

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Nineteenth Legislature

February 28, 1979

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. E. TCHORZEWSKI (Humboldt): — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to you and to members of this House, a group of 16 Grade 8 students from Dana Radar Base, near Bruno — particularly since they took their courage in their hands and drove down in this kind of weather to view the proceedings of this House as well as to visit other parts of the city of Regina. They are accompanied by their teacher, Charlotte Ruth and by Master Corporal Coffin and Corporal O'Connell, as well as Mrs. Loreny and Mrs. Dosken. I am going to meet with them after the question period for a brief while to answer any questions that they have. I know that members will join with me in extending our welcome to them and wishing them a very safe trip home when they leave later on this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission Purchase

MR. R. ANDREW (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding). Can the Minister of Agriculture advise this Assembly whether the Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission has made an offer to purchase the north half of 17 — 26 — 18 west of the third from one Tom Turner, Plato, Saskatchewan?

HON. E.E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I think I will have to take notice of that. I wouldn't be aware of whether the Land Bank Commission has offered to purchase this particular piece of land.

MR. ANDREWS: — A supplementary. While you are verifying that particular question, would you also verify whether or not the Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission also made an offer to purchase Caroncrest Farms Limited, for the same land, approximately two months earlier? And would you determine or not the price offered was \$137,600?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I will have to take notice of that. I am sure that I wouldn't know those figures offhand and I would have to take notice.

MR. ANDREWS: — Mr. Speaker, one further question to the Minister of Agriculture. Would you also determine whether or not in these particular offers, this particular person was not trying to circumvent the act and obtain land . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Next question.

Squaw Rapids Loop Line

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister in charge of SPC. On your loop line that is to be built joining the Squaw Rapids power project to the hydro project in Manitoba, it has been recommended by your one-man committee, the Dean of Engineering from the University of Saskatchewan and the environment board that you take a different route than the one proposed by SPC. Can you tell me if there is a different route? Are you going to take the route that they are advising or are you going to take the SPC as originally planned?

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Power Corporation provided to the Department of the Environment, as is the policy of the government, and to Mr. Nikiforuk, who is the one-man committee reviewing, if you like investigating this matter, the proposed routes that SPC had thought were practical. They had an ordering of preference in regard to those routes. It is correct that route B, the preferred route by SPC was not recommended by the Department of the Environment nor by Mr. Nikiforuk, the dean at the College of Engineering in Saskatoon. It is the intention of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to follow a route that was partially proposed by Mr. Nikiforuk, route E. He had proposed a slight modification to be called, if you like, the modified E but he did stipulate that if for some reason SPC was not able to follow it within the time frame that it had to build the line or if for some reason SPC was not able to get sufficient material to follow the modified route because it was longer and more material and more time was needed, that he and the Department of the Environment would agree to the route E which was initially proposed by the corporation but not its first choice. So at the present time the short answer is that SPC is, for all intents and purposes, following the recommendation not only of Mr. Nikiforuk but of the Department of the Environment in constructing on route E.

Conflict of Interest — Mediation Board

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask a question of the minister responsible for the Provincial Mediation Board and I rise to ask the question in defence of the civil service of this province. Mr. Speaker, would the minister not agree that within the last six months a member of the Provincial Mediation Board was fired because of conflict of interest and subsequently was hired by the federal Liberal government?

HON. E.C. WHELAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — In answer to the question, I know of no one on the Provincial Mediation Board that was fired. If the individual who was working for us and who resigned is working for the federal government I have no knowledge of it.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. On the contrary as the minister is very much aware, a man by the name of Peter Daniel was fired, relieved or whatever terms you would like to use, of his duties as a member of the Provincial Mediation Board. And because of that, Mr. Minister, and because of the reply by the Premier of this province in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, that he will not immediately introduce conflict of interest legislation pertaining to ministers, I ask the question Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Next question. The member for Swift Current.

MR. BIRKBECK: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Then I would ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, regarding this matter if in light of the failure of the Premier to answer for his departments and his own offices, will this minister then come in and provide us with

conflict of interest guidelines to protect the civil servants of this province?

MR. WHELAN: — May I repeat; so if the hon. member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) listens and hears this time, no one was fired, it was a resignation. The resignation was handed in by the individual. There was no conflict of interest that he indicated or I indicated in his resignation. I have no knowledge of what he's talking about. He's making a case out of pure cloth and there's just nothing to it and he knows it because we discussed it.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for the Provincial Mediation Board knows very right well why that member resigned and he is refusing to tell this House here today. I ask the minister one more time, will you now today tell this Assembly why did that member of the Provincial Mediation Board resign?

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, he's finally admitted the truth but if he resigned that was his decision, not ours, and I think that should be very clear.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Mercury Contamination

MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources. In light of recent decisions to allow netting of whitefish on Diefenbaker Lake and in view of the problems mercury contamination is causing in many of our lakes and river systems, has the minister's department lifted the mercury contamination warning on the South Saskatchewan River and the lake or are sportsmen to continue to fish for fun?

HON. A. MATSALLA (Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources): — Mr. Speaker, the mercury content in the Qu'Appelle River system is there but it's at a level that is safe for the fishing of whitefish and selling of it on a commercial basis. The reason for that is that the whitefish has different eating habits than the other fish and, therefore, it is a much safer fish for sale purposes. But, as far as the rest of the species of the fish, the river system is going to continue as a fishing for fun system.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that the minister is not aware that other species of fish, namely those accidentally caught by the nets, are being given to needy families in districts of the lakes and rivers. Is your department allowing the poor in this province to be eating contaminated fish?

MR. MATSALLA: — Mr. Speaker, no we're not allowing the sale of other species of fish for commercial purposes. Nevertheless, the warning is clear that in so far as the other species of fish are concerned, it's fishing for fun and, in so far as the whitefish are concerned, our research indicates that that fish is not of the level of the mercury content of the other fish.

MR. HAM: — A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid the minister misunderstands. The commercial fishermen are giving fish being caught accidentally to poor and needy families in the districts of those rivers and lakes. They are in fact eating mercury-contaminated fish. Will you see that this is stopped?

MR. MATSALLA: — Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is anything we can do if someone decides to give some fish to some family that would like to have fish for a meal. I do not

February 28, 1979

think there is any way we can control that.

MR. COLLVER: — In the light of the minister's suggestion that the Qu'Appelle lakes and river system is a fishing for fun area and yet some fish are being taken out of it for commercial use. Why then, does the minister's brochure on fishing grounds in the province of Saskatchewan stipulate for the North Saskatchewan River systems, and more specifically, the Nipawin area, that it is a fishing for fun area, while at the same time that same brochure does not stipulate that the Qu'Appelle River system in the Qu'Appelle Lakes is a fishing for fun area? Is there some attempt by the minister to differentiate between that North Saskatchewan River system, which he says is a fishing for fun area in his brochure, and that the Qu'Appelle River system which is only a fishing for fun area in this House?

HON. A. MATSALLA (Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources): — Mr. Speaker, the brochure that the hon. member is referring to indicates fish which is done by angling. It doesn't refer to fish that could be caught by net. It strictly refers to angling species.

MR. COLLVER: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, surely the minister jests in what he says. He presents to the people of Saskatchewan, and of the world, who want to fish in Saskatchewan waters, the fact that the Nipawin area on the North Saskatchewan River is a fishing for fun area and that the Qu'Appelle River system in the Qu'Appelle Lakes system is not a fishing for fun area — it is a proper fishing area. Therefore he is telling the anglers that they can fish in the Qu'Appelle system but they can only fish for fun in Nipawin, and at the same time you're telling this House that the Qu'Appelle system is a fish for fun area. Would the minister once again please say why have you made Nipawin and district and the Qu'Appelle River system different when in this House you say they are both fish for fun areas?

MR. MATSALLA: — Mr. Speaker, the level of contamination is higher in the Saskatchewan River system than it is in the Qu'Appelle River system, but waters in the Nipawin area that the hon. member is referring to are part of the Saskatchewan River system.

Changes to Education System

MR. G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Shillington).

As this is the International Year of the Child, and much mention was made of this in the throne speech, and also it was the theme of the celebration at the opening of the legislature, I would like the minister to explain why there is very little, if any, mention of serious changes to the education system mentioned in the throne speech.

HON. E.B. SHILLINGTON (Minister of Education): — We aren't, Mr. Speaker, planning any extensive amendments to The Education Act. We are still in the process of bringing in regulations to that act. I am meeting with teachers and trustees, and they haven't indicated to me that they see any pressing changes needed in The Education Act, and I think until we see some need for some changes we won't be making them simply for the sake of creating some activity in any given year.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I did mention little or no mention of education, and the only thing that I could find in the throne speech was

education along the co-op principles. Being a co-op member myself, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Education whether in these times when drugs, and drug abuse in the schools of Saskatchewan, when alcohol is running rampant in our schools, when sex and smoking are problems are there not more serious topics than co-op philosophy to be offered in the curriculums of the Saskatchewan schools?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: — Another Billy Graham.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I would recommend . . . listen to this . . . I would recommend to the hon. member that he read past annual reports. He will find in there that we have had such a program for a couple of years that's ongoing. I might also add, for the edification of the hon. member that that isn't the case in any province governed by a Conservative government. It is the only program that exists.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to draw to the attention of the minister that if he studies the curriculums of the Saskatchewan schools he will see that there are ample opportunities for teaching co-op principles. And, I cite the Grade 12 social studies course, I cite the economic . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I'll take the next question.

Reference to Horn Cattlemen's Fund

MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern): — A question for the Minister of Agriculture. On January 23, the Saskatchewan Horn Cattle Check-off Committee advised the minister of a \$95,407 allotment from the horn fund. Has the minister signed the cheques and processed them to where they are supposed to go?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, any of the recommendations that have been made to me by either the check-off committee or the horn cattle fund committee have been approved by me.

MR. KATZMAN: — Is the minister suggesting that he has not changed them in any way, shape or form as he attempted to do years ago on the cattle check-off system?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I have made no change.

MR. R. KATZMAN: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can we now have your assurances that from now on these committees can continue to have that response from the minister? When they make recommendations you will not take it upon yourself to be better than the people you appoint to these committees — appointed as representatives and you will continue to approve their recommendations without change?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, my job as minister is to insure that the act under which they operate is properly taken care of, and properly dealt with. If the recommendations are within the act, certainly I will not interfere.

MR. KATZMAN: — Supplementary. Then why have you interfered in the past, and why are you interfering in the cattle check-off as indicated by the Western Producer?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I think the interference I made in the past, if I made any

February 28, 1979

interference at all, was justified.

Tommy Douglas Building

MR. P. ROUSSEAU (Regina South): — Question to the Minister of Government Services. Mr. Minister, since you have now received the preliminary report from Dr. Atharle, and since that report indicates a very serious condition in the sub-basement of the T.C. Douglas Building, have you made a decision and are you now prepared to move these people out of that area into more suitable conditions and a more suitable area?

HON. G.T. SNYDER (Minister of Government Services): — In answer to the hon. member's question. I think you are aware of the fact that the Department of Government Services has made a number of changes and brought in an engineer prior to the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour's engaging an environmental engineer. He was in the city on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of last week conducting some exhaustive tests. Tests are continuing and it is my understanding that the environmental engineer will be returning after some of those tests have been made and some conclusions have been drawn. At this point in time office services employees have been removed from the quarters and are being utilized in other facilities that have been provided by the Department of Government Services and when the problem has been rectified the necessary decisions will be made at that time.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, I think I understood the answer. Have they all been moved out now?

MR. SNYDER: — I understand that there are no employees who are being housed there on an ongoing basis. I believe some photographic equipment that is mounted in the sub-basement is being used from time to time but the clerical staff and other staff have been removed and it is my understanding that there is no one permanently housed in those quarters.

I wonder if the member will bear in mind the fact that there are a number of other places and a number of other locales in Canada and elsewhere where entire shopping centres are located beneath the surface of the ground. Montreal for example, with an entire subway system operating on top. So it is not an insurmountable problem. There are some difficulties I believe with the ventilation system but every indication seems to point to a resolution of the problem, hopefully in the not too distant future.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I presume, Mr. Minister, that you have read this telex from Dr. Atharle. The thing that concerns me is the area where he suggests justifiable concern was expressed about the lack of natural lighting and the existence of the parkade above the printing rooms. Are you suggesting we are going to move the parkade out?

MR. SNYDER: — I think the hon. member for Regina South is putting a connotation on the telex which actually is not there. I think if he will read it carefully he will note that Dr. Atharle has drawn attention to some contributing factors in an indication of the problem. He is not suggesting that the problem is an insoluble one or that the premises should not be occupied in the future. I think you are putting a construction on the telex that just simply is not there. I have read it carefully myself.

Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation

MR. H. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation.

This council, I understand, was set up to provide government dollars to put into a fund as a matching fund for charitable organizations to use for overseas development purposes. Can the minister tell me if the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation is an independent body or are taxes controlled by this government?

HON. W.A. ROBBINS (Minister of Co-operation and Co-operative Development): — An independent body.

MR. SWAN: — Are you aware that the Red Cross now is trying to get matching funds from the Government of Saskatchewan by not going through the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation because of its involvement in political arenas?

MR. ROBBINS: — I am not aware of the Red Cross. I am aware of the withdrawal of one of the organizations, a UNICEF organization, because they had some arguments with the internal operation of SCIC in relation to their educational activities. That is one of the reasons why we felt that they should rectify the problems within their own organization before coming back to us for increased grants.

MR. SWAN: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Red Cross and UNICEF have both declared that they cannot work with the Saskatchewan Council for Co-operation and International Development because of the political activism of that council. Now if it is set up to be an independent body, then can I ask this government to take a look at what is going on within that group? If the group is not doing the proper job, then take steps to correct that job so that these groups — UNICEF, Red Cross and other responsible groups — can have co-operation.

MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, when the UNICEF organization withdrew from SCIC they came to us and asked for matching grants. We said no, those matching grants would be given only to SCIC and that they should stay within the organization or should re-apply in order that they could make alterations if they disagreed with the educational matters which were being dealt with within the organization. How can they be independent if we go and interfere with them? We are not going to interfere with them. We are simply saying that they must stay within the organization or re-apply. I hope they will re-apply and will go back into the organization and put their point of view.

MR. SWAN: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think that any group of this type who are set up as an independent body by government must have some guidelines to go by. If they have those guidelines and their guidelines are that they are not to be politically active, then can they not be expected to operate in a non-political arena? My question is, Mr. Speaker, I would like the government to see if they are following their guidelines and give us an answer in this House?

MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, I can check further on the matter but I am sure they are following the guidelines related to the fact that only a portion of the money that gathers from non-government organizations and matched by the government is spent for educational purposes. I think the member for Rosetown-Elrose would have to agree that within the organization itself they must settle their differences — if they have differences of opinion with respect to the educational factors which are carried out. Frankly, there are a number of organizations in there, church organizations and others,

February 28, 1979

and as far as I know UNICEF and the Lutheran Brethren were the only two who came to me and expressed concern about it. We said to them stay within the organization, fight for your point of view and win it.

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, the minister has just announced that the SCIC is independent of government. How do the members of the board of SCIC get acquainted?

MR. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, we just finished saying that SCIC was not a government organization; and since we are not here to give general information to members opposite that they can find out from reading the press, or at the Legislative Library for those who wish to pursue that route . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — And hot lines.

MR. BLAKENEY: — . . . And hot lines as he says. It's in no sense our function generally to provide information so far as I'm aware. It's not within the official knowledge of the Government of Saskatchewan how SCIC chooses its officers.

MR. COLLVER: — Supplementary question, the, Mr. Speaker. If the organization is definitely not appointed by the cabinet or by the Premier, as the Premier is certainly suggesting, then is the Premier suggesting to this Assembly that an organization that has no appointment or input from the provincial government is in fact, administering provincial government funds for the province of Saskatchewan?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Oh, come on!

MR. COLLVER: — That's true. If this organization is administering government funds, what guidelines has the government set down for that organization to administer the government funds?

MR. BLAKENEY: — The answer to the first one is, of course, yes. There are great numbers of organizations which are not appointed by the Government of Saskatchewan which in your language, administer government funds. Every school board in the province in your language, administers government funds and there are many others. With respect to the question asked by the hon. member when he was standing, I will say this: the organizations who are operating in this area, the Red Cross, the Lutheran World Relief, the Mennonite World Relief and others came together, and represented to us that they were all members of an organization — and others joined. They put forward guidelines, and I don't have them in my head, but they were going to devote a given percentage to education and the great bulk to specific overseas relief work and a given percentage to organizations as I recall it. And based upon that internal guideline, the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation operates.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. White (Regina Wascana) for an address in reply and the proposed amendment thereto moved

by Mr. Collver.

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, when I entered the debate yesterday, I took the opportunity to extend to you my congratulations on once again being selected as the Speaker of this legislature. I said then and I say again, that in my judgement, you discharged your duties with ability and impartiality in the past and I'm confident that you will similarly serve this new legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I also tendered my congratulations to the mover of the motion, the hon. member for Regina Wascana and the seconder of the motion, the hon. member for Shaunavon. I said that I was proud that our party could attract men of the calibre of the member for Wascana and the member for Shaunavon and that judging from their performance to date, I am confident that they will make an important contribution to their constituency, their province and their country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I went on to congratulate all of the new members of the House — there were 19 in all who are members of this House and who weren't members of the last House. That indicates a very high rate of turnover; it indicates that to be in the public service of the people of Saskatchewan in this legislature is a position which offers many rewards but does not offer security of tenure and that when judging whether or not a person is going to enter public life he must take that into account. Accordingly when we are judging how we ought to provide for prerequisites for our members that too ought to be taken into account.

I want to say a few words about some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Collver). He upbraided us for the way we conducted the election. He ascribed our success to the posthumous talents of Dr. Lenin and Mr. Machiavelli. I am surprised that he overlooked Adolph Hitler and Genghis Khan. They would be equally credible. I think he indicated that Conservatives are unwilling to admit that the public accepted our policies and rejected theirs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — And because they are unwilling to accept the fact that the public adopted our policies and rejected theirs, they are looking for scapegoats. They are trotting out stories to the effect that civil servants have been brow-beaten, that old people have been hoodwinked. But they name no names and they name no places; just blanket charges unsubstantiated by facts. Then, Mr. Speaker, he descended to a low which I would have thought we would not see in this legislature. He repeated a story alleging that a member of the cabinet was a homosexual. Then he called upon me to deny it. I say that it is not worthy of a denial. I am not going to indulge his prurient interest, his titillation with the sensational; nor am I going to allow myself to get into the position that the Leader of the Opposition can come into this House and make any charge and then call upon someone to deny it. I say to him and to every member opposite, if any one of you dares to go outside this House and name a name, I predict you will have full opportunity to prove what you allege . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

February 28, 1979

MR. BLAKENEY: — . . . you will have full opportunity in a court of law.

To the Leader of the Opposition I say this: you have raised this matter in the House without any evidence to support it; you have raised it in a speech in which you purported to be saying that we should be elevating the moral tone of Saskatchewan. You have raised it in this way without a shred or shadow of evidence. Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) does not have the courage, I would go even farther, doesn't have the decency, to go outside this House and name a name, then I say to him and I say to all members opposite I extend to you my sympathy because in that case the member for Nipawin and all his party has a problem and I predict it will come to be known as the PC problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I will leave that matter because I do not feel that it is worthy of further comment in this House.

The Leader of the Opposition started his remarks by saying that his party would stand up for what they believe in, would present an alternative program, but I listened and my overwhelming impression was that his approach was negative. I heard no attempt to put forward an alternative program, a positive program. Yes, of course, he repeated the platitudes that he stood for justice to all. I make that point, justice before the law for all, nobody to be victimized. Then it seemed to me that he selected out homosexuals for victimization, but I leave that aside. He repeated platitudes to which I am sure we would all ascribe but when it came to putting forward a program in a positive form I listened in vain.

I'll give an example. He gave a litany of the problems of this and every other society and he mentioned gambling. Did he give the policy of his party on gambling? There are some hard questions which I am going to invite him to answer in this House. Does he favor elimination of all lotteries? If so, I wish he would say so. People would then know. Does he favor restricted lotteries operated largely by non-profit organizations as is the Saskatchewan model, which is clearly the policy of this government? If he favors that I wish he would say so. I wish he would, in his words, stand up and be counted. Does he favor the widespread use of Las Vegas-type casinos that we find in Edmonton and Calgary? If that is his policy I wish he would stand up and be counted. Does he favor even more open gambling? Now that is a current issue. It is one on which the Conservative Party could state a policy, could tell the people of Saskatchewan where they stand. But I listened to the Leader of the Opposition and I don't know where his party stands because he is afraid to say, he is afraid to offer an alternative. He is afraid to put forward his proposal in a clear concise way. He is in fact afraid on this and many other issues to stand up and be counted.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now, Mr. Speaker, we believe our policies are right but we readily acknowledge we could be wrong. I say to the opposition that your alternative policies may have merit but we'll never know unless you present them. Government proposes legislation and proposes a budget and in this way outlines its policy. The opposition outlines its policy in major speeches by its leader and in the resolutions which he puts on the order paper giving it the opportunity to set out with clarity where it stands so that the people may know. In the resolutions, as I pointed out yesterday, Mr. Speaker, of the 16, I believe, resolutions put forward on the order paper by the opposition, no less than

15 start out by condemning and then do not name the policy which the Conservative Party advocates.

I pointed out that when we were in opposition we put forward positive resolutions dealing with an Independent Boundaries Commission, dealing with our stand on school taxes, dealing with issue after issue, items which found their way into our 1971 election program. I invite any hon. member to look at the resolutions on the order paper here and see what positive program the Conservative Party could put forward on the basis of those resolutions. In fact we have no word what the party stands for, no attempt to set out constructive alternatives. I say whatever the short-term merit of offering no policies to deal with hard issues but simply voicing platitudes, sooner or later the public will insist on knowing where the Conservative party stands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — And then, Mr. Speaker, what I call the PC problem will become clearer. The opposition will be tested and they will be found wanting.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal a little more fully with what I regard as the broad questions facing the people of Saskatchewan. I want to put the position of our government, first, in a somewhat philosophic context and then go on to more specific issues.

Briefly put, the role of the Government of Saskatchewan is to assist the people of our province to achieve the aspirations they set for themselves. Many of these aspirations are personal to each citizen and as such are not the direct concern of government but many are aspirations which we share in common, in which we must seek to fulfil through our organizations, through our churches, our unions, our governments. And government is one of the organizations by which people seek to fulfil their aspirations. Governments have a role, too, in setting some rules so that in seeking our own goals those of us who are strong do not trample those who are weak. All this I think is clear.

Now what goals do we seek for Saskatchewan? What is our framework for Saskatchewan? For my part, I would like to see our province be a place where rural values can be preserved, a place where opportunities for fellowship and personal enrichment abound, a place where there will be varied job opportunities for our young people, a place where Indian and Metis people who wish to pursue their traditional way of life may have an opportunity to do so and those Indian people and Metis people who wish to become part of the main stream may also follow that road without being discriminated against, a place where our resources will be developed for our benefit and where we, in this place and this generation, will recognize our position as stewards of those resources and our obligation to people of another place and a future generation, a place where our multicultural roots will be nourished so that over time we will create in this province and in this country a new people proud of our future without anyway being ashamed of our past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

February 28, 1979

MR. BLAKENEY: — A place where people feel comfortable with themselves and their own sense of identity and where we willingly take our part in sharing responsibility as citizens of the larger community of Canada and the world.

A place where material progress is our servant and tool and neither our goal nor our God. Now that would be a society which all of us would be proud of and we will not succeed in building that society — of course not — but we can make progress. I believe few places on earth are in a better position than Saskatchewan to build that kind of society, a society both tough and compassionate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — What are the things which make our province strong; make it a good place to live in? There is a great natural wealth with agricultural land, mineral resources, forests, wildlife — then there are our people — as sturdy and self-reliant a group of people as will be found anywhere on the face of the globe. There are our social institutions — our churches, our local governments, our schools, our universities, our hospitals, our co-ops, our community organizations — as rich and well-developed a matrix of self-help organizations as exists for any one million people anywhere in the world. There's our concern for our neighbor — not all that we would like it to be, certainly with large blind spots, but a concern which means that we have essentially a compassionate society.

Some years ago, a writer wrote that no place on earth are the good things of life more evenly distributed than they are in Saskatchewan. I'm sorry to say that isn't true, but it approaches truth and it's a high tribute to pay to any society.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I want to talk this afternoon about some of the things which make our province strong which make it so distinctive and so desirable — things which have caused Saskatchewan people to walk with a new pride and new self-reliance. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that because of past misfortunes and ignorance about our achievements and our potential, the understanding of our province among other Canadians has sometimes been woefully inadequate. This has rubbed off on Saskatchewan people. The result has been an undue modesty by our province and its people. This is fortunately passing. We do not wish to be jingoistic but undue modesty itself is no virtue. The day of self-consciousness about being rural, of uncritical admiration of the urban society in the big city — that's passing too. For centuries — from the glories of Athens and Rome to Samuel Johnson's cryptic comment, that he who is tired of London is tired of life. From those very days we have tended to admire everything of urban nature. Regarded urban life as the summum bonum of civilized man — is the highest pinnacle of civilization. No, we no longer accept that. We know we need not accept it, nor should we.

Modern communications have opened up most of the cultural offerings of the city to small town and rural dwellers. We still have much work to do to see that we get even more cultural offerings in the rural areas. But the western world is in a new era, an era

when a gracious, comfortable and satisfying way of life can be built on the strengths of rural and small town living with its personal contacts and opportunities for participation plus the great cultural offerings of the largest cities brought to us electronically and, in part, by travelling companies.

And this is a new era, a new era for North America and it is certainly a new era for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan people are responding with a new sense of pride and a new sense of self worth. When I go about Canada and elsewhere in the world, I am proud to say that I am from Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I have always been proud to say that, but I say to you that in the last few years there is a growing recognition by people all over North America at least, that I have every right to be proud.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — It's a good province and working together we can make it better. Let me turn to some more specific things, the things which are of greatest importance to our well-being. There are really, perhaps, for four or five interconnected, but in part separate. There is our agricultural industry. Will it continue to be prosperous and will it be organized in a way which will strengthen our way of life or weaken our way of life? Our mineral resources — can we develop them in a way which will benefit us and our children? Will the benefits be siphoned off for other parts of the world by multi-national resource companies? Our social institutions — can we continue to develop our social institutions and our schools and our health services and the like in a way which will reinforce the unique values of Saskatchewan life? Or will these institutions be swallowed up in the almost inexorable application of management techniques and the like, swallowed up in the monolithic North American culture? I am not suggesting, mind you, that all of that is bad or most of that is bad. I am suggesting that we will have to work to maintain our distinctiveness.

Fourthly, our Nation, federal-provincial relations. Can we in Canada develop relations between the federal government and the provincial governments which strengthen regional development and at the same time maintain a strong Canada? Or will we see growing tension, a growing tension which enervates the energies of Saskatchewan and of all Canadians and, therefore, makes us weaker?

Now these are vital questions for Saskatchewan people, important questions that I would like this legislature to address.

Let me turn now to the first one of those, agriculture. The goal of any government in Saskatchewan must be to increase farm production and see that the farmer gets a fair and stable income. When considering production our governments and our university do an outstanding job in seeing the farmers have the facts on which to base decisions, and farmers make the decisions and make good decisions.

This is an area where up to now we in Saskatchewan have had comparatively little concern. If we provided the farmers with information and if the university provided the farmers with information, we could pretty well depend on the farmers and the farm organizations to produce and they didn't need much from governments. In the past our problems haven't been that we couldn't produce wheat or produce other grains, or

February 28, 1979

produce oil seeds, or produce livestock. Our problems have been that we couldn't sell them or sell them at fair prices. Markets were, and by the way, still are absolutely key to our farmers. And I'll say a little more about that in a moment.

There is growing evidence that we may in fact be facing problems in production. Not because our present production will drop but rather that our markets will grow and we will want to seize the opportunity to fill all those markets if we can. The major developments are in grain. Let me give you a few figures to set the framework. I will use the new metric measure of tonnes because that's what everybody is using to discuss export amounts, even though I have some difficulty converting tonnes into bushels. My children have few of those difficulties but I confess I still have them.

Canada consumes for livestock and human consumption about 15 million tonnes of grain a year. For these purposes, I will lump grain and oilseeds together and call it all grain. Now some of this is transported by rail; a lot of it is transported by rail but a lot of it is consumed in the area where it is produced. Canada exports about 20 or 21 million tonnes of grain. All of this is transported by rail. So about two-thirds of the grain we produce is exported. Of the 20 million tonnes of grain that is exported by Canada, a little more than half of it comes from Saskatchewan.

Now the Canadian Wheat Board is telling us something very different than it has been saying recently. They are telling us over and over again that they can sell 30 million tonnes of grain or more by 1985. A 50 per cent increase in exports, about an extra 10 million tonnes a year and that's at least a 35 per cent increase in the grain handled by rail. Now, Mr. MacMurchy and Mr. Kaeding and I were in Winnipeg last month attending a meeting of officials concerned with grain handling. Premier Lyon was there. Premier Lougheed was there, a B.C. cabinet minister was there. Mr. Lang was there, Mr. Martin O'Connell, the federal Minister of Labour, the President of the CNR and the President of CP Rail and the Presidents of the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta Pools and the President of the United Grain Growers and the President of Cargill and a number of the other companies, the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board — almost all of the actors who are concerned with the marketing and transport of grain. We had long and tough sessions and the overwhelming conclusion of that group was that while nothing is certain, the Canadian Wheat Board predictions of exports of 30 million tonnes of grain by 1985 was sound enough and cautious enough that we should make our plans based on these figures. Now that's a major decision. It's a decision with important implications. For production, it will mean that special efforts may be necessary if we're to obtain and maintain a rate of production to allow exports of 30 million tonnes by 1985 and growing thereafter.

Now, I have confidence that farmers will respond if the market and the price is offered, but maybe unforeseen problems will arise when you start talking about increasing grain production by 40 per cent in five or six years. To help meet those problems, there will be a need for more emphasis on agricultural research and at this session we hope to set up a new basis for funding agricultural research by our province and I hope that the federal government will continue to support agricultural research. Unfortunately, their moves have suggested a withdrawal. I do believe that this may be the greatest opportunity that Canada has to earn foreign exchange dollars and to get out of some of the difficulties which Canada is continuing to face and going to face in the next several years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) will deal more fully with our research proposals. I say our farmers may need help in producing their crops but they will certainly need help in marketing that crop. History has shown that farmers will produce when the price is high enough — and this is important — when there is some evidence that it is going to be stable. Stability is very important if high levels of production are going to be reached and maintained. People can tell us that even in cattle. Right now, even with high prices, people are a little bit concerned about getting into cattle because they are not sure how long those prices are going to stay. You can see that tendency in farmers — a very, very prudent tendency in farmers.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that offering stability to grain producers is best done by the orderly marketing of grain.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — We fully support the Canadian Wheat Board and we do not believe that members opposite support the Canadian Wheat Board. We believe that it would be best if all members of this House rallied behind the Canadian Wheat Board and we will be asking members to do that in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: — What could we do if we did not want to rally?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asks what he can do if he does not want to rally behind the Canadian Wheat Board. He can do what members of his party are doing up and down Canada; undermining the Canadian Wheat Board and suggesting it would be a good idea to have another seller, a competitive seller of Canadian grain abroad, such as other Conservatives are doing. That is what he could do. He could suggest that Canada's best interests would be served when we are dealing with a monolithic buyer like the Chinese government to have two or three people bidding, cutting the price of Canadian grain. He could suggest that that is the way to do it. That is not our opinion though. That is the opinion of members opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — This leads me to touch upon two topics of vital interest to agriculture; rail line abandonment and the statutory crow rate. Decisions on these issues will decide whether our rural economy and rural way of life is strengthened or all but destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, the long battle between the people of Saskatchewan and the railways over rail line abandonment is reaching a climax. We have had the Snively report; we have had the report of the Hall Commission and I want to say that in my view the public awareness generated by the hearings of the Hall Commission and the public awareness generated by the Hall Commission report itself saved Saskatchewan from a transportation disaster.

The Hall Commission report presented the best blueprint for organizing and financing grain transportation in the West. The federal government has repudiated Hall but that report, be it repudiated or not, cannot be totally ignored because it is anchored in common sense and public support.

February 28, 1979

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the way that our government responded to this challenge. When we were elected to 1971 we anticipated that this problem would arise and we set about immediately to organize a group of people who would gather information and assist farmers to fight for their rail lines. We took the 'then' Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Harold Horner and said to Mr. Horner, make this your full-time job because the day is going to come before long when we will need every scrap of information we can get.

The minister, the Attorney General and then the current Minister of Municipal Affairs organized this work laterally under a transportation agency. We presented to the Hall Commission the best-documented material of anybody. We armed our rural people with the full facts on what grain moved on their rail line and what the consequences of abandonment would be and, I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that made an impact on Mr. Justice Hall.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — We helped many rural communities to rally and as a result many of their lines are included in the permanent network. Some of them have lines guaranteed, at least supposedly, to the year 2000. But there are still many communities that are not so fortunate. Some lines have been abandoned, properly so, and some lines are slated for abandonment when it should not happen.

Now the latest report is that of the Prairie Rail Action Committee (PRAC). The Hall Commission had recommended that a Prairie Rail Authority be set up to look at a number of lines over a number of years, so that their future could be decided on the best evidence available. Judge Hall said we are uncertain about this block of lines. We do not think the facts will be in right away. We think the lines should be continued and examined overtime. The federal government apparently thought that a quick decision was better than an informed decision. Now, mind you, there's merit in both. There's some merit in knowing where you stand, but there's some merit in having the facts before you jump. And so the federal government appointed the PRAC, and we had the report of that committee, complete with their calculations. I invite hon. members to look at that report, and particularly to look at the calculations which are in it. I say to you, virtually every calculation that's in that report is based upon the five year average of grain movements from 1973 to 1977, inclusive, and on this basis they are recommending the abandonment of over half the lines they looked at, around 1,500 miles of track. And we have the federal Minister of Transport apparently agreeing with their recommendation and the basis of their calculation.

I invite all hon. members, urban and rural alike because this concerns us all, to look at the action committee's calculations about cost to farmers, about returns to railways. As I say they're almost all based upon this five year average or in some cases they took the ten year average into account, and on this key assumption let me tell you what they did. They looked at the five year and ten year averages — usually worked with the five year average — and then made a key assumption; that that amount of grain which has moved in the last five years was going to move in the next five, and the next five. Note that assumption because it's key, and if it's wrong, the report is destroyed. Now the federal Minister of Transport apparently thinks it's right. This is strange, because I told the House about our meeting in Winnipeg with the Canadian Wheat Board when the Wheat Board was very firm that our exports were not going to be the five year average or

the ten year average, but 50 per cent above the five year average or 50 per cent above the 10 year average. The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board was there and he agreed with the Wheat Board officials. Now we have Transport Minister Lang saying one thing and we have Wheat Board Minister Lang saying another. Now one of them isn't leveling with us and one of them isn't being frank with the people of Saskatchewan, and I think it's the Minister of Transport. He knows, and the action committee knows, that the whole basis of that report is faulty. I call upon the Canadian Transport Commission (CTC) to establish at the outset of its hearings a projection of future grain exports based on the soundest evidence available. I say that that evidence will not support the action committee, indeed it cannot support the action committee unless the Wheat Board and the grain companies and the Wheat Board minister had been totally misleading us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the situation is almost farcical. We have four provincial governments, two federal cabinet ministers, two railways, all the major grain companies in complete agreement that we must beef-up our grain-handling system to meet huge new demands. Our old system handled 20 million tonnes and they say it is not enough. We need work on the main lines, we need work on the ports, we need special work on Prince Rupert and we need a crash program to buy hopper cars. Unprecedented steps need to be taken by the wheat board. That 30 million tonnes must be moved, that's what we were told and that's how they are acting. But what about branch lines? The action committee tells us we have got to abandon branch lines and that we must scrap hundreds of miles. The farmer says, why? The action committee says that we don't need them to carry that 20 million tonnes. The farmer says, just a minute, Mr. Lang. You said we needed main lines and we need ports to handle 30 million tonnes and you are taking my money to buy hopper cars because we are going to move this 30 million tonnes. Now, if we need main lines and ports and hopper cars to handle 30 million tonnes how come we don't need branch lines to handle 30 million tonnes? That's a good question and one that hasn't been answered and one that should be answered before any major rail line is abandoned.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now if we had followed the advice of the Hall Commission we wouldn't be in this position. We would have taken the time, as Judge Hall recommended, through the Prairie Rail Authority to find out what the facts were, but it is still not too late. If we can defer a moving on the major action committee recommendations until we have the facts on which sensible decisions can be made, then I predict that many lines recommended for abandonment by the action committee will be found to be desirable and, indeed, necessary to move the tonnage that we are talking about.

Certainly some of the proposals of the action committee are not reasonable — the proposal like scraping the line to Ceylon and Bengough and Willow Bunch, the proposal like taking the railway out of a town like Holdfast which already has to handle about 800,000 bushels a year and has every reason to believe that it will be much higher. I mention those two but there are many other semi-million bushel points where they are talking about taking the rail line out.

The position of our government is that in many instances the case for abandonment has not been made. We intend to help the communities who have a reasonable case to put

February 28, 1979

that case before the CTC (Canadian Transportation Commission). The battle to save the rail lines goes on and for our part we have not given up the fight.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now, Mr. Speaker, in all this the Conservative Party has been strangely silent and small wonder. Oh, I understand now that they are taking a position against the Prairie Rail Action Committee (PRAC) but I invite any hon. member on this side of the House or that to square that with what the hon. member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) has been telling us for years, that our whole grain-handling system is hopelessly obsolete, that only massive centralization and huge inland terminals would save it. That's what the member for Thunder Creek the seatmate of the Leader of the Opposition has been saying for years. He, and his colleagues certainly cannot object to the action committee's report unless they say it doesn't go far enough. Nor can farmers look with much comfort to the comments — at the least the quoted comments — of the federal member for Vegreville, Mr. Mazankowski. He is quoted as saying that the Conservatives will certainly fight for any line that the farmers, and the railway companies want to keep. Now that is a comfort. That'll be a comfort to the farmers to know that Mr. Mazankowski will stand foursquare with the railway companies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the battle lines are drawn, as they so often have been, and we of the NDP stand with the farmers and small towns of Saskatchewan and we stand proudly with them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I turn to a related subject, the crow rate on grain. The railways are once again mounting an assault on the Crow's Nest rates, pleading the case that they are losing money. Once again we are hearing allies of the members opposite leading to the attack on the crow rate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Members opposite indicate that we are being silly. I say to them, that members of Palliser Wheat Growers Association have consistently indicated that the statutory crow rate ought to be changed . . . inaudible interjection . . . I think better not comment on their disavowing their close allies.

Mr. Speaker, it is true the costs for the railways have risen and I think we must acknowledge that. And that raises the question of what ought to be done with the crow rate. Really, four positions are possible:

1. The crow rate could stay as it is, and the railway companies could continue to absorb the losses — so-called.
2. The crow rates could stay as they are for farmers, and a subsidy could be paid to the railway companies to make up their loss — and that is the Hall Commission's solution.
3. The statute by which the crow rate is set up could be changed, and it could be increased by statute;
4. Or, the statute covering the crow rate could be repealed and substituted with some other method of rate setting, say the CTC.

There is a vast difference for farmers depending on which of those routes you use. The first two leave things as they are for the farmers and therefore are desirable. The third one — changing the statutes to increase the crow rates — would increase rates, but would still leave farmers with a protection of a statute. The fourth, to remove the crow rates statute altogether would be to declare ‘open season’ on farmers.

Now, our government supports the Hall Commission; our government supports that solution. And one of the arguments against maintaining the crow rate for farmers is that it discourages the processing of some farm products in western Canada. Our government has met that argument by saying that we will pay a subsidy on certain processed farm products, we will pay the difference between railway costs, as determined by an independent body and a crow rate equivalent. We will pay that subsidy and we have called it our crow rate guarantee plan. Our election program contained that platform. We make this offer conditional upon the federal government accepting the crow rate recommendation in the Hall Commission report. That offer stands and we hope that it will be picked up by the federal government of whatever stripe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Let me make one final point before I leave crow. If there is any justification for increasing the crow rate to farmers and I say ‘if’, that action must be by way of changing the statutory rate and not removing it. There can be no justification whatever for removing from western farmers the protection of a statutory grain rate. Our government would oppose any such proposal with all the force it could muster. I will not repeat the reasons why; I have done it on many other occasions. I simply want to repeat that our government is totally and unalterably opposed to removing from our farmers the protection of a statutory grain rate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now I have spoken primarily of grain and oilseeds, although our government fully recognizes the major contribution made to our economy by livestock and poultry. We are pleased the long period of depressed prices for beef producers has finally ended and that for the time being returns are relatively good.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken of grain, rail transport and rail rates because these are the very lifeblood of Saskatchewan. If we lose these battles, then small town rural Saskatchewan is struck a devastating blow and all producers, be it of grain or oilseeds or livestock, will be the losers. And so will all Saskatchewan. That is why this battle must not be lost. That is why this battle will not be lost.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have said that our future depends upon agriculture, mineral resources, upon keeping and strengthening our social institutions and upon how Canada as a nation is governed. I want to say something about resources.

In each throne speech debate for several years I have spent some time outlining the policies of our government respecting non-renewable resources. The policy objective, I have said, is firm. In a word, our objective is to guarantee a fair return to the people of Saskatchewan, in dollars, in jobs, in future security. But I also said the means are

February 28, 1979

flexible. And I set forth the approach we were using resource by resource. I would like to report to you again on activity during the past year touching on the major resources. It has been an eventful year.

Let me begin with oil. I do so with some pride because year after year opposition spokesmen have told the public that our government had frightened the oil industry out of this province. The member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) has stuck with that story. He has always been faithful to that story and he has always been wrong, and he's never more wrong than in 1978.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I know the Minister of Mineral Resources will have an opportunity to report more fully during this session and now I'll confine myself to a few highlights.

In 1978, the number of oil and gas wells drilled was 998, just about double the number for 1977. In the sale of oil and natural gas, in the sale of permits and drilling rights this year, we set all time records. The bids were over \$22 million and that's double the 1977 figures and that was a record figure. In oil, the big news has been heavy oil. There has been a resurgence of interest in this great resource. Members will recall the feverish activity to acquire the shares of Husky Oil by Petro-Canada and Occidental Oil of California and Alberta Gas Trunk all in the race. And you will remember too, that Petro-Canada after losing that race, bought a major share of Pacific Pet. Now, this corporate activity was sparked by rising interest in heavy oil in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Last fall, a consortium of three companies, Petro-Canada, Saskoil and Gulf announced a long-range drilling program to cost \$100 million. Shortly thereafter, Husky, now effectively controlled by Alberta Gas Trunk, announced an even bigger exploration and drilling program. Now, the purpose of these programs is to firm up the supply of heavy oil, to establish that there is enough to supply our regular markets and also to provide the feedstock for an upgrading plant. An upgrading plant is one which will take that Lloydminster type crude which is heavy and sticky and by chemical means convert it into a light crude oil product more suited to the manufacture of gasoline and other light ends. An upgrading plant is not assured and in any case will not come in the immediate future. But there are good prospects that we will see an upgrading plant before too many years in the general Lloydminster area. Oil revenues have continued at a high and increasing level. Negotiations are proceeding with the industry to resolve all outstanding issues respecting past and future taxes. In short, action in the oil patch is at record high levels and record high levels of taxes are coming into the provincial government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Yes, we have record activity without resorting to the tax giveaway policies recommended by the opposition. They said we couldn't have both taxes and high levels of activity and they were wrong and they were wrong when they said it and 1978 proves them wrong once more and 1979 will prove them even more wrong if possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, turning to potash — our potash policy announced just over three years ago stated our intention to acquire half of the productive capacity of the province's potash industry. Since that time, purchases of capacity from Duval, Sylvite

at Rocanville, Alwinsal at Lanigan, Amax at Esterhazy and U.S. Borax and Swift at Allan have been completed.

Expansion of some mines has also proceeded with the result that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan is something over 40 per cent of the productive capacity of the Saskatchewan industry. It is the largest producer and exporter of potash in North America and is gradually expanding its productive capacity. PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) is having a good year. The Alwinsal mine at Lanigan, which was bought and refurbished before it was put back into production, is now producing. Sales are up and prospects are good. The entire industry is enjoying a good year. Markets for potash are expanding modestly and all mines, private and public, are operating at or near capacity.

There is every reason to be optimistic about our prospects. As I have indicated, expansions are under way at the Cory mine, the Rocanville mine, the Lanigan mine and other expansions are planned. This will mean more sales, more jobs and more money for the people of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — It will also mean more foreign currency earned for Canada. We are proud of what our potash industry is doing to help Canada's short-term problems. We are proud, too, that the industry is on the way to helping us with our long-term problems. In 1971, 15 per cent of the potash industry was Canadian owned. Today the figure is close to 60 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I say to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan that there can be no long-term solution to our economic problems in Canada, our balance of payments problems and our slumping dollar until Canadians own the lion's share of our basic resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — That is why I welcome Alberta Gas Trunk acquiring the Husky shares. That is why I welcome Petro-Canada acquiring Pacific Petroleums. That is why I welcome Eldorado Nuclear and SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) acquiring uranium interests. And that is why I welcome the Potash Corporation buying potash mines.

That is going to be a key issue for Canadians to face in the months ahead. They are going to have to ask themselves very, very, earnestly whether they are prepared to see this country continue to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water and continue to have the adverse economic consequences which are all about us — a weak dollar, massive outward movement of dividends and interest — or are we going to take our courage in our hands and see that the resources of this country are owned by Canadians and developed for Canadians. Exploration in Northern Saskatchewan was at record levels. Indeed, hard-rock mineral exploration in northern Saskatchewan was not only greater than in any other province or territory, but I believe about as much as in all the provinces and territories put together.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

February 28, 1979

MR. BLAKENEY: — A key event of the year was the receipt of the report prepared by the Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry headed by Mr. Justice Bayda. The report was an exhaustive inquiry into most aspects of developing a uranium mine at Cluff Lake in northwestern Saskatchewan. It dealt in particular with the possible effects on the physical environment, the safety of workers and others who would be associated with the project, the social and economic impact of such a project on northern Saskatchewan and on people in northern Saskatchewan, and more broadly with questions related to the use of uranium as a fuel to generate electric power throughout the world. More broadly, the questions dealt with were technical, political and moral.

Many have disagreed with one or other aspects of the report. Almost everyone has agreed that the report is an exceptionally able and thorough review of the issues and makes careful and thoughtful recommendations.

The government has accepted the general conclusions of the report and is taking action with the report as a guide.

In referring to uranium and hard-rock minerals 1978 was a banner year for hard-rock minerals. The Cluff Lake project is proceeding. Steps recommended for environmental protection and worker safety are under way. Steps to see that economic benefits come to northern people have been taken and more are under preparation.

Many countries have examined in great detail the problems associated with using uranium as a power plant fuel and have decided to use it — Britain, Sweden, Germany, Japan and many others. We do not think that based upon the evidence available, it would be appropriate for the Saskatchewan government to conclude that these countries have wrongly assessed their best interests, and for us, based upon that conclusion, to attempt to prohibit further development of Saskatchewan uranium resources.

Now there's widespread interest in Saskatchewan uranium. Further development is expected. The government believes that this development can proceed in a manner to benefit our province and our country if sufficient care is exercised. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members of the House, we will be proceeding and we will be exercising very great care.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now there have been important developments, too, with respect to natural gas, coal, water power, and the session will provide other opportunities to discuss these. It's been a good year for Saskatchewan resource development. It's been a good year because we ignored the advice of members opposite. The faint hearts and the doom-sayers of the opposition would have us turn over our resources to international resource companies. We heard once again yesterday the proposition that none of the resource should be developed by Crown corporations in Saskatchewan. We heard that very definitely, and I call that the Exxon syndrome.

Mother Exxon knows best. The opposition goes so far as to say that it is quite improper, for example, for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to have gas wells. I think that that is a point of view which would be found only in a few conservative recesses in North America. We have countries like Holland where the government is engaged in oil production and I like Italy and France and Britain; and indeed the British BP is here and

the French company is here and the Dutch company is most assuredly here . . . many, many companies. We are dealing with the Japanese companies which are effectively government-controlled; we are dealing with companies from all over the world where government is involved. But somehow members opposite feel that what the Japanese can do for their citizens we somehow cannot do and that we are not as bright as the Italians so we could not run an oil company.

I think this view is wrong. I think the view which says that we must leave the development of this resource to Exxon, and its like, is one which is counsel of defeat. It will mean that we will forever not be owners, not be in the management team, but we will forever be, as I said, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. That is Conservative policy; it is most assuredly not our policy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — When I hear members opposite say that somehow it is wrong for us even to have one Crown Corporation in the competitive field I am reminded that Canada is famous for its dinosaurs and they are not all dead.

We on this side reject that policy. We believe that if Canadians, yes and the people of Saskatchewan, stand firm we can develop our resources. We can get a large flow of royalties and we can own a large part of resources, these resources. We say it can be done; we say it is being done. We are doing it ourselves and all the people of Saskatchewan are the winners.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Oh I talked about agriculture and resources. I talked a bit about our institutions. I won't have time to deal with all of them. I do want, however, to say something about health.

It is not uncommon for politicians to reminisce over past campaigns. I guess I am no different. The other day I was speaking about the 1971 campaign, my first campaign as the Leader of the NDP. What is most startling are the differences.

Then I was talking about the Liberal depression, the exodus of young people from the province, the closed schools, the closed small hospitals, the drop in retail sales, the business failures and the idle construction industry.

All those things were real in 1971. Some of you may not remember just how real. Today all of that has changed; but there is one issue that has not changed since 1971. The opponent has changed names; a couple of times it has not even changed names, but not intentionally.

Back in 1971 I used to introduce this issue by quoting the book of Genesis — the seven years of pestilence with the seven lean and gaunt Liberal cows chewing and gnawing away at Saskatchewan's health care program. They doubled medicare premiums and they imposed deterrent fees and they failed to introduce the drug program they promised. And we said we'd change all that if we were elected and we did. And we had seven good years of restored and expanded health services in Saskatchewan — no more deterrent fees, no more premiums. Now we have a new pestilence in the horizon, ready to start chewing and gnawing at health care if it gets the chance. Not Liberal, that's true. But just as gaunt, just as lean, just as anxious to follow the lead of

February 28, 1979

Conservatives in Ontario and Conservatives in Manitoba and Conservatives in Alberta.

Now consider the evidence. I've got it right here, Mr. Speaker. Let me tell you what the Conservative government in Ontario is doing. They're feeling a little less rich these days and like Conservative governments everywhere, they're saving money at the expense of the sick. Let me draw your attention to some stories in the Toronto Globe and Mail and I won't go back to a couple of years ago, although I could find them then. I have here the issue of January 19, this year, which has a story beginning.

The Ontario ministry is calling for a reduction of more than 1,000 active-treatment beds in Metro Toronto while hospital officials maintain the area is already squeezed for bed space.

In the same issue I have another story with the headline 'Admission delays planned as hospitals face squeeze'. And the stories continue. On January 20, a front page headline says 'Budget will mean misery, hospital chiefs say'. And on January 23, there's another front page headline. 'Some hospitals turn away sick in ambulances.' And that's what's happening in the province where every family pays a premium of \$456 a year.

Closer to home, in the Conservative province of Alberta, I note with interest that the provincial government is trying to find ways to spend their oil revenue. But they haven't hit upon the clever idea of eliminating medicare premiums. They give money to the municipalities to retire municipal debt. That's good. They eliminate all gasoline tax, but they don't free their citizens from the burden of health premiums and deterrent fees because they are a Conservative government and they believe that health care is a privilege which should be paid for. The Conservatives in Saskatchewan hold the same view and the Conservatives in Saskatchewan have been acting on that view.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — And they believe that a universal health plan is a bad thing if it doesn't have premiums . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I will discuss with members opposite what their members are saying. The member for Thunder Creek, the seat mate of the Leader of the Opposition, has made it as clear as possible that he believes in deterrent fees. In March, 1977, and I quote this from the Hansard:

'I think that it is fair to say that the universal concept of medicare where there are no user charges involved for using the system has failed. I believe it to be a common denominator in any program that a user must pay more for using the system than a non-user.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — That's once from the member for Thunder Creek . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I again repeat that the users of our system must begin to pay more than the non-users up to a maximum limit. Then in April of 1977 — Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that your system of universal medicare has failed and is continuing to fail — and you go on to say — somewhere along the line those who use the system are going to have to pay more than those who do not use the system. Now these are quotes from him. There couldn't be a clearer call for user fees, deterrent fees, a call from the seat mate of the Leader of the Opposition. Now the Leader of the Opposition says that when we say the Collver Conservatives call for deterrent fees, he says we are not telling the truth. He says we're wrong. Well I say the member for Thunder Creek has most certainly

called for user fees, most certainly called for deterrent fees. The member for Thunder Creek is most certainly a Conservative. The only place we could be wrong is that maybe he isn't a Collver Conservative.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition may feel that medicare has failed but we do not believe this. It is not perfect but it's a better way to deliver medical services than the private enterprise method we see in the United States. Mr. Speaker, that's recognized even in the United States. A few months ago, I was down in Boston attending a meeting of the governors of the fifty United States representing the Canadian Premiers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — The chief subject of discussion was whether or not United States should have a medicare plan patterned on that in Canada. Leading the argument for it was Senator Edward Kennedy who gave all the traditional arguments, the arguments which we all know so well. I was very, very pleased to stand up and outline for them what had been done in Saskatchewan, what had been done in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — And the fact, that in all but a few circles in Canada, medicare was regarded as a success and as a great addition to the entire social climate of Canada. I was proud to say that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Nor, Mr. Speaker, do we believe that sick should pay more than the well as the member for Thunder Creek most assuredly does. Look at the figures. Look at the reports from the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan particularly, or the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Plan. See who are the large users of hospital and medical care and you will see that they are senior citizens and families with sick children. These are what the statistics show. These are the users whom the Conservative member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) is saying should pay and pay more. There is no way that he can move from that. We do not agree.

Conservatives do not believe in medicare in spite of what they say because their record speaks for itself. We have built one of the best health systems in the world here in Saskatchewan and they have fought it every inch of the way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Away back when they opposed the hospital plan and the medicare plan and I well remember their opposition to the medicare plan.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Not us.

MR. BLAKENEY: — They say, not us, but I look up and down the corridors here and I see going into your caucus office — I don't know what he is doing there but Dr. Barootes is going in there and coming out there — and if you are saying that he is among the ones

February 28, 1979

who did not oppose the medicare plan then I think your facts are a good deal different from mine. He is very active in the Conservative party, not as an elected member, but I think you and I well know what his function is in the Conservative Party.

When more recently, Mr. Speaker, we brought in Aids to Independent Living and the Prescription Drug Plan and the children's dental plan, none of which exists in Ontario or Alberta, the Conservatives called them frills — not some distant Conservative in the past, but some of the Conservatives sitting in this House, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — And they went on to say these are, quote, 'not meeting the real needs of Saskatchewan residents.' They said they would do away with the children's dental plan and the drug plan. Conservatives may believe that the children's dental plan is a frill. I say that plan has done more for the dental health of rural children than anything else in the history of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Conservatives may believe that providing wheelchairs to handicapped people free of direct charge is a frill. The New Democrats disagree. I believe that if the Conservatives ever had the power to do so they would gradually chip away at those plans, piece by piece they would begin to dismantle the health care plan which has been so carefully crafted in Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, whether or not that is their intention, I predict they will not have the opportunity to act on it for many years to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — We propose to go on improving our health care plan. We are going, in the next four years, to work to make a good system even better. We made proposals during the election campaign and we propose to act on them. We promised a health research fund. This will provide a continuing and stable source of support for health research conducted in Saskatchewan, by Saskatchewan researchers. We believe that this fund will encourage the development of even more active health research in our province.

We promised to provide dentures to senior citizens at reduced costs. Work is proceeding on that proposal. We promised to extend children's dental care to age 18 and in the fall of this year the plan will be extended to include children age 13. It will be extended step by step.

I could mention other areas. We intend, for example, to maintain and improve cancer treatment services in Saskatchewan. We proposed an entirely new structure, a cancer foundation, to undertake that task. We intend to continue our regeneration plans for the General and Pasqua Hospitals in Regina, and the renovations at the University Hospital in Saskatoon. Improvements of these hospitals will improve the level of medical services for the whole province.

Now these are immediate plans. Other steps will be taken in the future as we become

more aware of the best way to help our citizens protect their precious health. Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our health service in Saskatchewan, but we're not complacent. We promised improvements during the election and we'll take time over the next four years to make those improvements. We look beyond that to see if we can't do even better, and we will do this even though members opposite will, I predict, say pull back, it's too dangerous, it's too expensive, let the sick pay for themselves. If we can rely upon past history to tell us what's going to happen in the future, that will be their reaction. Mr. Speaker, we will look not back but forward. We are determined to keep Saskatchewan in the very forefront of health care in all North America.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about the national picture. In my speech last year I outlined the grave difficulties faced by this country as a result of the election of the Party Quebecois government. I tried to outline how we perceived the problems in Canada at that time. I also said that all people in Canada would have to approach discussions about Canada's future in a spirit of compromise, a spirit of understanding.

This should not mean that legitimate interests should not be pursued. It shouldn't mean that legitimate grievances shouldn't be redressed, far from it. It meant that in order to achieve a redress of our grievances, we might well have to acknowledge that other areas had grievances as well. Understanding, tolerance, compromise — these are the attributes necessary for a just nation and these are the attributes necessary if we are to rebuild Canada into a stronger nation. These are the concepts that need to dominate our leaders if we're to heal the country. These are the principles which must guide both the head and the heart as we seek to build a better Canada.

Of course, as westerners, we enter these negotiations with a sense of grievance, with a sense of feeling that over decades of time we have not been fairly dealt with in this confederation and, in that sense, we go in hardheaded and we go in with the head. We also have to acknowledge that prairie people, even in the depths of the depression, had a very strong feeling of patriotism for their country. Even under the most crushing blows they have never turned their back on Canada, and they want their governments, federal and provincial, to work to build a stronger Canada. They have Canada in their hearts it is up to us to see that we, too, have Canada in our hearts. And so our approach to the problems of today must reflect the work and dedication of our settlers from yesterday. It must reflect their iron will and at the same time their love for their new nation.

I believe we are trying to do that in Saskatchewan. We have said that there need to be changes in the constitution, said that we are willing to make changes. Indeed, in some cases we are insisting on changes, and I see some movement. The last year has been an eventful year.

In June of last year, the federal government introduced Bill C-60, their blueprint for constitutional change. The 10 premiers met in Regina in August and dealt with Bill C-60. I think that we tried to deal fairly with the proposals put forward in Bill C-60.

February 28, 1979

The federal government made a large number of proposals but two of them particularly raised the objections of provinces. The federal government took the position that they could change the constitution of Canada without consulting the provinces on a wide range of issues dealing only with the federal government, which everybody agrees to. But they said that this included the position of the monarchy, the supreme court and the Senate. We said that whatever the letter of the law may be, the federal government should not try to change the position of the monarchy, or the Senate, or the supreme court without provincial support because they go to the very basis of the federal system and the federal system must involve not only the provinces, not only the federal government, but the provinces as well.

The federal government also said that they wished to arrive at a formula to allow Canadians to amend the constitution and after that to bring it home, to repatriate the constitution, patriate it as is sometimes said. All the provinces agreed that we should patriate the constitution and agree on a formula to amend it if we could, but all insisted that this must be part of a full discussion at which were considered questions of the division of powers between the federal government and the provincial government. The Premiers set out their views, in detail, following the Regina Conference. The Prime Minister responded by calling a constitutional conference in October.

Before that conference was held two important things happened in Saskatchewan. First, we had a provincial election and as members opposite will know we were returned to office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Second, the supreme court brought down a decision in the Central Canada potash case, brought it down during the campaign. The two things became linked and the election campaign was in part fought upon constitutional issues. For our part we knew where we stood, for our part we knew that we stood with the people of Saskatchewan on the CIGOL (Canadian Industrial Gas and Oil Ltd.) decision and we propose to fight the constitutional proposals implicit in that decision. That's where we stand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I regret to say that the opposition parties did not know where they stood. They wished to beat up the New Democratic Party but they did not wish to state anything which might support Saskatchewan if it in fact would also support the NDP. Their whole position was one of refusing to take a position and if anyone can find the position of the Conservative Party on the CIGOL case during the last election campaign I would like them to refer me to the public statement or the clippings.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we could have used some support from all parties in Saskatchewan on that issue at that moment. We believe and still believe that over the last several years the federal government has launched a campaign to see if they can wrest at least partial control over resources from the provinces . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member for Nipawin and others are unaware of the basis for, let us say, the CIGOL decision. They are unaware of the fact that the underlying basis of the CIGOL decision dealt with indirect taxes, unaware of the fact that in Alberta that is not an issue, unaware of the fact that in Alberta almost all the oil rights are owned by the Crown.

Accordingly they may levy royalties which are not open to attack. They are unaware of the fact that in this province we have had to raise taxes rather than royalties and are, therefore, on a different constitutional basis. And, therefore, they are totally unaware of the fact that comparisons between the legal position in Alberta and the legal position in Saskatchewan have no basis in fact or law.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — The member for Nipawin very clearly does not like lawyers but he ought to get a little advice from some of them now and then. Mr. Speaker, the position we took on CIGOL and in the Central Canada Potash case while it did not earn the support of the members opposite earned us the support of virtually every provincial government in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — And I go further, Mr. Speaker, in saying that when we had our constitutional conference in October and again in February, we made very significant progress in convincing not only other provincial governments but the federal government of the justice of our cause, the justice of our cause on behalf of Saskatchewan because the members opposite would not support it.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what happened. Following the meeting in October we formed a committee of ministers on the constitution, and there were a series of meetings. I am very pleased to say that the provincial chairman of that committee was the Attorney General of Saskatchewan. There were two chairmen, a federal chairman and a provincial chairman. I am pleased to say that representing all of the provincial ministers was the Attorney General of Saskatchewan. I am pleased to say that he did an outstanding job on behalf of Saskatchewan and Canada and all the people in Saskatchewan should be grateful for his work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, what I say about the Attorney General is not only my word. They may, if they wish, consult with other provinces, consult with other people who are familiar with the work done by that committee and they will say that the contribution made by the Attorney General of Saskatchewan was outstanding.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — The results, so far as Saskatchewan was concerned, were quite outstanding, were quite outstanding because the problems dealing with resource management may be put under three headings: firstly, whether or not provincial powers are going to be restricted even where the federal government does not assert a power. That is, are we to be limited by the constitution or by transgressing on specific federal legislation. That's an important question. Right now we are limited by the constitution. Even where the federal government may wish to have us exercise jurisdiction in the resource area, it still cannot be done. The federal government conceded and all the other provinces conceded that that situation was undesirable. That was a major step forward.

The second question dealt with indirect taxes and that's of particular benefit to Saskatchewan because the CIGOL case held that our particular system of taxes (the

February 28, 1979

majority judgment held there) involved indirect taxes. All the provinces and the federal government conceded that that type of tax should be able to be levied by a provincial government. We were pleased with that.

The third thing dealt with the power of the federal government to intervene in this area based upon its power to regulate trade and commerce. The conclusion arrived at was less clear here. Since this was of paramount importance to the province of Alberta and since they had little interest in the indirect tax end of it, it's understandable that their reaction would be somewhat different than ours. But all in all, anyone looking at that record of performance by the Attorney General, and what was achieved at those conferences cannot help but conclude that if these changes become part of the Canadian constitution, then Saskatchewan will have made a long step forward in regulating its resources for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, other things happened. Generally, it would be fair to say that three things happened at the conferences which may turn out to be important. The first thing perhaps was that there was a major reshaping of the federal attitude, a major reshaping of the federal attitude. As I have tried to say they have up to recently been preoccupied, some might even say obsessed. I will say preoccupied, with the problem between Quebec and the rest of Canada. They have not been willing to turn their mind to other regional grievances; that has changed.

The second important thing that happened was that the present government of Quebec participated at all levels in the constitutional review. I won't speculate on why they participated but they were there. And if, as I think will happen, separation is rejected by the people of Quebec and we start the process of rebuilding the constitution again, we will be a long step forward because the Government of Quebec has participated in each of these steps. It won't be starting from scratch, it will be starting from a different position.

The third important thing which emerged, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that all parties seemed to be committed to an ongoing process. From time to time the Government of Quebec or some others give some indication that they are going to turn their backs on this whole process, but they don't. They are there and we are discussing the minutiae of changes. At the last conference we were in effect discussing the wording of proposed constitutional changes. This is a very long step forward from where we were short months ago. I think we can say that significant progress has been made.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that there are some forces militating against future progress, not the least of which is the stance of the Government of Quebec . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, now that the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) is here I want to mention the position of the Conservative Party on this issue. I want to say to him what I have said to the people of Canada. I believe that the Government of Saskatchewan and the government of other provinces should be saying to the province of Quebec, we do not believe that if you separate from Canada we can negotiate sovereignty association.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I say that in all earnestness because I do not think at this point that I could recommend to this legislature that we enter an arrangement for sovereignty

association and I think that following the trauma which would come about if there was separation, I don't believe it would matter if I did recommend it. I think people wouldn't have it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — As I have said to people in Quebec, consider our position. We in the West believe that over the decades, we have paid a lot to be in confederation. We have paid higher tariffs. We have been part of this economic system which forced us to sell cheap and buy dear. We are saying this; we are saying that we got certain benefits from that federal system. What ever we got was a protection because our economy is a boom and bust economy and we got the protection of a federal government in times of stress. We got a commitment as we thought from the federal government to provide us with a transportation system which will allow us from our land-locked position to take our products to market and we got assistance in selling our products abroad — the wheat, the potash, the rest. That's our quid pro quo and we gave the money we paid in higher tariffs.

I said to the people of Quebec, consider that — you come along here and we say we pay the tariffs because we need a strong federal government to protect us in times of drought, to give us transportation, to help us sell our products abroad and you say, our idea is for you to keep paying those tariffs, for you to keep buying things from Quebec at high tariffs but we will not put in a dime to the federal government which is going to offer you your protection. That's their proposal — that we continue to pay the benefits which we are conferring on Quebec and Ontario by way of tariffs but that the Quebec people not contribute anything to the central government which is our quid pro quo.

I said to them, no sale. That is clearly not possible to sell to the people of Saskatchewan and I have further said that we must not underestimate the emotional content of what will happen if you separate I fear that Canadians will say go, go with our qualified blessing but don't come back here and bargain just for now. I think we would have all we could do to restrain Canadians from wishing to resort to other means to preserve this nation. We shouldn't underestimate at all the power that is in people's minds, their devotion to a united Canada. So I said this and I believe that to be true and I believe people shouldn't be talking about negotiating sovereignty association.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I believe they shouldn't be talking about it, first, because it isn't in the best interest of the West and secondly, because they couldn't deliver anyway. When I see the Conservative leader talking about sovereignty association and when I see Mr. David Crombie, the member for Rosedale, talking about sovereignty association, I say that is unwise. I say they are doing Canada a disservice. I say this: those who wish to support Mr. Lalonde's position can vote for Mr. Trudeau's candidates and those who wish to support Mr. Crombie's position can vote for Mr. Clark's candidates and those who support the position I am putting forward can vote for the New Democratic Party candidates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the whole world is challenged with social change. Other countries are having great internal difficulties. Canada is fortunate indeed, that we hold dear to the position of peaceful political change. Of all goals that a people can

February 28, 1979

pursue, the goal of peaceful and just social change is one that will continue to be the mark of a mature people, a people that truly care for each other. I pledge for my part, Mr. Speaker, that this government will continue to bend its every effort to ensure that this tradition of Canada and of Saskatchewan in particular, will be foremost in our minds as we search for lasting constitutional change in Canada. And I think we can find that change. I think it's beginning to gel. We will not know until the Quebec situation is resolved, but I believe that it is beginning to gel — a new proposal for a new Canada where we will have to respond to many of the deeply felt aspirations of the people of Quebec. But I think we can do that within a united Canada. I can see it beginning to gel and I say to you what I'm sure all members of this House would agree to, that the people of Saskatchewan would want their government of whatever stripe to pursue that objective. I, as long as I occupy this office, will certainly pursue it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the record of our party in this province is a proud record. We took one of the poorest and most debt-ridden provinces in Canada and in the years of the '40s and '50s, created a system of social services without parallel in North America. We wiped out the provincial debt, made the province a model of fiscal responsibility.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Wiped out the provincial debt?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Yes, wiped out the provincial net debt. These people will have you believe that the Saskatchewan Power Corporation is a millstone around the necks of the taxpayers.

Would that we had more millstones, would that other governments had had the vision to set up organizations like the power corporation, would that we were in that happy position . . . (interjections, inaudible) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I wonder if the members can restore the dignity and decorum of this Chamber, to which we are usually accustomed.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I note that the hon. member is not familiar with distinctions between net debt and gross debt and since it will undoubtedly be a very, very long instructional session I will defer it until another time . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

If I may, Mr. Speaker, just allow them to vent their enthusiasm for a moment we will carry on . . . (interjections). Mr. Speaker, whatever we may have done in the past, it obviously has bothered members opposite so they do not like to have it repeated. They do not like to hear about what has been done in this province; they do not like to recall what it was like when the last Conservative government was here . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — I wondered when you were going to get those long shots in. That was your first campaign wasn't it?

MR. BLAKENEY: — I know that times are significantly different but even with times being significantly different I invite you to look at the stewardship of those days, compare it with the stewardship of these days, and make your judgment.

AN HON. MEMBER: — The people of Saskatchewan have done that.

MR. BLAKENEY: — In the next four years we propose to do a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan: we will reduce property taxes for senior citizens; we will give a rebate to renters; we will designate even more revenue for municipalities, with no strings attached; we will improve our health care system by extending children's dental care to 18; go into a health research and many of these things.

We propose, in the next four years I hope, to look even farther ahead. We can see some problems for this province, and I want to dwell just a moment as these are not particularly partisan . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — We have run out of money. Is that one of those problems?

MR. BLAKENEY: — I would like to talk about a couple of things which members opposite may be interested in or may not be interested in but there may well be one or two of the newer ones who would be interested.

I wonder if I could talk for a minute about the plight of Indian and Metis people of this province. We are working diligently to resolve unfulfilled land entitlements for Indian treaties. We have established some stringent employment regulations for new developments in northern Saskatchewan, regulations which guarantee jobs for northern people. But this government or any government can only do a limited amount.

We need to hear from Metis people and from Indian people just how they want to participate in Saskatchewan society. Do they want a separate development with minimum links between their society and ours? Do they want to pursue rapid assimilation? Now that question hasn't been resolved and I tell you whatever your party that that issue is going to have to be in part resolved. The question is being resolved in part by default but it is a real question for this province. It is an issue which will require tough decisions, primarily by Indian people and Metis people themselves and will require some thoughtful and sympathetic listening by the rest of us — because I am sure I don't know the answers and I suspect members opposite don't either. We must do everything we can to encourage this process.

I was happy to see the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians have a policy on economic development because that is going to be necessary if we are going to address those problems. It's a dilemma for all of us who are not of native ancestry and it is one which we have not resolved.

This leads me to some larger issues. We need as a society to see if we can challenge young people. In the 1960s young people were . . . by the standards of us who were older then (these words will not apply to some of you) . . . we felt them to be high spirited and indeed unruly. Nonetheless, they had an idealism which is not clearly evident in young people today. I don't know whether it is just a change of mood or whether they have developed a cynical approach to society. I hope it is simply a change in style. If in fact it is that they have lost confidence in the ability to change, if they have lost confidence in the capacity of ideals to motivate people, then we are in a poorer position than we were in those days with all their difficulties.

I think we can do some things, as older people, to stimulate young people to be interested in their province and to be still idealistic about what they would like their province to be. They must be encouraged by innovative methods to try new things. We

February 28, 1979

can provide opportunities outside our strict governmental capacity. We will have to encourage them to cherish the ideals which will be necessary to make this a truly vibrant society.

I don't know whether government people can do everything or much in this regard. Much of the task will have to be done by people whose appeals are to your imagination and idealism. People who are artists or musicians or explorers or developers — they don't all have to be artists — they can be promoters in the best sense of the word because these people all have a vision of the future. Some of us develop tunnel vision here in this legislature. But our task here in this legislature is to give them a chance to be heard, to live and to work and to express their vision here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is happening in our province. I believe we are beginning to build a cultural life here in Saskatchewan which is something more than reruns of network television shows. A culture which is allowing us to participate in the riches of North America and yet to develop some distinctive cultural aspects of our own province. I think it can be done and I think it is being done slowly. Not in any great measure, but in some measure and to the extent that we make some progress, it's desirable.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Not a second CBC I hope.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, if we are to do that, it will require confidence in ourselves and in our young people and will require a positive approach to our future and our potential. I ask hon. members to ask what has been offered by members opposite in this debate? Because the opposition's approach as illustrated so vividly by the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, is almost wholly negative and I would suggest, petty. Because it offers only criticism and no alternative policies, I must reject that approach. Conversely Mr. Speaker, for eight years our government has put forward positive programs and acted on them. Every citizen in Saskatchewan has benefited from them, benefited materially and benefited in a new pride in this province that we hold so dear.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can continue along that road. I think if we reject the negativism of members opposite we can move on and as we move on we can stimulate the imagination of young people to build this into the province we would all like it to be. Because I believe that Mr. Speaker, because I believe the opposition approach is negative and our approach is positive, because I believe that much needs to be done in this province — this province of great potential — because I believe that Mr. Speaker, I reject the opposition approach, I adopt ours and accordingly, I will oppose the amendment and support the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. E.C. WHELAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, on rising to speak in this debate on the Speech from the Throne, let me first congratulate the mover, the hon. member for Regina Wascana (Mr. White) and the seconder, the hon. member for Shaunavon (Mr. Lingenfelter).

The hon. member for Wascana, in his capacity as a professor of history at Campion College, University of Regina, taught two members of my family. Recommended reading for every Saskatchewan citizen is Power for a Province: A History of Saskatchewan Power. The book, based on his doctoral thesis, was written by the hon.

member for Regina Wascana, a Saskatchewan railroader who educated himself step by step. He wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth, like the deputy leader of the Opposition. I predict that he will make a valuable contribution to the government of this province and that he will be elected for a long long time.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Shaunavon is a young energetic person who worked hard to get elected and I predict too, that he will be an effective member and he'll always be a New Democrat; he won't be jumping all over the place like the hon. member for Qu'Appelle.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — I have great difficulty remembering which party you fellows belong to; it's a really difficult thing.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What about your Premier, what did he used to be?

MR. WHELAN: — I'm talking about the way that you got elected. Just plain opportunistic. There should be an opportunist party and you fellows should be the leaders of it. That's where you belong. On Monday last, the hon. member for . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Ed, if you ever saw the light, you'd be a member of the Progressive Conservative party.

MR. WHELAN: — Never! I saw the light when I was six years old. My father was a Tory. I lived during the '30s. I saw the light. On Monday last, the hon. member for Nipawin attempted to re-fight the election in the same manner in which he lost it. When the Premier spoke following the hon. Leader of the Opposition's dissertation, it must have occurred even to those members on the other side of the House, that the people of this province made the right decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Through most of his speech, the Leader of the Opposition tried to prove to us . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think he does a far better job speaking from his seat but I wish he wouldn't interfere with what I'm trying to say.

Mr. Speaker, for the most of the hon. Leader of the Opposition's speech, he tried to prove that in the last election we had used dirty tactics, to quote him. And then near the end, in a shameful quotation of someone on some radio program, he attempted to discredit in a most gross fashion, every member of the cabinet. Mr. Speaker, this is the member who was talking about dirty tactics! He lectured us about dirty tactics, Mr. Speaker. There is a story that Conservatives of this province tell about the Leader of the Opposition. Let me tell the story about the Leader of the Opposition that the Conservatives are telling, not the new Conservatives that have been around for a long time. The story is that the hon. member for Nipawin handed a fellow Conservative a pin. Another Conservative took one look and said, 'Run for your life he's got the hand grenade in his mouth.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — During the campaign and after, everyone was blamed by the Leader of

February 28, 1979

the Opposition. He was blaming them all for losing the election, everyone except himself. He said the press was responsible, the New Democrats had dirty tactics, the Conservatives in Manitoba undid everything he was trying to do. He talked about what Conservatives were doing to him in other parts of Canada but the truth is and the facts substantiate it, the hon. member himself had a great deal to do with losing the election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Let's look at the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, do I have the floor?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I would ask the members to try to restrain themselves from making comments when other members are speaking. I don't do this for any other reason except it's in the rules. Now if the members don't like the rules well then there is a method of changing the rules but the rules are quite clear. Rule 18:

Mr. Speaker, shall preserve order and decorum and shall decide questions of order.

Sub. 3:

When a member is speaking no member shall interrupt him except to raise a point of order nor pass between him and the Chair.

Now I think I have been fairly lenient in interpreting that rule and have allowed the odd comment to cross the floor but I think after we reach a certain point it becomes disruptive of the business of the House. I think we should try to adhere to the rules. I ask all new members to observe that rule. I know there are some members who have some problems with it but if they could reassess their position in the light of the fact that we have new members here who I am sure want to be instructed properly in the rules. The best way to instruct members properly in the rules is by example. I think the senior members should take this under advice at this time.

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, I think you are doing an excellent job under very difficult circumstances.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, let's look at the performance of the hon. member for Nipawin. When he first came into this House with a sanctimonious air, he announced to all the world that his members would not chew gum, they would not heckle, they wouldn't pound their desks, they wouldn't read their newspapers. Mr. Speaker, this was the way he began his performance.

In this legislature, after the election, let's look at the contrast, Mr. Speaker. He used such foul and abusive language to my colleague, the hon. member for Saskatoon Nutana, on the front steps of the legislature that the hon. member, because of honest anger had to give the member for Nipawin a cuffing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — I tell you that it was not dirty tactics. There was nothing devious about the hon. member for Nutana, nothing unfair. The well-mannered member for Nutana

gave the hon. member for Nipawin a cuffing, Mr. Speaker, I contend that he deserved it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — I've known the hon. member for Nutana as a close friend, for 33 years, and I can tell this House without hesitation that he does not become angry easily. He does not exhibit righteous wrath unless he's pushed a long, long way.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Regina North West is one of the largest in the province. It has 13,000 voters. Young people from all over Canada live in this area because it's the newest part of this growing city. Last October some residents were so new that in the election, some of the polls in the new areas had as many as 20 people, 20 voters, who were not yet qualified to vote in the election because they hadn't lived in this province six months.

Mr. Speaker, many of the people in the constituency in Regina Northwest work for the IPSCO steel plant. The Conservatives ran up and down talking against government ownership. Most of the people in the constituency knew that the provincial government under Tommy Douglas began the steel plant, now over 60 per cent owned by government. Outspokenly opposed to public ownership, dedicated to free enterprise, they were trying to get elected and they were running up and down saying to steel workers public ownership of IPSCO by three governments is a bad idea. They were saying that if IPSCO is going to produce the pipe for the Alaska Pipeline it's a bad idea because it's publicly owned. The hon. member says we used rough tactics, dirty tactics. Mr. Speaker, we just quoted the history of IPSCO. We told the truth, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — The result was that we got 55 per cent of the vote and they got a miserable 31 per cent of the vote. We didn't use dirty tactics, we told the truth. The constituency that I'm proud to represent not only gave the Conservatives a pasting on election day, but the young people, the older people, working people, steelworkers, homemakers, teachers, students, business people, all turned out to communicate their convictions and put to flight the remnants of a badly led Conservative Party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — It was a party that tried to get elected without a policy, without a program, and with a worn-out slogan, something about time for a change — I can't remember now; they had a lot of these sloppy old worn-out reactionary slogans.

Why did the people support the New Democrats? Well because the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation promoted home ownership for hundreds of families in Regina North West. The Department of Education paid for about 90 per cent of the cost of new schools. The Department of the Environment negotiated filters to help with the problems regarding the ISPCO (Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation) steel plant, neighborhoods, and the prospects of tremendous enlargement of the IPSCO facilities, were the background for the election, Mr. Speaker, and it was fought on the issues. Whether it is a housing project, the energy conservation house in the constituency, the home for the handicapped to be built in Argyle Park, or the new facilities at the Normanview Shopping Centre, Regina North West participates and understands fully economic stability and the promise for the future in this province.

February 28, 1979

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Well, what about the future of this province. Mr. Speaker, it was my good fortune to travel in this province representing the co-operatives in the latter part of the '40s. It was also my good fortune, Mr. Speaker, in the '50s to travel extensively to negotiate farm mortgages in arrears of taxes, to walk over many farms in Saskatchewan, to watch the roads being built, to see the power corporation light up the province, and in the early '60s to be elected to this legislature. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are honest, sincere individuals, probably the best politically informed group in Canada. For years they have worked together to build great institutions such as the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the utility systems like the Saskatchewan Power Corporation (SPC), the giant network of credit unions to finance their mortgages and their loans. Mr. Speaker, they opened up the north. This is why my two friends, the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. MacAuley) and the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Thompson) sit in this legislature at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — In the years that I have lived and worked in this province, I have watched Saskatchewan people work together, build together, enthusiastically participate in every type of democratic organization.

If there was one characteristic missing, it was complete confidence in the future. They had discovered by working together they could build the only Canadian-owned oil refinery in Canada. They could build a giant co-operative wholesale network. They could pave highways and build grid roads and access roads. They could build two university campuses. They could run a sodium-sulphate plant that has made \$23 million since it began operation. They could operate an insurance company, an aggressive insurance operation employing 1,170 people, with the most all-embracing aggressive insurance operation employing 1,170 people, with the most all-embracing program and the most progressive policies of any insurance company in the world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Leadership for these organizations as in SGIO came, Mr. Speaker, from the people of this province. Recently the manager of SGIO, John Green, Q.C., has been placed on the board of governors of the International Seminars Insurance of the World, recognition never before given to a Saskatchewan citizen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, in the operation of their numerous democratic organizations Saskatchewan people learned to work together, to live together and to understand each other. Then came the next logical step; ownership and development of their own resources, a challenge they accepted although their abilities to do so were pooh-poohed. These people opposite said leave it to Exxon; leave it to the multinationals; leave it to the free enterprisers (if there is such a thing).

Mr. Speaker, one recalls the story of the farmer who had a 40-bushel crop but no combine. There was only one combine in the area and the man who owned the harvesting equipment wanted 30 of the 40 bushels to harvest a crop. All the crop belonged to the first farmer and was on his land so this farmer and his neighbors got

together and bought their own combine, Mr. Speaker.

In the same way the people of Saskatchewan own their own resources, a rich crop of minerals unequal to anywhere in Canada, a crop that will be harvested. When they left the harvesting equipment in the hands of the wrong people, those multinationals who owned the harvesting equipment, who had their headquarters elsewhere, were getting most of the crop for harvesting it. So, Mr. Speaker, together the people of Saskatchewan said, we will get our own harvesting equipment and they are getting harvesting equipment in many ways: for their mineral crops, for their coal, oil, potash, uranium, nickel or gold.

Mr. Speaker, they decided they would say something about the harvesting of the crop and when the time came to fight the election they fought it on their right to get a fair share of the mineral crop of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Excuses from the opposition are worthless! They are worthless, Mr. Speaker. The cold fact of the matter is that on the real issues, whether medicare, public ownership of resources or leadership, the members opposite lost and they lost badly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — After the election was over, Mr. Speaker, after the ballots were counted, there was a new kind of confidence that swept this province, a confidence in the future. A threat had been put aside by the voters of this province. I say to my hon. friends opposite, this confidence is based on the realization that the people of Saskatchewan can manage the resources that they own, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we own and manage our resources and that it's a good idea, is quietly acknowledged even by Conservative cabinet ministers in other parts of this country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, there is a new feeling in the air in Saskatchewan, an attitude of philosophy that has always been here. Unless members opposite understand this philosophy, unless they know what the people of the province want, they are going to disappear like the other party which disappeared from the face of the political front of this province.

I noticed the other day that the hon. member for Nipawin made a speech about what would happen to the country if the federal Liberals were returned to power. Mr. Speaker, I would be the first to admit that the value of the Canadian dollar is an economic measure that no one can deny. I would be first to agree that the unemployment situation in this country is a shameful useless hardship on the people of a vast rich land. Mr. Speaker, I would not hesitate to condemn the harbor drudging, Skyshops and the other 40 or 50 scandals of the federal Liberals.

But, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) if he could tell me — should give me — one good logical sensible reason for voting Conservative, if he can, I am prepared to listen. What is the situation, Mr. Speaker? Recall the times Conservatives have been elected federally. In the '30s, the population of Canada, one of the richest countries in the world, was in rags and soup kitchens. The police were

February 28, 1979

called out to stop the young people; young people were marching on Ottawa because they were hungry, Mr. Speaker. Then in the '50s with the largest majority in the history of the country the federal Conservatives allowed the price of farm machinery to go berserk, brought in no economic program. Unemployment was on the rise when they were thrown out of office, when they were fighting among themselves with more energy than they fought to alleviate the problems of this nation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, if you look across this country now and you pick out your provincial governments under their jurisdiction — Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Manitoba — there is nothing in the economic make-up of any of these provincial governments that holds the solution for unemployment, for expansion of — small businesses, for the organization of resources to serve the people, Mr. Speaker, not one of these governments have the imagination, have enough courage to stand up to the multinationals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, you can look at any provincial Conservative government in the country and, in the name of reason, there isn't the slightest reason for giving the Conservatives a vote, not the slightest reason. Look at Newfoundland, now more than 25 per cent of the young people are out of work or Ontario where they get only about 2 per cent of their budget, Mr. Speaker, from minerals. Manitoba — Manitoba helped to elect us in this election. The people of Regina and the people of Saskatchewan are well aware of what is happening in that province. Without leadership at the provincial level in any province, without any evidence of leadership federally in the past or even today voting Conservative is just as hazardous as voting Liberal. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in their record, in their make-up, in their program or in their history that justifies giving either party a thought unless you are a multinational or a large shareholder in the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, I've talked about my constituency, Regina North West. I've talked about the issues in the recent election and I've set out clearly and carefully the substantial reason for refusing to give the federal Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, as much as a wink, let alone a vote.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion and I will vote against the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. G. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, fellow members of the legislature, it is indeed with great pleasure and pride that I rise for the first time for a speech in this House. I am proud to be chosen the representative of the great constituency of Arm River and wish, at this time, to express my sincere thanks to the constituents for their support on October 18 last, particularly those who worked so diligently for the two years prior to election date. Now that the election is behind us, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the constituents of Arm River and this Assembly that it is my sincere desire to attend to the needs to all the people in my constituency in respect to government regardless of their political philosophy. Thus, Mr. Speaker, I feel confident in assuming that from time to time as requests for assistance and information come to

my attention from any constituent that I will be able to bring these problems to any minister of the Crown sitting opposite, and he in turn will give these requests the same sincere consideration and attention as if they came from a member from the government side of the House.

Let us remember we are the servants of the public and the public is not our servants. We all profess to be the great answer to the public's problems, so let us prove to the public that for every one solution you propose to enact in this legislature that we don't create two problems. Hopefully the government opposite will have what is known as the open door policy. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is my hope and I am confident the hope of the majority of the people of this province that the programs and legislation will be the responsibility of the members of this legislature and not dictated by a few of the huge bureaucracies with which governments of all levels find themselves surrounded.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say for one who for many years has been interested in what takes place in this Assembly, I could never understand why as an average, interested taxpayer, I could not get full disclosure of what takes place here without attending in the galleries or visiting the legislative library and reading Hansard after the sessions are over. Mr. Speaker, I am without doubt positive that there are literally thousands of people in the province who would be most anxious to receive a copy of the daily debates and proceedings of this Assembly. I sincerely say to you under whose authority these debates and proceedings are published, why can't the public receive these publications? I received a publication last year for the first time and I can assure you that when I showed it to the members of the public, I might add regardless of their political affiliation, they were intensely interested and they asked the same question, why can't the public receive this publication? Even in the judgment of the powers that be a small subscription fee would be charged. It is my understanding that the most of the cost of printing is the setting up of the print and from then on, of course, it is quite mechanical. By suggesting and humbly requesting that you give the preceding idea sincere consideration, I am not trying to put the media out of business but what I am saying is let us have more full, factual disclosure about who said what about the matters that come before this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to have a free press and the members of the press core to express their interpretations of the happenings of this legislature but I think more importantly the public should be given information in print. Let them make their own interpretations which may or may not agree with the media interpretation. Thus our hot line programs could be much more interesting. Mr. Speaker, I am sure the cost factor of such a proposal as I have made will be of concern but really I don't believe it should be when I see government publications in abundance which have been forwarded to small town and village post offices far in excess of the number of persons receiving mail at these points. One such publication which comes to mind is a catalogue of courses available at community colleges.

Mr. Speaker, what I have to say to this Assembly I want the people of Saskatchewan to hear, and as many as possible on the air. I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:50 p.m.