undertook some water and sewage improvements with a commitment being made by the Municipal Water Assistance Board that a grant would be forthcoming. In many of these instances, the department has reneged on this grant. Is it true, Mr. Minister, that your department is broke?

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Last Mountain-Touchwood): — Mr. Speaker, I will say that the Municipal Assistance Board's funds have nearly all been allocated. There are still some funds available to the board for distribution. What the board has tried to do this year is to pay out to all of the urban councils, the funds for the work that would be complete in this particular year, this year of 1977. They have also tried to accommodate the needs of the communities that were involved in drought problems which were not covered under the federal-municipal program. I think that the communities have pretty well been covered for the work that was done in this particular year, and while there are a number of applications before the board and have been for some time, the work will likely proceed in '78 and '79 and I think the board will be in a position to pay out their grants to them.

MR. BAILEY: — A question, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the minister is aware that there are a number of projects that have been competed and they still have not received the grants. My question in the way of a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is: will the villages and towns in Saskatchewan that have completed their projects in 1977, and yet the department has reneged on the grants, will they be eligible for that grant for the project that they have completed in 1977 in the new fiscal year?

MR. MacMURCHY: — My understanding is that the projects that are complete, although I'm not sure of this, but my understanding as I recall the work of the board is that the projects that have been completed this year should receive their payments this year. Now if there are some that are outside of this then they can expect their payment to come in 1978, or certainly in the very near future. The commitment is there; it is a matter of when the payment can be made, and I think the payment in most cases will be made in 1977.

MR. BAILEY: — I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware that those councils who do not receive the grant are presently budgeting for their new fiscal year with some rather drastic increases in taxes because of the promised grant not being received?

MR. MacMURCHY: — I am not aware of that, and I would expect that most of the councils that were involved in a project like this where a commitment has been made by

the Municipal Water Assistance Board for assistance for the project will be going into short-term borrowing, and the short-term borrowing is recognized as part of the project costs and would be covered in the normal way by the Municipal Water Assistance Board payment.

DECLINE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South): — I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. I would like to explore with the minister the extent of the adverse impact upon our province of the decline of the Canadian dollar relative to that of the American dollar. May I ask you specifically what proportion of the funds to purchase potash mines are payable in US dollars?

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, first of all the broad question of the adverse effects of the American-Canadian dollar difference that there is today, it is fairly difficult to be precise at the effects. There are some positive and negative features. As the hon. member will be aware on the exports we are better off and our exports are very substantial from this province, like potash, like wheat. Those are the positive features.

In the case of imports, which we do import, a lot of foodstuffs and certain farm machinery and products, those are the negative things because we do have to pay a higher price.

If he is asking the question about how does one balance with the other, I am not able to tell him because that is a very difficult question to be precise on. In the case of potash acquisition, I don't think that there are any costs involved. I would like to check and take that question as notice.

MR. CAMERON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister indicate the extent in approximate amount the borrowings of the government of Saskatchewan and all its agencies and Crown corporations that are payable in American funds and what the estimate to the minister's department is of the increase in cost with respect to those borrowings brought about by the decline of the Canadian dollar relative to the American dollar?

MR. SMISHEK: — I'll take the question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

RCMP INVESTIGATING REHAB PROGRAM IN DNS

MR. G.N. WIPF (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of the Department of Natural Resources. Will the Minister of DNS tell this Assembly if the RCMP is or has this year been investigating the administration and operation of the residential rehabilitation assistance program in Northern Saskatchewan that is administered by the DNS?

HON. G.R. BOWERMAN (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan): — Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that the department referred the matter to the department of the Attorney General, the matter of questions raised respective to the residential rehabilitation program. The Attorney General would be the one responsible for allocating the RCMP for any investigation.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. Can the Minister of DNS assure this Assembly that his department has co-operated and supplied any and all records

requested by the RCMP?

MR. BOWERMAN: — Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have co-operated not only with the Attorney General's department or with the RCMP if those investigations have been conducted in that respect, but also encouraging the Central Mortgage and Housing people to get themselves involved with the department in a request for a special audit.

MR. WIPF: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I could refer this one to the Attorney General. Could you tell us the reason for this investigation?

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I must frankly confess that I don't know and I don't intend to know. This matter has been brought to the attention of the appropriate RCMP officials. The RCMP in its usual competent and thorough fashion will conduct the investigation and made the appropriate recommendations for Crown counsel and the department to take such action as they see fit. I don't go snooping into other investigations of a criminal matter in other areas. I think that would be wrong for me to do. I don't intend to do it in this case.

DISMISSAL OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES EMPLOYEES

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Government Services in charge of the Public Service Commission. Can the minister indicate whether any officials within his department have been dismissed recently, and if so, who and why?

HON. E.B. SHILLINGTON (Minister of Government Services): — I don't know if he is asking it to the Minister of Government Services or the Minister of the Public Service Commission?

MR. MacDONALD: — Government Services.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — There has, Mr. Speaker, been a reorganization take place within the department. Some positions were eliminated. No one was fired. There were some positions eliminated. Those persons who had their positions eliminated will be placed on the lists of the Public Service Commission to be re-instated when positions come up.

MR. MacDONALD: — Supplementary. I wonder now if I could direct this one to the Minister in charge of the Public Service Commission. Everyone is aware that there was a recent Manitoba election in which the NDP government was defeated. I wonder if the Minister of Public Service could give assurance to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan that every socialist in Manitoba looking for a job will not be hired and people in Saskatchewan will be dismissed as the Minister of Government Services has done in order to hire them?

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know precisely how many socialists that there are in Manitoba but I consider socialists very good people and, Mr. Speaker, if I could see that we could hire them in Saskatchewan I would certainly like to see all of them hired. Mr. Speaker, the policy of this government in the case of the Public Service Commission as the hon. member knows the Public Service Commission is operated very independently under the jurisdiction of its own act. If there are vacancies, they will be there, they will be advertised in the usual manner, in the merit system which we have, and I think functions very effectively, and if there are people from Manitoba who may

apply and may qualify they will be hired. As the hon. member knows people are not checked for their political membership or political affiliations to the Public Service Commission.

MR. MacDONALD: — I wonder if the minister could then indicate to me if anyone from the province of Manitoba has been hired since the election by Order in Council or otherwise and secondly, if the Minister could inform me if there has been any special advertising program placed in Winnipeg newspapers or any special recruiting program going on in the province of Manitoba or any requests coming for that kind of recruiting program in the province of Manitoba since the election?

MR. SMISHEK: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that there is no special advertising in Manitoba. I am not aware of any special advertising in the NDP paper for people in Manitoba. The advertising is placed in our local papers generally and if the people from Manitoba get it, that's fine. I can assure the member that there is no special advertising. I am not aware of anybody from Manitoba being hired but there may be somebody who may have been hired. I'll take it as notice and I will check.

DRILLING FOR NEW OIL

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister in charge of Saskoil. As the minister is aware some of the larger oil companies can accumulate production credits to create conditions for drilling for new oil. Small companies have very little opportunity to accumulate such credits. Companies are now drilling for oil and making a profit on drilling dry holes and this didn't happen under the other system. Could the minister tell this House, is this true?

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Mineral Resources): — The member is correct in regard to companies being able to take advantage of production credits and I emphasize the words 'production credits' and that it should, therefore, not be a feasible possibility for companies to make in effect, a profit on drilling dry holes. We do recognize that they are expending money in the undertaking to develop oil in the province and in so doing they will be drilling dry holes but they certainly are not in any way, as far as the government is concerned, making a profit in so doing. That is a question that should be directed to Saskoil, perhaps the Department of Mineral Resources would be a better source of information.

MR. LARTER: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. This is a basis of fact that the large multinationals, not the small companies in Saskatchewan which we want to drill for oil here, are making money in drilling dry holes. I would like to know what kind of an incentive program would allow this to exist. Also does the minister now know that the proper program for drilling doesn't exist? Even if they can make a profit in drilling a dry hole it still doesn't give the proper climate for drilling for oil in this province other than these credits.

MR. MESSER: — I think, Mr. Speaker, we should have the member undertake to explain what a profit is. He knows full well that there is some credit recognized by the Department of Mineral Resources in regard to companies that are developing or exploring for oil in Saskatchewan. They can now have a certain amount of moneys expended for their activity in the province recognized and a credit advanced to them if they continue to explore and develop for oil in the province of Saskatchewan. I do not see in any way how that credit that the department or the government recognizes can be interpreted as a profit to the companies. That policy, Mr. Speaker, is available not

only to the large corporations that are operating in the province of Saskatchewan but also to smaller companies that are operating.

It is strange, Mr. Speaker, to recognize here that the same members, as well as the Liberals opposite a few years ago, were saying that there were no large companies operating in the province of Saskatchewan and they were undertaking to condemn and criticize this government for that. We now have about a 250 per cent increase in activity over last year and they are complaining about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS — UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

MR. SPEAKER: — Before Orders of the Day, I wish to lay on the table, pursuant to Section 203A, sub 1 of the Election Act, 1971, a summary of the election contribution expenses of all candidates and the business managers in conjunction with the by-elections held in the provincial constituencies of Saskatoon-Sutherland, Prince Albert-Duck Lake and Pelly.

I have a further statement which I wish to make. On Thursday last, a point of order was raised to the effect that two hon. members had used unparliamentary language. I have checked the Debates and Proceedings and found that the words, “lie” and “liar” were used by the hon. member for Regina-Lakeview, on page 35, and by the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley on page 19.

All hon. members know that these words are unparliamentary and are not acceptable in this Assembly. I refer all hon. members to Beauchesne’s Parliamentary Rules and Forms, fourth edition, 1958, page 130 which states that unparliamentary language contains the imputation of bad motives or motives different from those acknowledged, misrepresenting the language of another or accusing him in his turn of misrepresentation, charging him with falsehood or deceit, or contemptuous or insulting language of any kind; all of these are unparliamentary.

I therefore intend to call on both hon. members to withdraw the unparliamentary words or expressions referred to, and I call on the hon. member for Regina-Lakeview to withdraw first.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity of checking the remarks that were made now that we have the daily Hansard, and of course have had an opportunity to reflect upon the comments that I did make in this Assembly, and I assume that you are only directing your ruling to remarks made in this Assembly and not outside of it on the public media. While, Mr. Speaker, I must say that the remarks made are true, they are certainly unparliamentary and I do withdraw them.

MR. SPEAKER: — I would ask the hon. member for Regina-Lakeview not to oppose diametrically opposing views in his withdrawal, and to make the withdrawal unconditional.

MR. MALONE: — Having respect for your Office, I of course, accede to your request coming from the Speaker, and withdraw the remarks unconditionally.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — The member for Indian Head-Wolseley . . .

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, you know that I always abide by your rules. I withdraw unconditionally.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S.J. CAMERON: — Mr. Speaker, are we on Orders of the Day?

MR. SPEAKER: — Yes.

MR. CAMERON: — Mr. Speaker, on a related matter, I raised a question of privilege on Thursday with reference to remarks made by the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland, referring to myself and the member for Wascana, as sitting here for the purposes only of acquiring the money that goes with the office and the publicity that occasionally goes with comments in the Session. I asked, Mr. Speaker, at that time to have the member withdraw the comment. Mr. Speaker indicated to him that they were clearly unparliamentary but did not go the step further and ask him to withdraw them. The consequence of that Mr. Speaker, was that on television that evening, Wayne Mantyka of CKCK TV chose to report those comments which were made here, and which Mr. Speaker indicated to the member were not proper usage, and I think, Mr. Speaker, referring to the very passage from Beauchesne's which you cited earlier, you will see that those remarks too fall in the same category and were unparliamentary, ought to have been withdrawn by the member, and I would call on Mr. Speaker to ask the member to withdraw them, making this point — that unless remarks of that kind are withdrawn, the consequence frequently will be to have them reported on the television station such as was the case on Thursday evening.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order!

I don't think the member's point is well taken because on November 17th on page 27 of the verbatim transcript I, in part, said I will give the member one more opportunity to withdraw the remarks, and I am speaking to the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland, and the member said, "I withdraw the comment, Mr. Speaker". And further, I accepted it as an unqualified withdrawal.

MR. CAMERON: — May I, Mr. Speaker, with deference, Mr. Speaker, I think that was with respect to other remarks which he made relative to the two of us which he did withdraw. I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that he was required to withdraw the comments to which I refer. The passage Mr. Speaker now refers to is a passage with a withdrawal with respect to other comments.

MR. SPEAKER: — I will take the member's comments under advisement and refer it back to the Chamber at a later time.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to speak to your earlier ruling. This is something new that arises out of the situation which I would like to draw to your attention by point of order Mr. Speaker.

While I was reflecting on my past sins and checking Beauchesne's, I noted, Mr. Speaker, that rule 156 of Beauchesne's indicates that if a member takes exception to comments

made about him, he is obliged to move immediately to state his objection. My recollection, Mr. Speaker, is that on Thursday, when the remarks that I made were made, both of the people that were referred to, did not rise and take exception to the remarks that were made. I bring this to your attention, Mr. Speaker, to ask that if in the future such rulings are going to be given, that surely it's incumbent upon those members who take exception to the remarks that are made, for them to act if they are in the House, to stand up and state their opposition to those remarks.

MR. SPEAKER: — I think that the member's remark in part is well taken with regard to the situation he refers to. Perhaps the member should have arisen at the time, and perhaps I should have called the member at the time that it occurred and I will admit that I should have and did not at that time. However, that does not lessen the offence in any way whatsoever nor the weight of the withdrawal.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

MR. N. LUSNEY (Pelly): moved, seconded by MR. G. McNEIL (Meadow Lake):

That an humble Address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of the province as follows:

TO HIS HONOUR THE HONOURABLE GEORGE PORTEOUS

Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan in Session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious Speech which your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present Session.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in rising to move the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, I would like to thank the Premier for the honor he has bestowed upon me and the constituents of Pelly, whom I have the privilege to represent. I am in full agreement with the proposals set out in the Throne Speech, and believe they will be welcomed by the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to deal with a number of topics in the time I have today, but first I think it is appropriate that I say a few words about two of my predecessors in the Pelly constituency who passed away within the past year.

Although we both labored long and hard on opposite sides of the political fence, I regard Ross Barrie as a fine man. Mr. Barrie served the constituency of Pelly in this Assembly from 1956 to 1964, and again from 1967 to 1971, and provided his constituents with representation that was capable, honest and dedicated, which was really a reflection of the man himself.

Leonard Larson was the MLA for Pelly from 1964 to 1967, and again from 1971 until his untimely death on March 6th of this year. Leonard was a man of considerable energy, and tremendous will power. His many strongly worded speeches in defence of the little guy and of the small family farm will long be remembered. Leonard Larson was a very good personal friend of mine, a good neighbor, a good politician, and above all, a good,

honest and dedicated man.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to express my support for the legislative program outlined last Wednesday in the Speech from the Throne. It is a further indication of the sound common sense approach of the Blakeney government in meeting the needs of the people of this province.

One of those needs, and without doubt, the most important one, is that of health care. The New Democratic Party has always placed the delivery of health services at the top of our list of priorities.

Mr. Speaker, in my own riding, I have tangible proof of this government's commitment to the very best quality health care. There is to be built in Kamsack, at a cost of \$2.8 million, a new 45 bed hospital. Mr. Speaker, that is an indication of the vast improvement over the situation which prevailed when the father of the newest member of the Conservative caucus was Premier. During the last three years of the Thatcher government, 11 small hospitals were closed across Saskatchewan.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, the Blakeney government has opened seven new hospitals and seventy community health centres since coming to power in 1971, and in doing so, has become part of a definite pattern, which extend beyond hospitals, to include all aspects of medical care. The pattern reveals cutbacks, restrictions, and neglect on the part of the old-line parties where health care is concerned, and a genuine belief by the New Democratic Party in the principles of free access to high quality hospital and medical care for everyone, without financial barriers. Mr. Speaker, recent moves by the federal government to cut back on its financial responsibilities to medicare and hospitalization are something we should not let the voters forget especially with a federal election approaching.

In the federal government's Budget of July 1975, the then Finance Minister, John Turner, gave the provinces the required five years notice that Ottawa is pulling out of hospital insurance cost sharing. A few weeks later, Marc Lalonde introduced Bill C-68 under which Ottawa no longer guarantees to pay 50 per cent of the costs of medicare. That, of course, means that the provinces will have to pay for the programs from their own revenue, and as a result, the less wealthy provinces will not be able to make up the difference and will be forced to either cut the health services now available or raise provincial taxes.

Not satisfied with those efforts to scuttle our medical care system, another attempt occurred when Mr. Trudeau met with the Premiers at the first ministers conference in the middle of June, 1976. At that time, the Prime Minister announced the federal government's intention to withdraw from its commitment to pay 50 per cent of the costs for hospital care, diagnostic services and physicians fees.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, this refusal by Ottawa to live up to its responsibility to fund health care, falls heavily on the provincial governments. I think it is a most regrettable move by our national government, one that in the years ahead will cause friction between the have and have-not provinces, when the federal government should be working for greater unity in our nation. In cutting back problems this will create many for the provinces that need this type of health care. Mr. Speaker, national standards in medical care should have been insured by providing enough money for the poorer provinces to maintain those standards. The fact that this was not done was heavily criticized by the NDP members of parliament and by the Blakeney government, and

rightly so.

In health, 1977 is an historic year, Mr. Speaker. It was 30 years ago that the government of Tommy Douglas legislated into existence North America's first hospitalization insurance here in the province of Saskatchewan. For many years the people of Saskatchewan were alone in operating and paying for this widely accepted protection against financial disaster due to illness. This is also the 15th anniversary of medicare. In 1962 Woodrow Lloyd's government introduced medicare in Saskatchewan. Again no other province, or American state had medicare at the time and none of them had the political courage to pass the necessary legislation until years later.

The proud tradition of the New Democratic Party in providing quality health care to all residents of the province without any financial hurdles is being maintained by the Blakeney government. In recent years this government has greatly expanded the insured services covered by medicare. We have also started programs which: provide prescription drugs to people on medication for only a pharmacist's fee; allow hearing aids to be purchased at reduced costs; ensure that children can have their teeth checked by trained personnel without charge; make wheelchairs, crutches, and artificial limbs available without cost to those who need them. We have eliminated medicare premiums, premiums which in a rich province like Conservative Ontario cost \$384 for a family of three. The Blakeney government also abolished deterrent fees which still apply to a wide range . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — . . . of medical treatment in Conservative Ontario and Conservative Alberta.

Wherever you look the record of the NDP as it relates to health care is a good one. But what about the opposition? Where do they stand?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems that a number of Conservative MLAs favor bringing back deterrent fees. The Conservative member of the Legislature for Swift Current (Mr. Ham) as long ago as before the last election was expressing his personal support for some form of tax on the sick, in spite of the fact that studies have shown that deterrent fees do not financially affect the well to do. They do affect the elderly and the poor a great deal. That MLA has been joined by other prominent Conservatives in supporting a charge for each visit to the doctor's office and every day in the hospital bed. Notable among them, Mr. Speaker, has been the Conservative MLA for Rosetown-Elrose (Mr. Bailey) who was speaking in the House last March, proposed a figure of \$10 a day for a deterrent fee on Saskatchewan hospital beds.

Federal Conservative Leader, Joe Clark, has not been silent on the health care issue either. He says people abuse hospital insurance and in order to limit it, Mr. Clark says, one way might be to consider all or a portion of the value of a doctor's visit as taxable income for the patient. Something like a T-4 form could be used.

At the annual convention of the provincial Conservative Party just prior to the last provincial election, Ivan Daunt, the PC candidate in the Yorkton constituency first praised Premier Ross Thatcher for 'bravery' in introducing the deterrent fees, then suggested a plan for taxing the sick which is similar to Joe Clark's. According to the Leader-Post story the plan was met with all but universal approval by convention delegates, especially the Leader of the Conservative Party of this province, who

according to the story in the Conservative paper was quite interested in the suggestion to tax the sick. Mr. Speaker, that paragraph in the Leader-Post describing the tax on the sick proposal is as follows, I quote.

It drew immediate favor from Mr. Collver and later, when he asked for a show of hands on the subject, all but one delegate indicated they were interested in it. The dissenting vote came from a university student who said he thought the measure might be expensive to administer.

Mr. Speaker, I think that brief sampling of Conservative health policy is enough to convince the people here in the gallery and listening on the radio, that the Conservatives do not believe in universal free medical care, that they never have believed in it, and they never will.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on the subject of agriculture. Some 84,000 Saskatchewan people are employed in farming. For every farmer who is busy at this job, it is estimated that three additional jobs exist as a direct result. In fact, of the 385,000 people who hold jobs in the province over 300,000 depend directly or indirectly on the farm sector. It has long been the stand of the NDP government that agriculture is the single most important part of the Saskatchewan economy. When agriculture is healthy, Saskatchewan is healthy.

This past spring, our provincial government took steps to make sure that the drought conditions would not develop into a disaster for small communities and individual farms. Over 100 rural communities have benefited from the government assistance in providing a safe water supply. Again this fall, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government responded to the needs of thousands of farmers who had to harvest damp grain. The financial assistance to farmers for moving grain drying equipment was very welcome all across the province and in the northern half of Saskatchewan in particular.

Mr. Speaker, the short term emergency assistance to the agriculture sector has always been forthcoming under the NDP, but the really impressive part of the Blakeney government's record in agriculture has been the long-term programs. The impact of these programs on the Pelly constituency alone has been considerable.

The Farm Start program helped nearly 100 farmers in my constituency to diversify their operations last year. Farm Start grants totalled over \$400,000 and Farm Start loans were worth \$1.8 million. That money helped 81 farmers to buy beef cattle, three farmers purchased hogs, 11 more started dairy operations, and two farmers started in the sheep and poultry business. Mr. Speaker, for farmers in Pelly and for farmers all across Saskatchewan, Farm Start has been a real blessing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — The Beef Industry Assistance program is another of the NDP programs that is very popular in my riding. In 1976, 669 mixed farmers in the Pelly constituency were given over \$1.3 million in Beef Industry Assistance loans, and another 1,231 farmers received grants. The total grant money paid out was just over \$1 million in my riding alone. Mr. Speaker, I think those figures demonstrate in the clearest way possible that when Saskatchewan farmers find themselves in difficult circumstances, they can look to the Blakeney government to give them a hand.

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Mr. Speaker, the Land Bank program is very active in my constituency. So much so that a Land Bank councillor has recently been stationed at Kamsack. Since the program began 249 retiring farmers in Pelly have sold their land to the Land Bank and to date 210 young farmers have started farming, or added to their existing holdings to make a viable farm unit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, Land Bank has worked well in Pelly, and the people of Pelly know it. During the by-election campaign, the Liberal Party made Land Bank their biggest issue and they lost their deposit. The Land Bank is one means we have of maintaining family farms. When a farm couple reaches retirement age they no longer have to sell their farm to the large corporations or to a wealthy neighbor who doesn't really need the land. The retiring couple can sell to a son, a relative, or a young family who wants to get into farming. It is the Land Bank that allows this to take place, and the value of such a system has been recognized by those of all political stripes. In fact, it may interest those members across the floor to know that during the Pelly by-election campaign, the Conservative candidate applied for and received a Land Bank lease at the same time as his party leader was condemning the program at every opportunity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — But, Mr. Speaker, I don't blame either the Leader of the Conservative Party, or his by-election candidate for poor communication with one another. It is rather hard to communicate with someone who spends so much time trying to straighten out his own mismanaged business affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves with Land Bank. Last year 1,187 people applied for 401 available parcels of Land Bank land. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the United States and Australia are interested in our Land Bank system. Not only is Land Bank popular in Saskatchewan, but it is becoming popular internationally. The final line in any discussion of the Land Bank, Mr. Speaker, should always be that the program has assisted 1,900 people in becoming Saskatchewan farmers on a family farm basis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Just as with health care, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is leading the way in agriculture.

Another area closely related to agriculture in this province is transportation. The Throne Speech mentioned this government's battle for equitable freight rates and an adequate rail network. Both are of vital concern to the people of rural Saskatchewan.

On May 16th of this year the report of the Grain-handling and Transportation Commission was tabled in the House of Commons and released to the public. The Hall Commission, as it is commonly known, spent two years examining in detail western Canada's transportation and grain-handling system. The commission conducted some

120 public hearings, attended by over 15,000 people, and received over 1,600 briefs from individuals and organizations concerned with the future of the transportation system in western Canada. The report of the Hall Commission is a milestone in the fight to stop wholesale rail line abandonment and preserve the very social fabric of rural Saskatchewan.

It was not until 1967, with the passing of the national Transportation Act, that the federal government began to set up a mechanism that would ensure a basic network of rail service that would be thought of as more or less permanent. This freeze on abandonment was extended in 1973 and the railways were prohibited from abandoning further miles of track until January 1, 1975.

In December 1974, the federal government set up a protected basic rail network for western Canada. Over 12,000 miles of lines were placed in the protected category until the year 2000. The well over 6,000 miles left unprotected in 1974, were mostly branch lines that were to draw the attention of the Hall Commission, which was set up in April 1975.

Mr. Speaker, the political party to which I belong was in general very pleased with the recommendations of the Hall Report. The most important recommendation, and one which we on this side of the House all agreed with, calls for the railways to maintain branch lines to the extent that our country elevator system can remain in place. The inland terminal concept as a substitute for the local elevator system is completely rejected. Perhaps most important of all, the Hall Commission endorses the position of the Blakeney government, that consideration of the social and economic effects on rural communities of wholesale rail line abandonment must be of a higher priority than the profit margins of Cargill grain or the CPR.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — The Hall Report recommends that about 1,100 miles of Saskatchewan branch lines be added to the permanent system, and kept in a proper state of repair. The provincial government had asked that approximately 250 additional miles be classed as permanent.

The commission's report also calls for the establishment of a Prairie Rail Authority, or a new Crown corporation to operate and evaluate rail lines that were neither classified as permanent nor slated for abandonment. I feel some concern that fully 2,344 miles of branch lines were left in this undecided category. Mr. Speaker, it leaves communities like Wroxton, Stornoway, Rhein and Calder in my own constituency in a very uncertain position. The elevators in those communities and the farmers who haul to the elevators are left in a very uncertain position. The brief presented to the Hall Commission hearing by the Blakeney government recommended that all the branch lines in that undecided category be retained, so that delivery points along them can count on a secure future.

Mr. Speaker, a recently released study by the University of Regina into the impact on Saskatchewan communities of rail line abandonment points to the seriousness of the situation. The summary report, which sets out the findings of the study, has one thing to say more often than anything else. Rail line abandonment has drastic, often crippling results for Saskatchewan communities, Mr. Speaker, the study found that if all the delivery points were closed, along the branch lines that the railways would like to abandon, the average distance from a farm yard to a remaining delivery point would more than triple. The farmers affected would not only haul grain to a town much further

away, but they indicated to the researchers that a very sizeable part of their business dealings would also be shifted. Fertilizer, chemicals, feed and other related expenditures would more likely be made in the community that kept its elevators. Even household expenses like groceries, clothing, home furnishings, prescription drugs, and the use of the post office, the banks, the hardware store, the garage and possibly the doctor would even be transferred to the community with a delivery point in many cases. Mr. Speaker, the survey concludes that farm families would withdraw from their home community just under 40 per cent of the money they annually spend in their towns if that town lost its elevators.

The survey researchers also contacted business people in the 26 communities studied. The businessmen were well aware of the likely reduction in patronage. The report attempted to calculate in dollar terms the potential loss for these communities if they lost their elevators. The figure which was settled upon was \$120 million in annual sales. In light of that, Mr. Speaker, perhaps one should not be surprised that 47 per cent of the businessmen said they would consider selling out or closing down if branch line abandonment struck their community.

Mr. Speaker, there is a whole list of other implications for Saskatchewan towns on branch lines that the railways want to abandon. Almost one third of the local farm residents would reconsider their current intentions to retire in their home town. And 28 per cent of the present residents of the towns would move to another community. Many of the villages and towns would gradually lose all of their services and become ghost towns.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is apparent that for the movement of grain and for the survival of rural Saskatchewan, the country elevator system must stay. The federal government must act on the Hall Commission Report in keeping with the spirit of its recommendations, and the federal Minister of Transport must stop in his efforts to destroy those structures that best serve the family farm.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to just say a few words of agreement for the strong support voiced in the Throne Speech for the Crow's Nest Pass freight rates. The statutory rates have their origin in the Crow's Nest Pass agreement between the federal government and railway officials which was confirmed by an act of parliament in 1897. In return for vast land grants and millions of dollars in government funds the railway among other things reduced its rates for shipping grain and flour to Fort William. In 1925, federal legislation applied the Crow's Nest rates to grain from all points in the West moving over all rail lines.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, the railways have been raising a considerable fuss about this subsidy they must provide for the shipment of grain for export. I would remind the House that both the CPR and the CNR have used the welfare received from the Public Treasure as a springboard to develop giant business conglomerates throughout the world.

I think we should tell the boards of directors of the CN and the CP if they will give back to the Canadian taxpayers the hotels, the iron and steel plants, the pipelines, and the real estate developments, then perhaps the farmers of western Canada, who are taxpayers themselves, would consider talking about ending the Crow's Nest rates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to give you an example of what the statutory rates mean to an average farmer in my riding. Under the Crow's Nest rates it costs 19 cents per hundredweight to ship grain the 712 miles from Kamsack to Thunder Bay. A similar distance in the United States where there are no legislated reductions in freight rates, would be from Wolf Point, Montana to Duluth. To ship his grain the 713 miles the Montana farmer must pay 88 cents per hundredweight. That is well over four times what the farmer in my area must pay, or to put it another way, if the statutory rates did not exist prairie farmers would be paying in freight charges over four times what they now pay.

Mr. Speaker, prairie farmers receive an annual benefit of \$320 million from the Crow rates. That represents about 12 per cent of gross farm receipts. The rates are an absolutely indispensable part of a healthy agricultural economy in western Canada. We in the New Democratic Party are not prepared to sit idly by while the statutory rates are juggled to fit into the profit picture of the railways.

I want to turn now for a few minutes to discuss the social services extended by this government to the less fortunate in our society, and those who find it difficult to provide for all of their own needs.

The Throne Speech talked about the new Home Care program. The provincial government has been holding consultations with people all over the province concerning the best method of providing services, things such as homemaking, home nursing, meals-on-wheels and physical therapy to people who are shut in, the elderly, the handicapped, the chronically ill and disabled people are those that would be affected.

Mr. Speaker, in the past many of these people have had to move out of their own homes and into an institution because they could not get nursing care in their home or occupational and physical therapy or keep their home in a proper state of repair. Even very small things to most of us, like minor home maintenance, necessary household duties, and access to at least one hot, nutritious meal a day are major hurdles for some aged, infirm or handicapped person alone in his or her own home.

At present, Mr. Speaker, a variety of volunteer organizations provide some of these badly needed services and have been doing an excellent job, but the entire province is not covered and in certain areas there are no services to shut-in people at all.

Mr. Speaker, the Blakeney government has taken the stand that if an individual or a couple want to remain in their own home and if all it takes is a little bit of help from the provincial government to allow them to do this, then that is what should be done. Saskatchewan senior citizens have been treated much better in a number of areas since the election of the New Democratic Party in 1971. Nine million dollars was spent this year on low rental housing for senior citizens. That will build 1,350 low cost rental units in communities all across Saskatchewan.

Roughly \$2 million will be spent on construction grants to special care homes and the residents of these new nursing homes, as well as the existing ones, can look forward to greater financial assistance towards the cost of their care. Mr. Speaker, in terms of actual cash going directly to the senior citizens, the provincial government now spends \$6.5 million to supplement the federal old age pension, over \$11 million in special care

subsidies, \$19 million in Saskatchewan Assistance Plan payments and lesser amounts for the small programs like the Senior Citizens' Home Repair grants which the Throne Speech promised to expand.

Mr. Speaker, in my home town of Kamsack there is a very active and very popular senior citizens' centre. It receives funds from this government as do similar centres across the province. I think it is of interest to everyone regardless of what age they are to know that prior to the 1971 election there were 13 senior citizen activity centres in all of Saskatchewan. Today, Mr. Speaker, thanks to a policy of encouragement and financial assistance by the Blakeney government, there are 253 such centres.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, to list in detail all of those programs started in the last six years that are of benefit to the senior citizens would take more time than what I have this afternoon. A set of figures though can tell the story just as well. Although it is hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, in the last year that the Thatcher government was in office only half a million dollars was spent on senior citizens. This year the New Democratic Party government will spend more than \$73 million, a 15 fold increase.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Speaker, the Department of Social Services, headed by Herman Rolfes, had done a tremendous job for the senior citizens of our province, and in other areas too that minister and that department deserve praise.

Mr. Speaker, the Family Income Plan has been functioning much better as time goes on. After some initial problems it is now one of the best income support programs the province has. The Family Income Plan supplements the income of working families who would otherwise find it difficult to get along. It is a program that young families in particular have been helped by, and should be supported by all parties in this Assembly.

The Conservative Party tried everything to make welfare an issue in the Pelly by-election. I found that difficult to understand for two reasons. First, because we made available to them official figures showing the number of people receiving welfare in Saskatchewan in various years. In the spring of 1971 there were more than 48,000 on welfare. In the spring of this year that number had gone down by more than 10,000. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand how any political party can attempt to make political mileage by attacking the disadvantaged. Mr. Speaker, that is what the Conservative Party continues to do and they should hang their heads in shame for doing it.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken for some time, and have talked about those things I believe to be of great importance in the Throne Speech, and in government policy. Before I conclude, I want to say a few words about the Pelly constituency, a constituency which it has been my privilege to represent since the winning of the June 8th election.

The Pelly riding stretches from the Manitoba border to No. 9 highway in the west, and from the Porcupine Forest Reserve in the north to the mixed farming area around Wroxton in the south. Some of the best land in the province is to be found in the Kamsack area, and Mr. Speaker, it is my own humble opinion, the best people to be found anywhere are those in the Pelly constituency.

Mr. Speaker, all three parties threw everything they had into the campaign to win in Pelly. Local people have numerous stories to tell about talking to the Cabinet minister, to a member of Parliament, a senator, and all in the same afternoon, and without leaving their own verandas. Mostly federal Cabinet ministers I might add.

The leaders, and most spokesmen for each party spent well over a month visiting some 9,400 eligible voters in the riding, and talked over the issues. If ever there was a political contest where the electorate was well informed, the Pelly by-election was it. For that reason alone, the outcome of the June 8 vote was, I believe, of considerable significance.

In all modesty on my part, Mr. Speaker, it is my opinion that the electors in the Pelly seat stopped the so-called Tory tide in its tracks.

The by-election saw the New Democratic Party win 41 out of 58 polls, tie for the lead in two others, and lose only 15. The party received strong support from all parts of the riding winning the home polls of both the opposition candidates. Over 200 more residents of the Pelly constituency cast their ballots for the New Democratic Party on Wednesday, June 8, than did in the 1975 election. The by-election was a tremendous victory for the provincial New Democratic Party, and the Pelly NDP Association, but most important of all, it was a decision made by a well informed electorate, who had heard all the issues discussed. Their decision was to endorse the programs and the policies of the Blakeney government, and Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech predicts a continuation of the good government and people oriented programs of the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Speaker, this party found widespread support in the by-election, which brought me into this Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, in moving this motion, I express my full support for the proposals contained in the Speech from the Throne.

MR. G. McNEILL (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Meadow Lake constituency, it is an honor to be able to second the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is an honor which I will carry out with pleasure and pride, Mr. Speaker — pleasure, because it affords me an opportunity to say a few words to you, to the members of this Assembly, and to the people of Saskatchewan, about my

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constituency, one of the most beautiful parts of the province with some of our most industrious citizens, and pride, Mr. Speaker, because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the benefits of recent initiatives of the Blakeney government and the positive aspects that I see flowing from the proposals contained in the Speech presented to us last Wednesday.

The Speech reflects the capacity to deal with issues facing us in an organized and a careful manner. It reflects what we can do as a provincial government to advance the equal opportunity for each and every citizen, and to know that they will be rewarded with a fair share of the advances we make as a society. In short, Mr. Speaker, it reflects ordinary honesty in addressing issues, something obviously in short supply in politics these days.

These trademarks, Mr. Speaker, reflect the characteristics of the man who heads the government that prepared the Speech, and I am proud to be associated with this man, providing this well organized, outstanding and honest leadership to our province and in our country. I'm proud to be associated with our Premier, Allan Blakeney.

I'm proud also to be associated with the member who spoke before me. I want to congratulate him on his recent election to this Assembly and on the fine job he did in his maiden speech — an important speech, Mr. Speaker, in moving the Address-in-Reply. He has demonstrated why the people of Pelly placed their trust in him in the by-election, sending him here with even more votes than his highly respected and capable predecessor. He has also served notice, I think, that he will be in this Assembly for a long time to come. While that may be unwelcome news to both the Liberal and Conservative members opposite, it is good news to the people of Saskatchewan.

I also want to congratulate one other member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, Unlike the Pelly by-election results, this occurred probably as welcome news for the Liberal leader and the Tory leader. I say welcome news for the Liberal opposition leader, because to him it's comparable to a successful cancer operation, and also news to the Conservative leader as well; he'd probably welcome Idi Amin to his caucus in his totally unprincipled drive for even a sniff of power. In any case, I want to congratulate the member for Thunder Creek, Mr. Thatcher, on his betrayal of the people who sent him here. He has demonstrated his qualities for a membership in the Conservative caucus. I want to wish him well in his new found home away from home. I'm sure that in his own style, he will continue to be an embarrassment to his leader and to his caucus. He certainly has all the talents required to be a financial critic for the Conservatives, to explain and advocate what the member for Biggar describes as their proposal for a 'zero brains' budget.

Mr. Speaker, in a way of an announcement, I would like to say that Meadow Lake has a radio station, CJNS, which will broadcast for three hours per day now, and may be heard on 1240 on your radio dial. My thanks is extended to CJNB in North Battleford, which is the mother station of our new broadcast satellite in Meadow Lake.

Since the last Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there have been many accomplishments in the Meadow Lake constituency. The New Democratic Party government, under the sound leadership of Allan Blakeney has helped, through consultation and financial input, to build a seed-cleaning plant at Paradise Hill.

The senior citizens of the northwest section of this province are pleased with the generous support they have received in the past six and one half years. As pioneers of

our land, they know that there is a sincere interest in them, by the high priority placed on services to senior citizens. Most recently, the people of St. Walburg and Loon Lake are pleased with the construction and opening of their senior citizens' villas. The residents of Pierceland are thankful for the assistance provided to enable them to install a sewer system in their town.

In Goodsoil the school needed to be expanded and the residents there are thankful to the government of Saskatchewan for responding in adding four rooms to their school.

The constituents from Meadow Lake and area have commended our administration on the construction of the \$1.6 million airport at Meadow Lake. For a town that is almost certain to grow and prosper, this was a very welcome addition.

Since I became MLA for Meadow Lake, there has been \$6.6 million spent on the construction and improvements of streets, highways and bridges in my constituency. This includes extensive work on highways 4, 55 and 21 and, Mr. Speaker, if our government sees fit to continue placing a high priority on the North, highway 4 will be completed and in top condition by the end of 1978.

I might point out for the comments of the member over there we were about 10 or 11 years behind time because we had a Liberal member for there and he didn't do anything.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. McNEILL: — Under the new Recreational and Cultural Facilities Grant Program many areas have received funding to build and renovate such facilities within their communities. This would not have been possible without such a generous program. Facilities such as the Loon Lake curling rink, the Meadow Lake curling rink, the curling rink on the Onion Lake Reserve and Pierceland all could not have existed in the form they are without the financial support of this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. McNEILL: — Mr. Speaker, the list of benefits goes on and on with the programs and assistance to the people of this province. I hope that list will continue to grow because the key to our future is held in the northern section of this province.

Our area boasts the finest outdoor recreation facilities available anywhere in the province, with the Meadow Lake Provincial Park and other recreation services. Improvements this past year are appreciated by the people of the area and I want to encourage the Minister of Tourism to speed up the capital improvements in our parks. The community and regional tourist development program referred to in the Speech is welcome indeed. Local and regional tourism and travel associations appreciate the financial assistance being provided to enable them to promote their areas of the province. People in my area welcome as well the stepped up security which was provided this summer in our provincial park. Abuse of our public recreation facilities and vandalism aren't appreciated by anyone and I am glad the minister moved to improve this situation.

A year ago during the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, the opposition member for Shaunavon was commenting on the beef industry assistance grant announced by this government. He said, and I quote:

The NDP say that this will give \$32 million to the cattle industry. I doubt if it will give a tenth of that. This statement is a terrible disservice and an insult to the farmers of this province, Mr. Speaker.

That is what he said, Mr. Speaker. The results of the program show the member's comments are nonsense. The 971 farmers in my constituency who had an average taxable income of \$1,430, received grants averaging \$1,681 per farmer were appreciative of the provincial grant program. The small businessmen in my constituency are not likely to be too receptive to someone telling them that the injunction of more than \$1.6 million into the economy of the constituency was a terrible disservice to them either. The disservice, Mr. Speaker, was done by the members opposite who heaped criticism on the program which has paid out nearly \$31 million to the beef producers across the province. I commend the Minister of Agriculture on behalf of those 971 farmers in my constituency and all the small businessmen there.

Mr. Speaker, poorly researched criticism has been heaped on our Land Bank Program by the people opposite. They say it is a land grab, and the facts put the lie to that statement. In 1976 there were 17,626 land transactions; 211 of them involved Land Bank land. In 1976 the Land Bank purchased only 1.2 per cent of the total acreage of land sold in the province. In 1976 the average price per acre paid by the Land Bank was \$114, compared to the provincial average of \$150 per acre. They say the program has failed in its objective of getting young farmers started and the facts prove them dead wrong.

Today, the average Saskatchewan farmer is 55 years old, while the average age of Land Bank lessees is 32 years. Under Land Bank, the five year age group receiving most leases is the one 20 to 25 years old. They say, Mr. Speaker, that we don't intend to sell an acre of land and again they are dead wrong. Land Bank will sell the lessee the land after five years of continued lease. In 1976 the Department of Agriculture sold roughly 60,000 acres of Crown land.

Mr. Speaker, both groups opposite have bitterly opposed the Land Bank Program. They have misrepresented it and they have ignored all the facts pointing to its success. If the program is such a bad deal for farmers the Conservatives and the Liberals should explain why 1,187 people applied for the 401 available parcels of land in 1976 — with similar ratios every other year.

They should explain, and in particular the Conservative member for Qu'Appelle should explain why he is so concerned about the 7,600 acres of land the Land Bank owns in his constituency, but not a whisper from the great defender of individual enterprises about the 38,520 acres of land in his constituency owned by monopoly foreign owners.

Mr. Speaker, their criticism is ill-founded. It does a disservice to the 2,150 Land Bank lessees and to more than 8,600 more who applied for land who couldn't lease it because we didn't have any land to lease to them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say as well that the people of my constituency welcome and appreciate the roughly \$100 million Sask Tel will be spending this year and over the next few years on the Rural Telephone Improvement Program. I want to emphasize that this is a voluntary program. The rural companies can vote on whether they want to amalgamate with Sask Tel or not. Many in my area are choosing to amalgamate

because they recognize their subscribers want to improve service and have large exchange districts and they recognize and are honest about the fact that rental charges may increase a dollar or two to cover the amortized cost of the \$100 million investment.

Mr. Speaker, I want the member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) to know that I have every intention of telling my constituents that he has chastised us for borrowing money and guaranteeing borrowing for these improvements, as he has done in this House and elsewhere, and I have every intention of explaining to my constituents that the cuts in spending the Conservatives have called for would mean no work for these telephone improvements and, consequently, fewer jobs and a continued poor service.

Mr. Speaker, before I leave the matters relating to my constituency, I want to inform the members of the Assembly of a major improvement in our area. I want to congratulate the people in my area who are involved in the formation of the two new rural municipalities in the place of the former local improvement districts. Mr. Speaker, I welcome on behalf of my constituents yet another example of the strengthening of local government in our area. This kind of a move combined with the concerted efforts of this government to vastly increase grants to local governments are the real stuff of giving more power to local government and school boards. It is more real and meaningful than the snake-oil remedies which the member for Nipawin is so fond of peddling, Mr. Speaker — again, without facts to back him up.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne makes reference to legislation to further strengthening local government in northern Saskatchewan. I welcome this as a further real evidence of the commitment of our party and our government to action instead of hollow talk in our drive to strengthen local government institutions. We have been dedicated to build up the social and governmental institutions of this province, and not tearing them down as demonstrated by the actions of the Conservative members time and time again, Mr. Speaker, and never more visibly than the day after this Session opened. As a youngster who grew up in Toronto and Alberta, the member for Nipawin may not be aware, Mr. Speaker, that this province and this party has an enviable record of programs to build up and strengthen local governments and local institutions. We are proud of some of our historical initiatives such as the Grid Road System, and more recently, the Unconditional Grants Programs. I think it's fair to say that the government of this province, whatever their political stripes, have been well motivated and have done their best in trying to build our social and democratic institutions.

The member for Nipawin, the Conservative Leader, has a responsibility to inform himself of the history of this province, and the sooner he does so the better off we will all be.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been taking the initiative in yet another more designed, another move designed to strengthen local government, and I want to say that the local government organizations are being consulted and have input in every step of the way in developing this new initiative. I am referring of course to the plan to establish a new system of revenue sharing for municipal governments. We recognize the need to expand the financial base for local government, and the revenue sharing proposals are consistent with the steps we have already taken in the vastly increasing unconditional grants to local governments. The proposal for a system of revenue sharing is a logical outgrowth of our policies of the past six years.

In addition to expanding the financial base, revenue sharing can meet the second goal of providing local councils with a greater degree of flexibility in decisions they make.

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We understand and are in step with local officials who are determined to strengthen local autonomy, and we are prepared to take concrete steps to do something positive.

A third goal of our proposed revenue sharing is and must be to help off-set inflation. We hope that the system settled on will see the amount paid out to each municipality grow automatically with the increase of our provincial tax base. This growth would offer a degree of protection against inflation to the extent that the tax base grows, either as a result of inflation and because of the real growth we have seen in our provincial economy, so too would the revenue sharing grants paid to the municipalities.

I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that the revenue sharing proposals were consistent with steps we have taken in increasing grants to municipalities. Between 1971 and 1975 revenues received by urban municipalities in direct transfers from the provincial government grew by 287 per cent. That is a sign of our commitment in the Past, and I say these new proposals for revenue sharing are a sign of our continued commitment to help solve the problems of our municipal government. That's action, Mr. Speaker, not words.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some time on an area that is of great concern to the constituents of this province, Uranium Development. I think that success or failure in economic terms depends on the development of this industry.

I think that the development would bring with it employment and job training for northern residents, spin off industries throughout Saskatchewan, revenue to the province through taxation as well as a much needed energy supply to various parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, although I favor development, I also know that we cannot develop blindly and I sincerely hope that the Bayda Inquiry will give us some positive and safe directions to follow. In my opinion we should develop with care to ensure that every precaution possible is explored so that any danger to people and the environment will be kept at a minimum.

The other major area of concern is, "where do we sell our uranium?" We certainly do not want to see the product to someone who is not going to use our product to supply energy needs, and instead build bombs to destroy us. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this fear is coming somewhat late. There are already enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over. Supplying more uranium will not place us in any more danger than we are right now.

If we do in fact develop this industry, I would very much like to see that a good portion of the revenue is spent on research into disposal and neutralizing of radioactive material, and into exploring alternate forms of energy such as solar energy. If we can develop new sources of energy that are safer and renewable we will be doing a service to our residents of the future, and in the future when the uranium runs out, have an acceptable alternate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few remarks about health care. My colleague, the member for Pelly, has already dealt with this area very ably.

I want to mention only one set of figures, Mr. Speaker, which sets the record clear in regard to health care and hospital financing. Under the last Liberal budget, 83.7 million

was provided for hospital operating budgets. In the fiscal year past, close to \$210 million dollars was provided, Mr. Speaker, and that is close to a 250 per cent increase in funds provided for the operation of our hospitals including any capital costs for renovations or new hospitals we have built. Members opposite want to describe that as a cut-back, and I say they should get their facts straight.

The members opposite say they would do better and I say, "Don't judge a book by its cover," Mr. Speaker. Our sister province of Manitoba recently had an election. Conservative spokesman after spokesman went around the province ensuring the public that a Conservative government wouldn't tamper with social programs the Schreyer government had adopted — all those things are good and they would make them better they said. Sounds familiar doesn't it, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like home.

I invite you and members opposite to look into the second chapter of that book. I have here a clipping from the Winnipeg Free Press of October 25, a few days after the Lyon government was sworn into office, and it's all about the views of the Conservative health minister. What's the headline on the story? Health budgets will be cut, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cut the health budget — four days after being sworn into office. There's more, Mr. Speaker. I want to give you a bit more of it, and I'm quoting from this same article. "Health Minister Bud Sherman said today budget cuts in the Department of Health and Social Development will definitely be made." And another one; "The need for budget paring couldn't be more obvious." And another one, Mr. Speaker! "The province's health care delivery system is too rich when measured against other services the government must extend, and leaves no alternative to austerity." And another one, Mr. Speaker, asked about the possible cuts of the health department's 5000 civil servants force, Sherman said, he expected to see a reduction. That, Mr. Speaker, is the Conservatives who have just taken office. And I invite you to compare those statements with the statements a week or two earlier. All sugar and honey on the front cover but the second chapter is a disaster to the health care of Manitoba.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. McNEILL: — I predict it will get worse, Mr. Speaker. I predict that the Conservatives will back premiums which the NDP had abolished, or deterrent fees which the NDP didn't have, or both. And I predict that they will freeze hospital construction and renovation just as is being done by the Conservative government in Alberta. Health care gets the axe of the Conservative budget man, Mr. Speaker, so they can do away with mineral acreage taxes or taxes on wealth which we don't want nor do we need that here, Mr. Speaker. I want to encourage our people to look a little further, Mr. Speaker, than the front cover of the Conservative book and what Manitobans will suffer is a sign of what we can all expect from the boys across from us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to return for a few more moments to the matter of a resource policy, because of policies of this government, we have increase revenues the people get from our natural resources. This year, because of our policies, that revenue will be in the neighborhood of \$370 million. That is more than 11 times as much as we were getting under the giveaway plan.

They say we're not spending that money on people; we're spending it on potash. That, Mr. Speaker, is a deliberate misrepresentation of the truth and they know it. This year we will spend roughly 65 per cent of that revenue, roughly \$240 million on current programs and that \$240 million is not coming out of your pocket and mine. These are

fact, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the opposition spokesman that they can't have it both ways.

When they criticize our resource taxation policies I presume what they would do as an alternative is to give these large companies a break — they'd give back to them a large chunk of the \$370 million we collect. If they did that Mr. Speaker, they wouldn't have that \$370 million to spend on government programs. Either they would have to increase personal taxes to make up the difference or they would have to cut out the programs. They have a responsibility to tell us which course they would follow, and I say they would do both to rewards their corporate friends.

I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that about \$240 million of our resource revenue was being spent on current programs. The remaining, roughly \$130 million is being spent on programs designed to ensure that we continue to benefit from the development of our own resources.

I welcome the announcement in the Speech from the Throne that legislation will be introduced to establish a resource revenue fund. I don't see this as a radical departure from what we have been doing, but I am sure it will demonstrate to the people of Saskatchewan the benefits from our resource policies and it may even open the eyes of the opposition, opposed to the benefits of taxation and development policies that we have been following as a government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to discuss the economy. The Throne Speech dealt with only a few of the economy indicators that could have been used to illustrate the fact that while the Canadian economy slips further out of control, here in Saskatchewan sound economic planning has made us an island of stability in a sea of uncertainty.

The Speech mentioned that 14,000 new jobs were created in 1976; the rise in the provincial gross domestic product to \$7.4 billion; and the increase in personal income to \$6.3 billion, that was Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The national economy figures recorded only a marginal advance, in fact, if inflation is taken into calculations the gross national product in Canada has recently been declining. And Mr. Speaker, far from being able to talk in any positive way about job creation, the federal government has managed to help bring about the highest number of unemployed Canadians since the great depression. Our provincial economy is strong, Mr. Speaker, and the confidence shown by the business community reflects the confidence they have in the future performance of Saskatchewan.

There were 19,075 companies on the register with the Provincial Secretary's office at the end of 1976 — an increase of over 6,000 new businesses since the last Thatcher year. In fact, Mr. Speaker, investment in Saskatchewan has set new records since the election of the Blakeney government.

The building of homes, new businesses, has followed investment figures. The value of construction was up a full 30 per cent in 1975 over the previous years, and up another 25 per cent in 1976.

A recent federal government survey of Canada's 300 largest companies indicated that in the immediate future investment would continue to flow to this province and at an

even greater rate than oil rich Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the national economy is ailing, and in serious trouble. No amount of razzle-dazzle on the issues and baby kissing, or attempts to divert attention to the public will change that. On the other hand, Saskatchewan has an economic stewardship by the cabinet ministers responsible which set it apart from all other provinces. Mr. Speaker, Allan Blakeney, Walter Smishek and Wes Robbins don't have to kiss babies, babies kiss them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. McNEILL: — In closing my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier and my colleagues for the opportunity to second the address-in-reply. It is an honor for me and my constituents, and I want to repeat some of the thoughts expressed by my friend the member for Pelly (Mr. Lusney). The result of the Pelly by-election can't be denied. People had an opportunity to make a decision after intensive campaigning last May. The issues were explained to the people, and the people indicated full support for this government and its program. This Throne Speech is one more step in our program of good, common-sense government. I am in full support of it and I am proud to second the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. E.C. MALONE (Leader of the Liberal Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to say just a few words today before asking leave to adjourn this debate.

I would like to begin, of course, by congratulating the member for Meadow Lake (Mr. McNeill) and the member for Pelly (Mr. Lusney) for the honor that was bestowed upon them by the Premier to move and second the Speech from the Throne. I know it is an honor but it is indeed also a very onerous task when one saw what they had to work with to develop the speech from the Speech from the Throne that we heard last Wednesday from His Honour. Very little to work with, nothing was said in the Speech, and unfortunately I must say that nothing was said by either of the speakers.

I would also like, at this opportunity Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the new member for Pelly (Mr. Lusney) for his election win of earlier this year. I did attempt to personally extend congratulations to the member on election night, however, he was otherwise occupied and I was unable to make contact with him. I suspect he was probably on the phone with the Premier trying to find out all the election promises that had been made to the people of Pelly by the Premier and his agents, which the member no doubt was not aware of. I suspect that there will be many people in the Pelly constituency, as there will be in this Legislature, looking to that member to see when such things as air conditioning plants and artificial ice surfaces and paved roads, gymnasiums and so on are located on the Cote, Keeseekoose and Key Indian Reserves, and indeed I think there will be many people in his constituency will be waiting for those particular developments to occur. I would suggest that perhaps those people shouldn't wait with bated breath, but indeed they are going to be waiting and they are going to see if those promises that were made and which all of us were so well aware of in that particular campaign area are kept. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that most of them will not be. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Pelly, notwithstanding any success he does have in this Legislature in the next couple of years, will not be returning, but I wish him well while he has a short period here.

Mr. Speaker, in listening to the members give their addresses, I must say that I was once again taken with the sense of déjà vu; that we have heard all of this in the past. I have been a member of this Legislature now since 1973 and I think that the same tired speeches are given by the same people on the same dates. The NDP demonstrate nothing more than their tiredness in office, their lack of new ideas, by the speeches that they have written for the mover and the seconder to the reply to the Throne.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MALONE: — I couldn't help but reflect upon the remarks that were directed All the same old villains were brought up again by the members opposite . . . the bad old CPR, the bad old federal government, bad old Cargill grain company, on and on and on. Not a single new idea, Mr. Speaker, not a single new initiative from the government across. All they can do is talk about old battles, talk about old villains and talk about old issues. I would think, Mr. Speaker, that the time would be rapidly approaching where the Blakeney government is going to determine that they need some new ideas, that they need some new solutions, that they need some new direction to the problems that are facing the people of Saskatchewan, that it is no longer good enough simply to stand up in this Legislature and castigate these villains of the past; castigate them and say, ah! Those are the friends of the Liberals, and now we have a new verse, they are the friends of the Tories, and so on. I would like one of these days, Mr. Speaker, to meet a representative from one of these companies that we hear about all the time so that at least I would know who my friends are supposed to be, and who our allies are in this particular political arena.

Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that I sensed from the Speech from the Throne is this lack of initiative, lack of ideas. One of the things that really I find that is so unique perhaps in Saskatchewan and in this Legislature, is really not a difference between those who sit to my left and those who sit across from me, but a great similarity. The NDP have old ideas, and the Tories have no ideas. Mr. Speaker, since this session started that has again been demonstrated by the speakers that we have heard and the issues that we have debated.

You notice, Mr. Speaker, that once again one of the member opposite got up and he talked about Land Bank, and he went through the glories of the Land Bank and how it had put so many people on the farms of Saskatchewan. With that we agree. You will notice as well, Mr. Speaker, there is no reference made whatsoever as to when that land is going to be sold. there was no reference in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, as to whether or not the tenants of that property are going to remain just that, tenants of the NDP government, or whether they are going to have an opportunity to buy that farm land. You notice, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to continue to hear nothing from the members opposite about this particular program that is such a great concern to the people of Saskatchewan. Well, I've heard speeches across there before. What I am hoping is to give some initiative to you members over there to say something new and something different.

Mr. Speaker, On of the things that I would like to take a moment to dwell on — I regret having to do this again today because it further dignifies the spurious allegations of the member for Souris-Cannington and the support that he received from those allegations from his colleagues in the Conservative Party. But I take exception, Mr.

Speaker, to the fact that those allegations were so widely reported by the press, when indeed everybody in this Legislature, including the members who sit to my left, know that the allegations are stupid, that they are wrong, that there is no foundation in fact for them.

I take exception, Mr. Speaker, to the Regina Leader Post using the front page headline on the day after these allegations were made to cover that particular story and not give the same treatment to the denials that were made to the allegations by the members on this side of the House. I say that is improper reporting, Mr. Speaker. I take exception as well, Mr. Speaker, to those members of the media who decided that the issue was whether or not the Tories should sit here or sit over there, when the issue was, Mr. Speaker, as to whether or not there was truth or not to the remarks that were made by the member for Souris-Cannington. That was the issue and that is the only issue, Mr. Speaker.

I believe later on today, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to have an opportunity to see what the members to our left feel about having this matter referred to the Committee on Privileges. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that once again we may have attempts to talk out the clock. I suspect it will be very difficult for them today to accomplish that because of the length of time that is going to be involved. But we are all going to be interested, Mr. Speaker, in seeing what the reaction of those members will be, when this vote is finally determined. I suggest to you once again, Mr. Speaker, that a vote against such a referral can be taken as an admission by those members who vote in that way, that the allegations were indeed incorrect and have no substance in truth. So I wait, Mr. Speaker, for that with great interest.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other point that I want to touch on today that arose in question period. Nothing very much arose in the debate so far that we have heard. But the Premier was asked questions about government advertising, questions that were well taken. His response was that such advertising is indeed justified because other people do it as well. The answer was that it was entirely appropriate for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan to advertise what that company is doing because IMC does so. But there is a very fundamental difference, Mr. Speaker, that apparently the Premier and the members opposite do not appreciate or do not understand and that is that IMC does not use the taxpayers' money to advertise their products and this government is doing so.

There are also other things, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to talk about as well. Why is it necessary, why is it necessary to advertise monopoly corporations such as SPC, such as Sask Tel, such as SGIO? There is no reason for this whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. Let me point out one other thing as well, Mr. Speaker. We heard the Attorney General recently with his dulcet tones on the radio saying, "Hello everybody, I'm Roy Romanow, and we're going to have a Cabinet meeting in Davidson and we'd sure like all of you people in that Davidson area to come to tea parties to meet your Cabinet." Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think we have to know what happened at those tea parties from the Attorney General. We know what happened. They were political meetings. They were political meetings that were advertised by the NDP government and paid for by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. I say that type of conduct, of using the taxpayers' money in the manner that you have used it, a misuse of that money, is just the same as the Tories in their false allegations. It's the same dishonesty, the same lack of trust that the Tories so vividly demonstrate which you are demonstrating now by your cavalier attitude of spending the taxpayers' money in this way.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne failed to deal with a number of matters. It failed to deal with the great problem that is growing in this province with the administration of justice. It failed to deal with the problem of a government in a bureaucracy that is growing beyond control. It failed to deal with problems facing our Indian and Metis people and it failed in a realistic way to deal with the problems facing Canadian confederation. Mr. Speaker, those of us in the Liberal Party are aware that these are the problems that are facing the people of Saskatchewan today — not problems of catching cattle rustlers, not problems of having more government commissions, more government agencies. Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, I intend on dealing with some of those problems and my colleagues, in the days to come, will also be dealing with them in a meaningful way. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT – ALLOCATING OF SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY.

MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, once again, to the degradation that this House experienced on Thursday; once again the House is going to deteriorate into a session during which supposedly other parties get together to put the shaft into what could be termed as, I am sure, the common enemy.

Mr. Speaker, as the country and the economy virtually fall down in front of us, as the books in this province become redder and redder, the best that this government can think to do, and this particular time, is to talk about the nonsense that we are proceeding with today. Mr. Speaker, the economy is a mess. We are not talking about how we are going to stimulate the economy. We are not arguing about whether or not we should be reducing the sales tax to stimulate the economy. We are not talking about whether we should be raising taxes. Instead we are talking about one of the most foolish and ridiculous motions that I have had the misfortune to encounter in my particular time in this House since 1975.

Mr. Speaker, last week the government or the party which forms the government had its convention and I think the newspaper that I am rapidly coming to the conclusion must be the fairest, most unbiased of them all. I say that because it appears all three parties hate it equally, so they must be fair, impartial and unbiased. But as they report it, the Premier in his comments to that convention spent a great deal of his time in reference to the Progressive Conservative Party. He went way, way back, he went all the way back to 1929. I didn't see 1929, some of you bald headed fellows over there I am sure did, some of you fellows who are starting to look a little bit on the tired out side, a little on the worn out side, you saw '29 I am sure.

MR. MOSTOWAY: — At least we'll be smiling!

MR. THATCHER: — Oh, we'll be smiling in 1979 as you go to your just reward in oblivion.

The extent, the preoccupation that that convention had on the Progressive Conservative Party is something to behold. We go way back to 1929. As the member for

Regina Lakeview (Mr. Malone) indicated talked about all the old enemies. There aren't any new ones. Those that won't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Was the Premier suggesting that he is conceding defeat to the Progressive Conservative Party in the next election? Mr. Speaker, I respectfully suggest to this House today that we have more important things to talk about than the nonsense that is going on right now. Mr. Speaker, we have the economy to talk about, we have potash mines to talk about, we have the deterioration of our health programs to talk about. We have countless things to talk about notwithstanding the bankruptcy of ideas that are in this Throne Speech. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, may I respectfully suggest and may I, therefore, move an amendment to the motion that in view of the very pressing urgent matter that should be facing this Assembly:

That the motion not now be dealt with but be dealt with six months hence (or on this day six months hence.)

I would so move, seconded by the member for Souris-Cannington.

MR. SPEAKER: — I have an amendment by the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) seconded by the member for Souris-Cannington. “That the motion not now be dealt with but be dealt with six months hence (or on this day six months hence).”

There are two things wrong with the motion. The most serious one being, and I am citing Beauchesne's Citation 202(11):

An amendment proposing that a resolution which does not require second reading be considered this day six months is out of order. In other words the six months hoist only applies to readings or other proceedings which take place on an appointed date. It has no application to motions for direct adoption.

The second thing that is wrong with the motion is that the member neglected to sign it. I declare the motion out of order.

MR. R.N. NELSON (Yorkton): — Mr. Speaker, I find this debate to be a sad and a most degrading experience.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I believe the member for Thunder Creek still has the floor.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that it was out of order, I am sorry that I didn't sign it. Not having access to the normal amount of legal advice that I am accustomed to . . .

MR. MERCHANT: — On a point of order, with all due respect to you, Mr. Speaker, after moving the motion the hon. member had to take his seat so the hon. member has lost his right to continue the debate.

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: — I want to thank the House for preserving the decorum of the House while I found a ruling which would apply.

The member I believe for Wascana is in order in drawing the point of order to our

attention and I cite the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly, Rule 28:

No member may speak twice to a question except in explanation of a material part of his speech which may have been misquoted or misunderstood, but then he is not to introduce any new matter, and no debate shall be allowed upon such explanation.

It is to be assumed that the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) in moving his motion of a six month hoist spoke to that motion prior to moving the motion and consequently he is not allowed to speak again.

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, in order that we can get on with the business of the House and out of respect for your high office, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to unconditionally withdraw the letter. I don't quite understand how I can do that, I didn't put the motion. That will be left in the hands of the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald) as I understand it.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! The members are all aware of the motion that is before the House and in view of the member for Souris-Cannington's statement on a matter of privilege at this point that he withdraws in an unqualified fashion the letter which was said and is the subject of this motion. I would ask the members of the Assembly if they would agree unanimously to drop the motion which is before the House at this time. I think that this would clear up the matter as the member has now unqualifiedly withdrawn the letter which he has sent to the Speaker.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this comes as a rather sudden development and if other members are like me, I am not quite sure of the impact of this. Mr. Speaker, my comment would be quite clearly that there are allegations made pertaining to all the members of the House and unlike Mr. Speaker I don't want to do my thinking while I'm standing on my feet but I just don't know whether or not a simple withdrawal at this stage of the game can handle this matter. The fact of the matter is that there was a two day debate, virtually a full day debate and a portion of it today, then all of a sudden there is an unqualified withdrawal. That's my only comment I guess.

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make, seeing it is my motion, can I speak on a point of order. I hope this is not winding up the debate. First of all, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if that withdrawal is good enough to withdraw for 80,000 readers of the front page of the Regina Leader-Post. That bothers me, Mr. Speaker. I wonder, too, Mr. Speaker, if the withdrawal of the letter is in fact a withdrawal of the allegations. Because I think they are two separate and distinct things. Did the member believe when he wrote that letter that the allegations were true and, if so, I would like an explanation from the member as to whether or not he is apologizing to the members of the House because now he does not believe the allegations to be true or is he merely trying to eliminate the danger of a public inquiry where he under oath is forced to admit or not admit that he is able to substantiate these very serious allegations. Mr. Speaker, if he would stand on his feet and say that he withdraws the allegations and that he has nothing to substantiate this but it was for whatever reason whatsoever, then I would certainly consider withdrawing the motion. But if it is only to withdraw the letter and only to eliminate the danger of public scrutiny into the Conservative Party and their reasons behind this kind of a public allegation, then, Mr. Speaker, I would have to think about it.

MR. COLLVER: — I would like to just comment on and read for Mr. Speaker the motion that is before this Assembly:

That a letter of November 16th to the Speaker from Mr. Eric Berntson be referred to the Standing Committee.

The member for Souris-Cannington has unconditionally withdrawn the letter that is the subject matter of this motion and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the matter be dropped and that the Assembly return to the urgent public business facing the people of Saskatchewan.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I think the member should treat this matter in as serious a fashion as is possible at this time. The member has made an unqualified withdrawal and I would be the first one to admit that any member of this House, including myself, occasionally makes a move in the wrong direction and wishes at a later point to change direction and usually has the opportunity to make that change of direction without any personal embarrassment. This is not the case. I think that the member in making the withdrawal is subjecting himself to some small amount of embarrassment at this time and some members may say that is justified but that is beside the point. I recall the other day in the debate without wishing to take part in the debate that one of the hon. members or several of the hon. members were calling for a withdrawal. Had the member risen at that time and withdrawn the letter I think his withdrawal would have been accepted. I think his withdrawal is no less genuine at this time in the proceedings.

I would remind the members that there are two parts to the letter. One part is a political charge which is, if I may say so, fair politics. If one member of one party charges that other parties are conspiring against that party as it were, that is a debating point. The other part of the letter which I viewed as being most serious and the part that I challenge from the Chair in the statement I issued, was the part of the letter which said that the seating plan was the manifestation of that “deal”. The member in withdrawing the letter has withdrawn, as I view it, the basis for this resolution, this motion that is before us, and consequently I would ask the members of the Assembly to give serious consideration to allowing the motion to drop at this time.

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I understand Mr. Speaker’s sentiments in this matter because they, frankly are my sentiments. But I would direct Mr. Speaker to page 24 of the November 17 Hansard where the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland, among other things, says the following:

And, Mr. Speaker, I read that letter and I tell you now, Mr. Speaker, I go on record for what it’s worth, that I concur with its contents.

If Mr. Speaker goes through the debate, it is not limited to the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland. If the argument is that the letter itself is a prima facie breach and if a member gets up and joins himself in that prima facie breach, as I submit to you the hon. member for Saskatoon-Sutherland did, and I won’t go on to document what the member for Thunder Creek and others said, the simple expunging or the simple withdrawal of the letter by one of the members of the Conservative Party leaving unchallenged and untested these kinds of allegations, I think can’t be left unresolved.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a proposal to you and to the members of the House. It is 4:35. We have to do or we should do condolences sometime today. May I ask the member of the House since the obvious recent development in the light of my

comments that we by agreement call it 5:00 o'clock, consider our position, reconvene at 7:00. Perhaps Mr. Speaker at that time will consider my remarks with respect to the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland. He can see how the individuals of this House feel as a result of the unqualified withdrawal and come back at 7:00 o'clock and perhaps the situation can be resolved fairly easily, namely the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland and those others who joined in those remarks of concurrence to see fit to also unqualify the withdrawal. Mr. Speaker, I think I'm speaking for all members of the House that it is inevitably reasonable, not since I'm making it but it is a suggestion, given the time frame that we're in, and given the fact that we're asked to make a — and I don't know how I could be presumed to be making a decision for all members on this side in any event, upon the business of not making the motion — it's not my motion. I don't even know what the Liberal Party is going to think about it so I'm going to ask the leave of the House, Mr. Speaker, to call it 5:00.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, before we consider the request of the Attorney General, I must apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, that I was out of the House when the member for Souris-Cannington made his withdrawal but it has raised a number of things in my mind. Firstly, does the withdrawal constitute an apology? We also have the remarks of the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland and the member for Rosetown which were all taken after this resolution was put before the House. Does the withdrawal by the member for Souris-Cannington constitute a withdrawal of the remarks that they made? I think, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of elements that we have to consider before the matter can be dropped or the withdrawal be accepted, and I would concur with the Attorney General that we need some time to reflect on the implications of this. I'm not sure whether it's suitable just to adjourn until 7:00 o'clock. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you could advise me if this matter is adjourned by the next speaker, whether it will come up tomorrow after the speeches on the Speech from the Throne.

MR. SPEAKER: — The member for Lakeview's question will be raised first. The suggestion from the Attorney General was that we notice it was 5:00. I do leave the Chair until 7:00 this evening. That means that the matter will raise itself at 7:00 o'clock. The member for Saskatoon-Sutherland . . .

MR. H.W. LANE (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — In response to what the Attorney General had to say, I would point out that he is quite correct in stating that I associated myself with the contents of the letter. Now, what the Attorney General fails to point out is that I gave an interpretation of what I believe that letter to be all about, and if he just reads further in, I say the letter in no way, to my way of thinking, did anything to question the office of the Speaker, and in that light . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order!

I tend to think that the suggestion which has been offered by the Attorney General with regard to noticing that it is 5:00 o'clock would solve the problem for the time being and we could deal with it at 7:00 o'clock this evening and if there is no serious objection, I would call it . . .

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to rise while you are on your feet but I think we all should be cognizant of Mr. Speaker's earlier statement that he indicated that the reason for the motion had been withdrawn as he indicated in his statement, in his very pointed

remarks to the members of the Assembly. I think those remarks of Mr. Speaker were stated quite clearly and in Mr. Speaker's way, very pointedly for the members of this Assembly. The reason for the motion as Mr. Speaker has already stated was on the letter. Mr. Speaker has already ruled and stated that the letter is the source of the motion. I suggest to the House later, that Mr. Speaker's already stated ruling is a matter to be kept in mind by hon. members. Again, Mr. Speaker, you indicated that . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order!

I think the member is right in that I said that; that the basis for the motion has been removed as far as I'm personally able to observe but I would remind the member for Qu'Appelle that the results of the debate have not been removed, at least in the thinking of some of the members here, and unless I have general agreement that we call it 5:00 o'clock, now I will continue the debate.

All right, I will recognize the next speaker.

MR. J.L. SKOBERG (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, I think it is unfortunate that the Legislative Assembly here has to be treated in such a frivolous manner as what we have just seen happen a few moments ago by the Leader of the Conservative Party who stood on his feet and suggested that everything was fine, nothing had happened and that we are prepared to withdraw and then try to instruct the Chair on what he should do.

I would like to suggest that when you look at the letter itself, Mr. Speaker, it's not written as the member or over the signature of the member for Souris-Cannington. It is written over the signature of the whip of the Progressive Conservative caucus. His individual withdrawal still does not resolve the problem with that caucus opposite. Every statement that is in this Hansard at this time is over the signature of that entire caucus and that letter is not from the individual member for Souris-Cannington. In fact I think all of us in this House agree he did not probably write that letter whatsoever.

As we look at the type of the letter that's written, Mr. Speaker, there are threats in that letter, nice deliberate threats, and they talk about decorum. They refer to the fact that we could, as you may well know, disrupt the opening day ceremonies by taking our rightful seats. That's an outright threat by a so-called political party in this province. I think, Mr. Speaker, that if we really realize what's going on and, as we read this letter, I don't know how it would be possible that that letter could be withdrawn or that motion withdrawn until it is resolved at this time. I for one would not be prepared to stand here and give that party six months to try to prove whether they're honest or dishonest. I don't think anyone in this House can have that type of a position that would give them that opportunity on the so-called motion that was tried to be moved or the amendment to the motion.

I think, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the type of letter that is being moved, we think of another House in this country, the federal House, and realize that at the Ottawa level you do not challenge the Chair. You do not have the right to challenge the Chair, that Chair has some respect. When I read this letter, there is absolutely no respect for the Chair of this Legislative Assembly. I think it is very regrettable that that would happen at this time of our history. When we look at the system of government that we do have in Canada, and we look at the type of letter that they have written, then surely the public of

this province and everyone in this province should realize that there is no decorum as the hon. member of the opposition party speaks about and that of course is that there is absolutely no decorum in recognizing the ability of the Chair to govern us here in the Legislature. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that somewhere along the line, they will be in a position to say what type of decorum they are speaking about when they run out to the press and say that we can do this and we're not going to do that, we're not going to smile, we're not going to smoke, we're not going to slouch and we're not going to do everything else you can possibly imagine and then they come back in here and completely disregard the authority of that Chair.

Mr. Speaker, we read in this letter about deals and as I read about deals all I can possibly think of at the present time is whether or not the Conservatives were thinking about a deal in a foreign country when they wrote this letter. As far as I'm concerned their minds were not with this letter when they wrote it. They were thinking about some nefarious situation somewhere else not in our system of government in this country but in some other country that some of those people have some knowledge of.

When I look at the federal level once again, I think of people like Stanley Knowles, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. McEachen, of all the three political parties. If they even thought that the Chair of any Legislative Assembly or the House of Commons of Canada was treated as frivolously as what this Session is doing right now, they would probably turn over and wonder where exactly our system was going. There is no respect in this letter for the Chair of this House and Mr. Speaker, I'm suggesting to you that until we find out whether or not in fact there are any charges in this letter that are correct, then there is no way we can possibly have a situation around here that we can have any respect for the Chair. I personally cannot for one moment understand why the Conservatives and the Party Whip that put his signature to this letter would be one bit frightened to refer this to the Standing Committee. If they made the statements, why don't they stand up and say then they have clear evidence that what they have said in here is true? If they didn't make the statements, why didn't they stand up as has been suggested and say, what's in this letter is not true and we ask leave to withdraw the letter. They have not done that. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Sutherland (Mr. Lane) stood up and tried to argue the point once again, even after possibly an agreement could have been reached by the respective parties in this House. But even at that time . . .

MR. LANE: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — What's the purpose.

MR. LANE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The point of order raised before by the Attorney General, which has now been raised again, I would like to speak to it if I might. The point is simply this, that I had associated myself with the contents of the letter, and I think it should be clearly stated now that that was in conjunction with a clear interpretation as I have it on the letter. Now I don't see the point that the hon. member is making and if I had interpreted the letter to have in any way slurred the Chair that would be an entirely different thing. Now, Mr. Speaker, on this point of order, I would like to also make this other comment.

The opposition, or the government members have risen and indicated things like 'they are scared to deal with it,' comments to that effect . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I would ask the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland to acquaint himself with what a point of order is, and in order for a point of order to have been raised

there must be some rule or procedure of the Legislature that has been abridged. Perhaps the member could acquaint himself with the proper manner in which to raise a point of order, and I would be more likely to accept it. But I can't accept an argument which the member is putting forward at this time. It really comes forward properly under 'debate' of the resolution.

MR. SKOBERG: — Mr. Speaker, I understand of course, that there is some difficulty on the Conservative side of the House as to understanding the rule of the Chair, and also respect for the Chair. We have seen that in this letter, and I also understand when they stand up on that type of a point of order they have no knowledge whatsoever of the parliamentary system in this country. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that it is utter nonsense for a party whip to write a letter like this, then come in and ask to withdraw it without completely withdrawing everything that is in this letter. I say it is utter nonsense for that member to assume the obligation of his entire caucus, by individually assuming that responsibility which was written over the signature of that particular caucus. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, and I repeat, that we must have respect for the Chair and we cannot have respect for the Chair under a system that we have seen here in the last couple of days. We know, as everyone in this Legislative Assembly knows in particular, that if respect is gone for the Chair, then you have no decorum whatsoever in this House or any other house. We also know that it is absolutely necessary when they are talking about trying to put forward a case about their Conservative Party being in the majority in this House, it is amazing indeed that two members of that Conservative Party now were not elected by their constituents to sit in the party they are sitting at.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SKOBERG: — And I will tell you that the majority of the people in this province are of the opinion, whether it is right or wrong, and I agree with the majority of the people in this province when a member leaves a political party he should have the intestinal fortitude to resign and stand for election for another political party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SKOBERG: — I heard a slight remark from the hon. member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) — "Wait until the next election" — and as I speak to some of the people that surround the community that I come from I think he will have a little difficult time standing for election come next time around. There is no question about it, if he gets the nomination it would be a feat of an accomplishment which I am not sure that he is even certain of at this time.

I must say, in all sincerity, that I still think there is time, possibly, if the hon. member and his caucus were to agree that everything that is in this letter is not necessarily a true statement of their thinking at the time. Maybe there is time yet for some type of reconciliation and recognition of the parliamentary system that we have. But it is very, very clear and after hearing what the hon. member for Saskatoon-Sutherland said they have no intention whatsoever of saying that there is anything in this letter that is not true. He subscribed to it in his speech, he made observations and as such, of course, then he is a party to it and his statements have been made in Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, I for one only say this, that we must have respect, we must have a resolve of the situation, and I still believe that the only route that we can take is by referring it to

the committee and under oath we then will find out, that committee will find out, which will report back to us in this Legislative Assembly, and then we can find out whether or not in fact there is any basis and allegations in this particular letter.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying that we cannot wait too long to find out whether or not we do have that system in Saskatchewan. We have been going to the schools throughout this province presenting pictures, as our Premier said here just the other day, I have been talking about the parliamentary process at three levels of government, municipal, provincial and federal. I told them that we do have respect in this province and in this country for a democracy at work and our parliamentary system. Then to become horrified to come down here and find out a letter of this nature, a threatening letter, a demanding letter, had been written to the Speaker, when all through that that's a political letter. It should have never gone to your chair, Mr. Speaker, in all honesty, in my humble opinion. That letter should not have been addressed to you whatsoever. They could have questioned their seating composition in this House, but they should not then have drawn the other areas in here and come about with their so-called 'great deal' that they referred to.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if we are going to have any decorum, which the Conservatives profess to have, then we must have a resolve to find out whether or not in fact that Chair that you sit in has any responsibility, has any power, vested in that Chair, to try to bring about a system that we all know and love in this country, and that is a parliamentary democracy that we hear about so often, but the Conservatives are not now prepared to practice.

HON. E. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that as one member of this House I am very sorry that this has gone to the point that it has. I am not what one would call a veteran member of this Legislature, in the way that some other members here are, the member who moved the resolution that is before us, for example, the member on this side of the House. But in the time that I have been here, I have learned to respect this institution, I have learned to respect that it is the place where those important issues of the day that the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) referred to when he got up and spoke, are debated and decided. Any attempt by anyone, especially by anyone who is a sitting member of this House, to try to destroy the integrity of this institution, or destroy the integrity of your Chair, I think is totally and completely unacceptable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — It is more than a question now, Mr. Speaker, of withdrawing the letter. I think if the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) had had the courage and the stamina and the backbone to get up on his own conviction, he would have done that the other day, rather than listening to his leader who refused to let him do it at that time. Had he done that, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't be having this debate here now this afternoon, and that's why I am sorry that we are debating it because it could have been worked out that way. The issue is greater than the letter now. The issue is the allegations that have been made in the contents of that letter, the allegations that have been printed by the press which has been carried throughout Saskatchewan, and the allegations that are made in Hansard as recorded here by members opposite, by members opposite who refuse to withdraw those allegations. The member for Saskatoon-Sutherland, who says, and he says very clearly, that "I go on record for what it is worth and I concur with its contents," and he refers to the letter.

Now unless, and until the members opposite remove those kinds of allegations and withdraw those kinds of statements and what they have attempted to do through their party whip as a caucus is pretty clear to everyone, and that is to try to undermine the very respect that every member of this House, and everybody in Saskatchewan ought to have for the institution of the Chair in this House. What we have seen happening here, Mr. Speaker, mind you, is a dangerous thing, because it is an attack on the very institution of government, parliamentary government. It is an attack on this Legislature through allegation and innuendo and it is an attack on the Speaker. That is clear. There was never any attempt, as far as I know, by the members who sponsored these allegations through this letter, to speak to the Speaker about it. There was never any attempt to raise the issue in this House and express their concern. There was only a letter that was set to the press and then to the Speaker when we were about to begin the sitting of this House. And it is clear that that kind of an approach is not any attempt to express concern on their parts about the role in this Legislature, it is clearly and simply nothing more than an attempt at cynical political opportunism. There is no doubt about that.

I listened to the member for Thunder Creek talk about the things that he said, and all I could think of while he was speaking is, what is he afraid of? What are those members afraid of? Why are they afraid to have the letter considered by the committee? Is it because they know that the things that we have said, that the members from the Liberal Party in this House have said, are true? I am convinced that that is the case. And why is the motion here? The motion is here because the member for Thunder Creek (and I share his feelings on this with him) has a respect for this institution and the respect for the institution of your Chair — Indian Head-Wolseley, I'm sorry. And that's why the resolution is here, Mr. Speaker, because there are members of this House other than seated over there who have a respect for it.

The member for Thunder Creek says that there are other important things that we should be debating in this House. And I agree. There are important things we should be debating in this House. But one of the things we need to be debating in this House is the question of law and order, if you will. The question of the law and order of this House, which there appear to be members here who have no respect for it, as clearly indicated in the last two days of debate. There seems to be even the parallel here, Mr. Speaker, in this innuendo that the Chair has been impartial, or not been impartial, by this innuendo that there is some kind of deal. There is a parallel here similar to the kind of thing through innuendo that some members of the federal caucus of the Progressive Conservative Party have been trying to cast on organizations like the RCMP by innuendos in parliament. Not much difference, not much different at all.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that this complete disrespect for our parliamentary system is something that has got to stop. And I think that the members . . . If it was only an isolated case, although as serious as it is, I suppose it would even then not be quite so bad. But it happened last year as well, in the last session. It is a clear attempt by the members of the Conservative caucus in this House to try to, to try to take a hold of what I think is commonly understood, a feeling amongst some people, a feeling of suspicion about government, and about politicians, and so on, and it's the Conservative Party who is trying to use that thing and build on it by misrepresentation. And the examples of the last session, Mr. Speaker, where there were allegations again, allegations by most members, of filthy hospitals and when they were put on the carpet of this House, they could not provide a shred of evidence to support what they said, but they got the headline that they wanted as they did with this letter to you, Mr. Speaker. There was also a case in between the two sessions where the Leader of the Conservative Party

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made some references incorrectly, and I think unwisely, about the inquiry into the correctional institute, into the correctional systems in the province and when he was put on the carpet by the Attorney General and asked to provide the evidence, he refused, and still hasn't done it. So it is clearly a strategy on the part of the Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, to try to create as much as possible, a disrespect for this Legislature, and for our parliamentary system of government and on the institution of the Chair, and I as one member of this Legislature have to disagree with them and would strongly urge that we come to grips with this, so that we can clear it up once and for all, and that is to consider that resolution and pass it in this House.

Mr. Speaker, it is now 5 o'clock, and I call 5 o'clock.