

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**June 18, 1982**

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**Special Committee to Compose Lists of Standing Committee**

**DEPUTY CLERK:** — Mr. Martens, from the special committee appointed to prepare lists of members to compose the standing committees of the Assembly, presents the first report of the said committee which is as follows:

Your committee met for organization and elected Mr. Martens as its chairman. Your committee has considered the membership of the various standing committees and recommends that the committee be empowered to increase the size of the standing committee on communication to 10 members, one of whom will be Mr. Speaker, who will serve as chairman.

**MR. MARTENS:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake, that the first report of the special committee appointed to prepare lists of members to compose the standing committees of the Assembly be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Tuesday, June 22, 1982, I shall move first reading of a bill to establish a mortgage interest reduction plan.

Mr. Speaker, I further give notice that I shall, on Tuesday, June 22, 1982, move first reading of a bill to amend The Income Tax Act by eliminating the mortgage interest tax credit as a consequence of the establishment of the mortgage interest reduction plan.

**WELCOME TO STUDENTS**

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, a group of 37 students from the McKague and Sylvania schools. There are 12 from Sylvania and 25 from McKague. They are accompanied from Sylvania by Mr. Bill McGowan and from McKague by Mr. Dennis Dahisjo. Their bus driver, Lyle Cox, is also accompanying them. They have been touring the city of Regina. They have seen Government House, the RCMP barracks, the Museum of Natural History and the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame. I will be meeting with them afterward for pictures and drinks. I wish them a good stay here and I would like the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them to this Assembly today.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to the

members of the Assembly a class of students from St. Leo School in Regina. They are 35 in number and are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Selinger. I want to take this opportunity to wish them a pleasant visit to the legislature and advise them that I will meet with them at 10:30. I would like all members on both sides of the house to join with me in welcoming them to the legislature today.

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

## QUESTIONS

### European Borrowings by Province

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the minister of Finance. I would like to ask him whether the province has borrowed money in Europe. If so, when? Are the obligations payable in U.S. funds? What is the rate of interest?

**HON. MR. ANDREW:** — The answer is no.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Finance can advise whether or not the press report indicating that there was loan in Swiss funds which was to be converted to U.S. funds was a reasonably accurate report?

**HON. MR. ANDREW:** — Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance has arranged a loan in Europe in Swiss funds in the Swiss market hedged in U.S. dollars that was effected, I believe, last week. The effective rate of interest was slightly less than 15 per cent. It is in U.S. dollars. Our officials are very confident, Mr. Speaker, that with the sliding of the dollar we have enough protection to make this a very attractive borrowing.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Does the minister consider that to be a favourable rate of interest considering the opportunities to borrow that there might have been elsewhere and considering what other provinces are paying for U.S. pay obligations at this time?

**HON. MR. ANDREW:** — The deal effected by the department obviously is an ongoing proposition by the Government of Saskatchewan. As you know, there are significant borrowings that are going to be required this year. Those must be staged over a period of time. Obviously, the markets are going to be up and down. We are not prepared to simply sit and wait and hope for a better interest rate and then have to borrow all the moneys near the end of the year. I think the borrowings that were effected were at the most effective rate and the cheapest rate, possibly, that we could get. I think the borrowings were in fact a good move in terms of about \$52 million. Of course, we have significant other borrowings that have to be made over the duration of this year. Hopefully, the market will be better. Perhaps it will not.

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

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, in the course of arranging this loan, did the department prepare a prospectus, or an offering statement? If so, will the minister table a copy of the prospectus or the offering statement in this legislature?

**HON. MR. ANDREW:** — In response, Mr. Speaker, of course the Leader of the Opposition, I think, knows that we cannot table that type of thing in question period. I will say that a prospectus, when issued, obviously is a public document and will be

made public when it is appropriate to be made public. We would rather have been able to use money from the heritage fund, had it been built up and left there. However, the members opposite left us in a position where that is not in fact the case so we do have to go to the money markets of the world to borrow money.

### **Reported Cancellation of Rural Gasification Program**

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I have a question for the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, it's reported widely that the program by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to take natural gas to 150 rural communities, including 50 rural communities in 1982, and farms on a project basis in association with those rural communities, has been cancelled. The report is that that program in cancelled or stopped.

Will the minister confirm that this program has been cancelled or stopped and, if so, will the minister advise whether any other program has been put in its place to provide natural gas to rural communities?

**HON. MR. McLAREN:** — In answer to the Leader of the Opposition, we are reviewing the natural gas distribution system that is to be put in place in the province. We are going to be reviewing it and, until such time, we'll be letting them know.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. The minister makes clear in fact that, while he will not say so, the program has stopped. If the minister did not say that, will the minister say that the program is going on? Will the minister say that the meetings which were called in respect to interested parties along those routes are in fact going to be held, or have the meetings been cancelled?

**HON. MR. McLAREN:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it is under review. We are going to introduce our own program and it's going to be a comprehensive program.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, we have heard the minister say that they are going to introduce a program in substitution for a program that was already in effect. The question I ask the minister is this: has the minister made any estimate of the number of construction jobs which will be lost in 1982 because you are reviewing a program and not proceeding with a program? Have you made any estimate of the number of jobs up at Ipsco (Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation) which could have been saved had you been proceeding with a program and not reviewing a program?

**HON. MR. McLAREN:** — Mr. Speaker, we couldn't be building than anyway with construction stroke that is on. We are still going to be looking at it and reviewing it and then we get it planned, it will get started.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I won't comment on whether or not pipe layers are covered by the construction strike. I think the hon. member knows that in many cases they are not. But we'll leave that comment and ask him this. How many jobs are you going to create this year, in 1982, with your natural gas construction program?

**HON. MR. McLAREN:** — I just have to say, Mr. Speaker, that we will let them know when we know. Once we have it reviewed, we'll be able to let them know the number of people

who are going to be on the job.

### **Construction of Housing Units**

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Question to the minister responsible for Sask Housing. Will the minister inform the House when the corporation will be proceeding with the construction of over 4,000 new housing units announced in the budget in March?

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake, yesterday or the day before we gave approval to go ahead with something like about a thousand of these new homes. The rest are under review. There have been a few changes made – all to the good I hope – and certainly all or most of them will be going this year.

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Supplementary to the minister. Can the minister indicate when the review will be over and the decision will be made to proceed with the construction of the remainder of the units that would create in excess of 5,000 jobs in the construction industry in the province of Saskatchewan? Does the minister have any idea when the construction will be proceeding to provide much-needed jobs in the construction industry which is hurting and the forestry industry which is hurting and in which there has been a record number of layoffs in recent weeks?

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member, we have already, as I indicated a few minutes ago, started building, or will be starting to build, 1,000 of the new homes. But he mentions the forest industry. That is one of the things that hasn't been done with Sask Housing. They have not been using our products. And that is one of the reasons we're taking some time to put it together. We feel very strongly that Saskatchewan products should be used in the production of these homes.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — It hadn't been the former government's alternative to do that. We have instructed Sask Housing to look into it to see how many Saskatchewan products we can use to create industry and to create jobs in this province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Supplementary to the minister. As with other areas, they are looking into, they are reviewing, they are studying, they are deciding, and the on-the-job training program continues, Mr. Speaker.

My question is: can the minister indicate to the House today how many new housing starts there will be in 1982? How many jobs will be created in the construction industry? How many jobs will be created in the forestry industry? When does the on-the-job training stop and the action begin?

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Mr. Speaker, as I've just told him, we've already almost allowed (or will allow in the next week or so) a thousand new homes to start. If it weren't for some of the downfalls and some of the problems the previous administration left us, we'd have many more going. There will be many jobs create because of this, as well as because of our new 13.25 per cent interest mortgage program being brought in which in itself will create many of these jobs and divert from some of the high income people who have been using some of these homes back to some of the low income ones who should

be using them.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

### **Construction of Pulp Mill and Newsprint Plant**

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Mr. Speaker, question to the minister responsible for the crown investments corporation. Is it the intention of the government to proceed with the construction of a thermo-mechanical pulp mill and a newsprint plant in Prince Albert?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — No.

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Supplementary to the minister. The minister has announced that the pulp mill is for sale. Will the minister inform the House whether it is the intention of the government to make the sale of the mill conditional upon the purchaser's agreeing to build a second pulp mill and newsprint plant in association with the existing mill?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, I am not about to speculate on how or what conditions will be placed on a sale of the P.A. pulp mill.

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Supplementary. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is reviewing and studying the matter, and that many people who are unemployed can await his on-the-job training. According to the *Prince Albert Herald* of June 10, 74 per cent more people were collecting unemployment insurance in May of the year than was the case in May of last year. This should be the peak of the employment season. What does the government intend to do to assure these people that they can get jobs, and that they will not be forced on to the welfare rolls in winter when the unemployment insurance runs out?

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, I not the minister ... The hon. member is indicating statistics from May, which are the result of the policies that had been put in lace by the previous government, and I don't know why he should be referring to us. They indicate the program and policies that were in place prior to our becoming the government.

As for what we are going to do about employment: if the hon. member had been listening to the programs as announced by the Premier and our government in the past, such as the mortgage interest rate, and a few others, he would know what we intend to do about employment in Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Final supplementary to the minister. We await the details of that program with interest. I repeat: according the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, the number of job orders in Prince Albert is down 36 per cent in May of 1982 over May 1981, and while it is acceptable that the minister would continue to see himself as an opposition member, and continue to criticize the opposition as if they were the government. . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order! Does the member have a question? Supplementaries

are not allowed a long preamble.

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do. I was coming to it. My question is: when will the government indicate the specific and direct and immediate action that it is going to take? Because people are unemployed now, not at the end of some review. They need jobs now.

**HON. MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. Member, since it was the previous government that drove most of the private sector out of this province, I am not about to take responsibility for that.

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

### **Employment Through Government Projects**

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Government Services. In view of the questions relating to the layoffs at Ipsco and in the forest products industry, I would like to ask the minister about a couple of projects. I have a list here of the many government agencies and departments that do work involving a large amount of structural steel, wood, that type of thing, in those very areas where they're having to deal with large numbers of layoffs. I would like to know whether or not on a couple of these projects — the rehab centre and the provincial lab — a decision has been made by the government to go ahead with these projects which were announced by the previous government.

**HON. MRS. DUNCAN:** — In response to the members, I can say that we hope to have the decision next week on all capital projects.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, in light of the answer that the matter is under review and consideration, I would like to ask the minister what the government is doing about the many people who are out of work, and about the indecision and the incapable actions of the government in making decisions? How many jobs are being lost as a result of these two projects — \$34 million projects? How many jobs are being held up at the present time?

**HON. MRS. DUNCAN:** — Many of the projects could not proceed at this time, Mr. Speaker, because of the present construction strike. We hope that will settle soon. With regard to the number of jobs, that is an impossible number to give the member opposite. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

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

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, of course we're well aware of the construction strike, and I'm sure that the government is working very effectively to get a settlement in

that area. But what I would like to know is whether or not tenders have been let for those two projects, which has nothing to do with the strike in the construction industry – whether or not they have been let, or where they're at.

**HON. MRS. DUNCAN:** — Tenders have not been let, Mr. Speaker, because the final drawings of the architects are not approved yet.

### **Job Creating Programs**

**AN HON. MEMBERS:** — Oh, here's the heavyweight.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you, that's a very kind introduction. I want to preface my question with the comment that to some extent, Mr. Speaker, we're not sure who has responsibility for what. I guess they don't know either, because they keep referring to us as the ministers. They keep referring to us as ministers, so I guess the confusion is general.

I'm assuming that the Minister of Labour has general responsibility for questions relating to unemployment, and I'm addressing the question to him. In light of Saskatchewan's deteriorating economy (which you people admit in the opening sentence of your throne speech), and in light of the comments of the Deputy Premier that this session would continue into the fall (and, therefore, presumably this throne speech outlines your government's programs for 1982), and in light of the failure of that throne speech to in any way deal with employment or unemployment (the words never appeared in the throne speech), is it to be assumed that this province's unemployed have to look for meat and drink to the specious platitudes in the opening part of that throne speech? Or do you have some programs to help the unemployed which you didn't outline in the throne speech?

**HON. MR. McLAREN:** — Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, I think we have already embarked on a number of items that re going to create employment in this province. One of them is the bill that is going to be introduced next week – the 13.25 per cent interest . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The fact that we have reduced the gas tax is putting extra money in people's pockets, and we're going to see an increase in activity in the market place just on account of that alone.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — The only suggestion from members opposite that they have any program which will increase employment is the reduction in interest rates. I wonder if the minister, who together with his colleagues has had so much time to study and review, has had any time to review the statistics in his own department. If he does, he will find that women are by far the largest number of the unemployed. Will over 50 per cent of the unemployed are women, who will not benefit from any increase in the construction industry. Are we to assume, Mr. Minister, that you're going to try, as the member suggested, to put them all on the government payroll, or are we to assume that you have not programs which will assist women in finding employment?

**HON. MR. McLAREN:** — Mr. Speaker, everyone is going to be affected by the things we are coming up with. They are going to include men and they are going to include women. There will be jobs for those who are coming out of school. We are going to make this province number one, but we can't do it in four weeks.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — I would remind the member opposite that we made this province number one in terms of employment; you inherited that province.

My question to the member opposite is: what programs do you have in place to assist women in finding employment? Specifically, what programs do you have? I would be interested in the details of those programs which you think will assist women in finding employment.

**HON. MR. MCLAREN:** — We will be announcing all of our plans in due course once they have been organized. No one will be discriminated against. That is my answer.

### **Movement of Grain**

**MR. ENGEL:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Would the minister tell the House if he has made any representation to Ottawa, to Mr. Pepin, the Minister of Transport, concerning the movement of grain, and if he has, what the nature of these representations has been?

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was one letter about five days ago to the Hon. Jean Luc Pepin inviting some exchange of dialogue relative to the Gilson report and the whole crow rate issue.

**MR. ENGEL:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are you aware that there have been massive layoffs at CPR and CNR — 3,000-plus people — and that about 20 per cent of the fleet is sitting idle — 320 locomotives and 20,000 cars for CNR alone? Are you making any representation concerning the movement of our grain between now and the end of July?

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — I didn't get the last part of your question because the member for Thunder Creek was . . .

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the member is offering some sort of defence for increased rates for CPR so that it can pay its employees. Is that it? As I understand it (and this is the position this government has always taken), any additional cost to the farmer should be opposed with vigour. We intend to do that. The CPR's problem is in fact a federal problem. Unfortunately, we are on the end of the stick that hurts any time the CPR is acting with less than performance. Our position relative to the whole crow question is that any additional cost to the farmer will be opposed with vigour.

### **Highway Construction**

**MR. LUSNEY:** — I have a question for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. In light of some of the newspaper articles I have seen recently, could the Minister of Highways tell this Assembly how long he expects to take in making his review of the 1982 highways construction budget? And could he tell us what criteria he is going to be using in his review?

**HON. MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Speaker, on the first question, we have already announced tendering for some new projects for 1982 for the capital project array. On the second point, the new administration in the province of Saskatchewan is not going to be playing politics in building roads. It's going to be roads for people's needs and for the safety of the people of Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. LUSNEY:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Highways says he is not going to be playing politics in the building of roads. Could he then tell us just what roads he considers to be the political roads which he is not going to build, and which ones he is going to build?

**HON. MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Speaker, one example is the road which the previous administration was not concerned about. I am referring to Highway No. 1 west of Webb where there were 22 people killed in a serious accident. The former administration did not take it into consideration to go one more mile to prevent any accident from happening at that curve. This administration is moving forward. One more miles will be added to that road.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Royal Visit by Princess Anne

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, this is the first opportunity I have had to express to this house, and through this House, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, my government's keen sense of pleasure as we anticipate the forthcoming visit to our province of Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, from July 8 to July 14.

The visit of Her Royal Highness to Saskatchewan is very timely in light of observances scheduled by Regina, Saskatoon and a number of rural communities this year. The people of Saskatchewan always appreciate visits by members of the royal family and they are particularly pleased that Princess Anne will join with them in celebrating several significant historical events. Mr. Speaker, the people of Regina and Saskatoon will find their centennial celebrations enriched by the royal visit and the visit will undoubtedly be a highlight of those celebrations.

My government and I are especially pleased that Princess Anne will visit a number of rural communities. I know that the visits to these communities are being looked forward to with great anticipation and will be something to be long remembered.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly outline the highlights of the royal visit.

Princess Anne will arrive in Regina at 3:45 p.m. on Thursday, July 8, and the official public welcoming ceremony will take place at the Legislative Building at 4:00 p.m. In the evening she will meet members of the media and then will be the guest of our Lieutenant-Governor and his wife at a dinner at the Hotel Saskatchewan. On Friday, July 9, she will visit Wilcox and then return to Regina to be welcomed by Mayor Larry Schneider, attend a civic luncheon at the Assiniboia Club, visit the Norman McKenzie Art Gallery, tour the Kalium Chemicals potash plant at Belle Plaine, and attend the provincial dinner at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts in the evening. As you can imagine, this will be a busy day for the Princess.

On Saturday, July 10, my wife and I will accompany Princess Anne on visits to Gravelbourg, Estevan, Alameda and Moosomin. This is the day set aside for visiting rural communities and my wife and I are looking forward to that.

On Sunday, July 11, Princess Anne will attend church at St. Paul's Cathedral and then

tour Government House, join the Regina Rifles at a garden party, visit the RCMP Depot Division and attend a dinner hosted by the Government of Canada.

On Monday, July 12, Princess Anne will be in Saskatoon where she will also have a busy schedule, in the morning she will be welcomed by Mayor Cliff Wright, visit Riverside Park, attend a civic luncheon at Centennial Auditorium at noon and tour the Ukrainian Museum of Canada. In the afternoon she will visit several university locations and enjoy an informal tea party at the residence of the university president, Dr. Leo Kristjanson before leaving for Regina.

Tuesday, July 13, has been set aside for a day of rest for the Princess.

Her Royal Highness will end her visit to Saskatchewan shortly after 10 a.m. on Wednesday, July 14.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see the Princess has a very busy schedule ahead of her. My colleagues and I are looking forward to the royal visit and I am sure the people of this province will join with us in giving Princess Anne a truly royal welcome to the province of Saskatchewan.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Premier in expressions of satisfaction with the fact that Princess Anne will be visiting our province and in particular will be visiting a number of communities that are having a centennial celebration this year. It was in the course of planning for those celebrations that an invitation was extended to have a member of the royal family visit our province during this year. It was extended some considerable time ago when we had hoped to have the Prince of Wales visit, but there have been many domestic changes in the affairs of the Prince of Wales since that time and I think he is not doing much visiting this year. Princess Anne has kindly consented to visit the province and I know she will be welcome warmly as members of the royal family have consistently been welcomed in this province.

The program outlined by the Premier sounds like an interesting one. I certainly have no suggestions, but if I were making a casual one I would suggest that the Princess be taken down, say, the IMCC (International Minerals and Chemical Corporation) or Cominco potash mine rather than the one at Kalium. I have a recollection of another female royal visitor who said, "Why do you always get me to tour museums and plant trees? Why don't I get a chance to go down potash mines like (as it then was) the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Andrew?" I thought that an interesting thought and I suppose female guests don't frequently get invited to underground mines.

But, in any case, I know that there will be a warm reception extended by the people of Saskatchewan to Princess Anne as a representative of the royal family and the monarch and as a symbol of a constitutional monarchical government which we enjoy. I join with the Premier in extending a welcome to her.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

### **Property Tax Rebate Program**

**HON. MR. SCHOENHALS:** — Mr. Speaker, as has been clearly documented this

morning, over the past month this government has been very busy reviewing the elements of the '82 March budget which was introduced in this House. One of the areas we have been reviewing very carefully is the property tax rebate program.

In reviewing that program we have taken a number of things into consideration.

Firstly, we have considered that on April 26 in this province the people spoke very clearly about which policies they felt were most important. We do not feel we are obligated in any way to meet the requirements of that budget.

Secondly, we have looked at the major new programs we will be introducing which will aid the people of the province to fight the increased battle against the cost of living. The elimination of the gas tax, the farm loan program and the mortgage assistance program are three examples of the types of things we will be introducing.

Finally, we have considered the target groups these programs are aimed at. In light of these decisions, the following are the levels that we will introduce for 1982-83 property improvement grants.

1. We will increase the maximum renters property tax rebate from \$115 to \$150.
2. We will increase the maximum senior citizens' school tax rebate by \$50 in all categories. The maximum in a home will increase from \$460 to \$510. A family maximum will increase from \$605 to \$655.

As a result of this program, Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of all senior citizens in the province will have their total school tax rebated.

3. We will maintain the maximum property improvement grant at its present level of \$230. We will, of course, ensure that applicants who receive below the maximum grant will get an increase equivalent to one-half of their tax increase.

Application forms for these grants will be in the major cities in approximately one week, and they will be in the smaller communities inside of three weeks.

We believe that these measures coupled with the other programs we are introducing will indicate very clearly to the people of this province that this government is committed to providing relief from the economic difficulties of the day, and to making it possible for the people of this province to own their own homes.

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

**MR. HAMMERSMITH:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me congratulate the minister, I am sure that urban governments in Saskatchewan, as well as home-owners and renters, will welcome this announcement. I know that many urban governments have been expressing concern that the payment of taxes or the rate of getting taxes paid seems to be slower than in other years because people have been waiting to know what the intentions of the government are. That is now clarified. I hope that those urban governments, which have had to borrow for operating capital because tax collections were slow, will now be able to get the cash flow back to normal.

I wish only to comment that I know many people in Saskatchewan, many home-owners and renters and senior citizens, are awaiting the details of the mortgage interest relief

program. There is some concern from people who may be left out. I think it is premature to express those concerns until we see the details, and we look forward to that. We will want to know as well the portion of the funding allocated under that program that will be directed toward the purchase of existing homes, the portion that will be directed toward the renewal of existing mortgages, and the portion that will be directed toward new home construction. We will also be expecting, in light of the throne speech yesterday, accompanying that announcement some indication as to relief for farmers and small businessmen and others who will be left out of the program.

I thank the minister for the announcement. We will look forward to further announcements.

## **MOTION**

### **Constitution of Continuing Select Committee**

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — With leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Finance:

That members Garner, Birkbeck, Duncan, Hammersmith, Katzman, Lingenfelter, Muirhead, Sauder and Tusa be constituted as a continuing select committee with the power to call for persons, papers, records and to examine witnesses under oath, and whose duty it shall be to establish from time to time select committees with the power to call persons, papers, records and to examine witnesses under oath, and with the power to travel and to hear testimony away from the seat of government; and that the continuing select committee will have the power to set the terms of reference for each select committee, and that each select committee shall report directly to the Legislative Assembly from time to time.

Motion agreed to.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **SPECIAL ORDER**

#### **ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**MR. HODGINS:** — Mr. Speaker, in rising to move the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, may I express my thanks to Premier Grant Devine and the Government of Saskatchewan for the confidence which they have placed in me today. It is an honor for me and a tribute to the many fine people of Melfort constituency whom I very proudly represent in this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I approach my position as an elected representative from the constituency of Melfort with a feeling of modesty and at the same time a sense of challenge. My address today is a very tangible part of that challenge.

I should like, Mr. Speaker, to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the Chair. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you are held in high regard by all members of this House and that you will command respect and confidence from this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, April 26, 1982, must be recorded as a great day in the history of Saskatchewan for it was on this day under the excellent leadership of our Premier,

Grant Devine, that the Progressive Conservative Party achieved the greatest political victory in the history of this province. As a result of that victory, the whole direction, the whole philosophy, the whole approach to provincial government was changed. The doors were opened for humane, dynamic and caring government. People all across this province once again had a renewed hope, that spirit of our pioneer forefathers. April 26 was the beginning of a new era for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. On that day, the first popularly-elected Progressive Conservative government in Saskatchewan's history won by an overwhelming majority.

During the last 10 years, Saskatchewan sustained difficult times. Young people had to leave; family farms declined. Increased taxes, state ownership and far too much government was the order of the day. That dark period in Saskatchewan's history has come to an end. Mr. Speaker, for the first time, we have a Speech from the Throne that breaths action and progress. The rhetoric, platitudes and self-praise of the previous administration have been replaced with a concise, clear and direct outline of what the Progressive Conservative government is prepared to do for Saskatchewan in our first session.

At the outset I should like to point out with pride that many of us would not be here and indeed there may not have been a Progressive Conservative government had it not been for our Premier and leader, Grant Devine. Without his fervour, devotion, dedication and unending hard work, our victory would never have been won. His leadership was an inspiration to the Progressive Conservative Party for its candidates, workers and supporters to scale what seemed supreme heights to win. He led our party to the ultimate victory. Mr. Speaker, to the Progressive Conservative cabinet, congratulations on your appointment. The wisdom and foresight of our Premier is reflected in your selection. You have a tremendous responsibility in cleaning up the mess that you inherited from the previous government and in resurrecting Saskatchewan from 10 years of mismanagement.

Mrs. Speaker, during the past 24 months the winds of change were sweeping Saskatchewan. Hundreds and then thousands of people joined the forward march of the Progressive Conservative Party. No matter where we went in Saskatchewan, people told us, "It's time for a change." I would remind this house that the overwhelming upsurge in Progressive Conservative support did not come just because of discontent with the previous government. It was also because people realized the Progressive Conservative Party offered a breath of fresh air – brand new refreshing policies of the 1980s – and on April 26, the voters endorsed these ideas.

Allow me to cite some examples, Mr. Speaker, of the new directions for Saskatchewan that this government will offer. It is not my intention today to give this house a litany of the sins of the NDP. The fact that so few of them are in this House is clear proof that the public recognized these sins. Rather, I wish to talk about the vision the Progressive Conservative government has for Saskatchewan. Throughout the election campaign we offered Saskatchewan a government it could trust, a government as good as the people of Saskatchewan, a government that believes power comes from the people and not from the government.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — We made a commitment that Saskatchewan can be number one in every respect. Our theme, "This is so much more we can be," is so true. In my

constituency of Melfort I listened to people from all walks of life tell me about the kind of Saskatchewan they want to live in. This is a time for high achievement in Saskatchewan, a time for growth. That was not the case with the previous government.

Let us take a close look at the record of the previous government in Saskatchewan. You will see that it was a significant contributor to the high cost of living. Here in Saskatchewan the government has a vast amount of control over utilities – electricity rates, telephone rates, insurance rates and fuel prices. During the NDP years, it significantly raised the prices of each and every one of them. During the last two years of NDP government electricity rates went up twice – over 17 per cent. Natural gas rates went up by 10 per cent in 1979 and 17.6 per cent in 1980, for a total increase of 27.6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, not once did the NDP government ever make an attempt to justify these increases, nor was any citizen of the province ever consulted. Telephone rates went up 12 per cent during that time. Again, Mr. Speaker, the consumers of Saskatchewan were not protected and had no recourse but to pay.

To protect the consumers of Saskatchewan, and at the same time battle the high cost of living, the Conservative government is going to establish a public utilities review commission.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — We would destroy the NDP myth that there is nothing a provincial government can do about inflation. I want you to know that the two major daily newspapers, the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and the Regina *Leader-Post*, have endorsed the idea of a public utilities review commission on their editorial pages in the past. It is a very popular and common-sense idea. The public utilities review commission would protect every citizen from unwarranted increases by those utility agencies that are publicly owned. I contend that government agencies which furnish telephones and electricity are offering a vital public service which must be regulated in such a manner as to provide the best possible service at the most reasonable cost to the province of Saskatchewan. I am proud that the Progressive Conservative government will make the public utilities review commission a reality.

Mr. Speaker, prior to Saturday, May 8, 1982, Saskatchewan was the only jurisdiction in the whole world where a fuel tax was directly linked to an automobile insurance program. I am, of course, speaking about the dreadful and notorious 20 per cent sliding tax on gasoline. During the time the NDP had that terrible tax on fuel, I read in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* that Saskatchewan drivers paid more for gasoline than Toronto drivers, even though Ontario was a non-producing province in the energy field. Then the NDP refused to remove that tax. It took the leadership and decisive action of Premier Grant Devine. I am pleased to note that this House will be used to reconfirm the removal of that tax.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — That, Mr. Speaker, is economic leadership. This government has the boldness and vision to battle for the high cost of living wherever possible. The public utilities review commission and the removal of the 20 per cent tax on gasoline are two key examples.

Mr. Speaker, with your leave I should like to revert to a more traditional part of a member's maiden speech. That is reference to my constituency of Melfort. Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow constituents in the Melfort area for the honor they have bestowed on me by electing me as their representative in the Saskatchewan legislature. To the people of Melfort, Star City, Gronlid, St. Brieux, and all the other communities and rural areas. I express my deepest gratitude for all the generous help, support and co-operation you gave. I would also extend my congratulations and thank my Conservative colleagues for their most helpful support throughout the campaign, and especially Premier Devine for his valuable contribution.

It is traditional, Mr. Speaker, that a new member describe from his point of view the social, cultural, and economic matrix of his constituency. You will have to excuse my unbridled enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker, as I describe my home, for the potential of this areas and its ambitious people working alongside its bold, new Progressive Conservative government is unlimited. I feel confident that now my neighbours and friends in the Melfort constituency have finally a government as good as they are.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — The fact that the Melfort constituency is in the centre of Saskatchewan's richest agricultural area, a territory which has never known drought or severe crop failure, may explain why the area has enjoyed healthy growth since the first settlers came in 1892. Records show that in 1904, Melfort had 53 registered businesses – just 12 years after its initial settlement, and that on July 7, 1907, Melfort was incorporated as a town with some 2,000 people. This growth continued, and on September 2, 1980, the city of Melfort was incorporated. The population at that time was 5,883. This growth was reflected throughout the constituency in towns and villages as agriculture industry grew. In the town of St. Brieux, for example, Bourgault Industries employs some 80 people in the production of farm tillage equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here as the MLA for Melfort constituency and hope to serve for many years to come.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — Mr. Speaker, since Melfort is an agricultural constituency in many aspects, I should like to commend our government's plan to implement a farm purchase program. The farmer did not merit much attention by the previous government. As I said previously, family farms declined, and land bank was created as a way to have state ownership. During the campaign Mr. Devine said. "Would the pioneers have come to Saskatchewan if land bank had been in place?" I think not.

Mr. Speaker, on April 26, 1982, the people of Saskatchewan had had enough of the social experiment. Families were cast aside for the family of crown corporations – real people no longer counted. I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that excessive taxation and infringement of freedoms was their guiding force. In the end as they became desperate to cling on to power, they became latent opportunists promising millions of dollars in irresponsible promises. Their tactic failed.

The former premier, Mr. Blakeney, said the issue was leadership. Never were truer words spoken.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — Under the leadership of Grant Devine, a new image was gaining interest. Admiration was growing for a man and a party that brought a fresh, new approach to government. April 26 resolved the question of leadership. Election day saw people head to the polls in record numbers, and April 27 dawned fresh and clear.

Today an atmosphere of trust and faith prevails in Saskatchewan. The public mood is one of optimism. The Progressive Conservative government has programs to implement and that is what we intend to do. We can face the future with dignity and faith, secure in the knowledge that our future is in the hands of a new Progressive Conservative government — a government whose objective is to make Saskatchewan number one. Mr. Speaker, senior citizens, youth, labour, farmers, and indeed all people are looking to this government with confidence.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell this House that in my campaign in Melfort I went into many homes, neighbourhoods, and halls and shared many a cup of coffee with people. They told me about their hopes and dreams. I listened, and when I recall all the miles and memories of that campaign I think of what a great place we can make Saskatchewan. Today, Mr. Speaker, I speak for Melfort constituency in saying that the Progressive Conservative government offers anew greatness for this wonderful province.

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

**MR. HODGINS:** — Mr. Speaker, in the rotunda of this building is the bust of a great Canadian, John Diefenbaker. I am sure he would be proud of this government. He spent a lifetime doing what was right and never foregoing his principles. That will be a guiding force for this government. Remember, there is so much more Saskatchewan can be.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honor to move, seconded by the hon. Member for Saskatoon Riversdale:

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

To His Honor the Honorable Cameron Irwin McIntosh, Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honor:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honor for the gracious speech which Your Honor has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

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

**MS. ZAZELENCHUK:** — Mr. Speaker, it is, indeed, a pleasure for me to second the first throne speech of the first Progressive Conservative government in the history of Saskatchewan. I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as Speaker of this legislature. My congratulations also to the hon. member for Estevan and all

members on their election or re-election. My compliments to the members of the Clerk's office of the Legislative Assembly. They have been very helpful in assisting new members with their duties. The member for Melfort did a commendable job and I consider it an honor for me and the constituents of Saskatoon Riversdale that my maiden speech is to second the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Premier and members of the cabinet for giving me this opportunity. Representing Saskatoon Riversdale is enough of an honor and I thank everyone who supported me at the polls.

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

**MS. ZAZELENCHUK:** — Today, I am the only member of the legislature who can say they were nominated once and declared elected three times. I soon will be joined by Paul Meagher representing the constituency of Prince Albert, who will also be able to make that claim. In Saskatoon Riversdale the final plurality is 19 votes. This isn't quite the mandate the two of us were looking for, but provincially, Mr. Speaker, the support for new government is unmistakable. People of Saskatchewan were tired of hearing of NDP mismanagement; we were actually tired of talking of NDP mismanagement and I know the NDP would prefer we not talk about it.

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

**MS. ZAZELENCHUK:** So to sidetrack the electorate during the election and non-election years, the NDP strongly suggested Progressive Conservatives lacked commitment to important areas. For example, there was the infamous threat to Medicare, which I believe deserves further mention here because it is a most serious threat to many of the constituents in Saskatoon Riversdale, indeed for people all across Saskatchewan. During the election campaign the NDP stated Saskatchewan had the best health care system in North America and suggested that Medicare would be more costly under a Progressive Conservative government. They chose their words carefully. The system is good. Every political party in Saskatchewan supports the system but under the NDP administration this system has ranked eighth in Canada in per capita spending on health and has not been the best in North America.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, Progressive Conservatives are committed to Medicare and opposed to deterrent fees of any kind. People didn't buy that threat and today they are more optimistic with the new government and the introduction of the throne speech, which again emphasizes our longstanding commitments to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party has been elected because it has a new approach based on the faith, energy and intelligence of Saskatchewan people, and a determination to use Saskatchewan resources to give our producers a competitive edge in national and international markets.

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

**MS. ZAZELENCHUK:** — We promise to alleviate the economic hardships caused by inflation and high interest rates and to bring efficiency to government crown corporations. We have the responsibility to ask whether we have come to the point where government intervention smothers rather than promotes growth. I think we have. Prior to April 26 people were uneasy about what the government would buy next, what the government would control next, what agency it would endow with power next. During the election campaign the NDP told us in one of their advertisements, and I

quote, “Every day we are getting closer to the goals we are working for.” The government was already involved in a packing plant, house construction company, office equipment and motels, to mention only a few examples. In our new Canadian constitution the right to own property (think of what the definition of property includes) is not guaranteed. This move, I believe, was initiated and supported by the former member for Saskatoon Riversdale and the Leader of the Opposition. Why would a government make those provisions in law?

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I campaigned for the thought of a government as good as the people. As Progressive Conservatives we believe it is the efforts of thousands of individuals looking for economic opportunity which will fuel growth in Saskatchewan. An environment where people feel helped by government, not smothered by it, is one in which people will be happiest. We campaigned with the slogan “There’s so much more we can be.” We can again be a vigorous, expanding province, which is not only the agricultural capital of Canada, which is not only an efficient producer of natural resources, but which is increasingly attractive to people who want to invest in our economic future. We are blessed with a natural resource base that should enable us to develop more industrial capacity. We have people now full of energy and a nation full of Saskatchewan people who we will do our best to lure back.

Considering Saskatchewan’s population in 1936 and Saskatchewan’s birth rate, which is above the national average, an estimated one million people have left Saskatchewan. I took a six-month job in Calgary for a company I was with in Saskatoon and there I lived with a group of friends I had known from university. One was working on her C.A., one was a lawyer, one was an engineer and one a biochemist. Each one was born, raised and completely educated in Saskatchewan, but not one had worked one day of his professional life in Saskatchewan.

I have an uncle who lives in my constituency. When the announcement was made I would be seeking the Progressive Conservative nomination in Saskatoon Riversdale, he confessed to having voted NDP once or twice (people I refer to as first time or second time offenders respectively). When I pointed out to him how many of our relatives had gone to Alberta for employment, that uncle soon became my sign chairman. The point I’m trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that people had questions. If things were going so well, where was the growth in population, the prosperity, the industrial jobs? Mr. Speaker, a government can’t survive those types of questions and the government didn’t.

I would now like to focus my speech on a few of the pieces of upcoming legislation mentioned in the throne speech. The member for Melfort did well in elaborating on the others.

If we take seriously our responsibility as government it is important to note that Saskatchewan, on April 26, set these records: the first Progressive Conservative government in the history of the province and a government with the largest mandate in the history of this province.

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

**MS. ZAZELENCHUK:** — This was done, Mr. Speaker, to change many of the records left by the NDP administration such as the highest automobile rates in Canada – considering our population density and SGI’s 20 per cent sales tax on the price of gasoline.

During the election the Progressive Conservatives promised to drop the gas tax and that was done immediately and will be confirmed by legislation in this session. I think that was appropriate. Saskatchewan depends on miles and miles of highway. Governments should set some limits on the profits they make on our need to travel. The federal government is doing its best to make transportation in Saskatchewan expensive and the province should not join in.

Mr. Speaker, a very firm promise of this government and one which is being kept in this throne speech is the promise we made to help individuals cope with high inflation and high interest rates. Important business for this session of the Assembly is the mortgage interest reduction plan.

Not too long ago people said mortgage money would not go above the psychological barrier of 10 per cent, then 12 per cent and 15 per cent. Mortgage money is now around 18 per cent. Short-term and second-mortgage money is already over 20 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I sold real estate in Saskatoon and, when faced with financing costs, lots of prospective home buyers who should have been able to buy homes had to give up the idea. For example, a \$70,000 house with a \$21,000 down payment had monthly payments of \$746. To a growing family this is a crippling and often an impossible burden. The disappointment of a young family delaying the purchase of a home is reflected in the economy as employment related to construction suffers and decisions are delayed to buy furniture, appliances and home improvement goods. An entire chain of economic activity is almost eliminated from the economy.

Mr. Speaker, under the mortgage interest-reduction plan with an effective interest rate of 13.25 per cent the payments on that same \$70,000 home would be \$582 per month – almost \$155 a month less. Thousands of citizens of Saskatchewan will be within reach of a home of their own and thousands of others in construction, service industries and retail businesses would benefit as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see in the Speech from the Throne that the government intends to proceed immediately to set up a public utilities review commission. This was not only promised during the past campaign, but it has been a proposal advanced several times in this Assembly by members of the Progressive Conservative opposition. We will now have another promise made and kept.

A public utilities review commission will allow a public review of any rate increases proposed by Saskatchewan crown corporations. This will serve several purposes. It will force all utilities to prove that the increases are justified. If they are in line with costs encountered and with services given, then they will be implemented. I think the public will be happy to meet increased rates if they are convinced those rates aren't arbitrary and not really just hidden taxes. If rate increases are not justified, the public will save money and today every bit counts.

A public utilities review commission will provide another benefit to the public. It will show them that the utilities are being well run. If rate increases are due to cost overruns, bad business decisions or incompetent management, it will be brought out in rate hearings.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the public, as owner of the crown corporation utilities, has

the right to as much information as possible about them. The previous administration was strongly opposed to the establishment of a commission. The NDP government believed that a commission was only needed for the privately owned. Members of the Assembly could make whatever representations were necessary and nothing more was needed. What can a member of the Assembly do if a crown corporation has already decided to raise its rates and the boards, controlled by the government and reflecting the government's policies, have supported those raises?

Mr. Speaker, there should be a commission to act openly on behalf of the people whether the utilities are publicly owned or not. Utilities, as we have often seen, do not stop overcharging or being secretive or being badly run because they are public. A public utilities review commission will make the public utilities more public and will soon prove its value to this Assembly and to the people across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to say, as a new member from an urban constituency, that I probably will never understand the agricultural industry as well as Mr. Premier or the member for Melfort. Perhaps an urban member is more familiar with rental accommodations. But as a government, we have listened to, and we understand, the concerns of people all across Saskatchewan. The recent election taught us that we have to continue to listen. This was a lesson learned not just at the expense of the NDP, but unfortunately also at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan for 11 years.

I didn't talk about the particular make-up of Saskatoon Riversdale which contains many different groups because I talked about better management which will benefit everyone.

I want to conclude by saying I am impressed with the quality of leadership we now have, the responsible financial management we offer, and the eagerness of each MLA to work hard for his or her constituency regardless of his or her political affiliation. Thank you.

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

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, my first words must be to congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker of this Assembly. Historically the office of Speaker has been one of real danger. Life expectancy in the job was not high. We illustrated this again in the ceremony which we went through in installing you in the office. The job was again in the ceremony which we went through in installing you in the office. The job was a dangerous job because people in earlier times, as they do now, tended to blame the bearer of bad news for the content of the message. And in those days the bad news that the Speaker had to take was the bad news to the king that the legislature or parliament was not going to provide him all the funds which he felt he required. So it fell to the Speaker to be the guardian of the rights of parliament against encroachment by the executive arm of government, by the big king and his ministers. And that remains the Speaker's role today.

We look to you, sir, to protect the ancient rights of members of this Assembly, by they on the opposition side or the government side, against erosion by action of the Premier and his ministers. I don't anticipate that this will be a difficult job, since there's no reason to believe, and we don't assume, that the Executive Council will not fully respect the time-honored rights and traditions of private members on both sides of the House. We of our party welcome your statement that you leave aside all partisan considerations and that you propose to use the powers of your distinguished office as

an impartial arbiter protecting the rights of all members of this Assembly.

May I make a few comments of a general nature? I don't want to sound like Father Time, but I do want to say a few things to new members of the Assembly. I have found that being a member of the Legislative Assembly is a rewarding task that has some frustrations, since it is sometimes difficult to be part of the decision-making process. And that is not because of any reluctance on the part of cabinets, whatever their political persuasion, to involve their members in the decision-making process, and we felt we were right in there where the decisions were made.

When we come to a large group – and I have noted that the government caucus, particularly, is a large group – it is not always easy to be where the decision is made. I suggest to all members that this ought not to be a basis for discouragement. In fact, you will have a substantial influence on the decisions, and that's about all anyone can have in any large organization.

It comes to the same thing in a large organization: if you and your colleagues have an opportunity to influence the decision, then you are doing the job which you were elected to do, and are in a position to influence the destiny of our province.

Here in the legislature we, in fact, don't make many decisions in a real sense of the word. We influence decisions. We dispose, in a general way, of material put before us by the cabinet, but the bulk of those decisions are made in the government caucus, where they ought to be made. I, in no sense, decry this system.

We, here in the legislature, have a somewhat different function. We attempt to influence decisions by debating them, by giving the public an opportunity to know what the implications of a decision are, as seen by proponents of the decision and very possibly opponents of the decision, so that the public will have a couple of sides of the story put to them and are able to make a judgment. And I know that nobody in either group in this House thinks that the public is not the ultimate arbiter, even though we do not always welcome its decisions.

I think, therefore, that we must understand our role here, and I address this particularly to Mr. Speaker, but also to all others. Our role here is to have a full opportunity to debate the issues and to see that we, as members on both sides, have an opportunity to influence the decisions which are shaped by the cabinet and the government caucus. I heard on one occasion – a number of years ago in this House – a minister of the crown, not of the party opposite nor of our party, suggest that the public had elected a government and the government ought to govern, and there didn't seem to be any particular function for this legislature because all it did was talk. I felt that was a rather summary way of disposing of the function of this legislature, and one which would not have been endorsed by Mr. Diefenbaker, whose name has been brought before this Assembly today, or by Mr. Churchill, or by Mr. Clark or any other well-known parliamentarian in our tradition – or Stanley Knowles, indeed. We have many people in each of the parties represented in this House who have distinguished careers as parliamentarians.

So our role here as an opposition, then, is to put forward our views to make sure that to the best of our ability we have put forward another side to the proposals put forward by the government, so the public may have an opportunity to judge. That is our role and

that is the one we propose to attempt to discharge.

My second duty is to congratulate the Premier on his being selected to occupy this very important post in the life of our province and our country, and to congratulate the ministers who have been appointed to assist him and to form his Executive Council. The member for Estevan, the Premier, occupies a challenging position, a demanding position, and a sometimes lonely one. And within the obvious limits which I don't need to specify here, I wish him well. I have taken up the duties as Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and this is a position of challenge and responsibility. And I intend to discharge my responsibilities as best I can.

Looking back on this office, I am happy to say that it has not offered security of tenure. Since 1970, indeed, seven different people have been Leader of the Opposition and one of them has been Leader of the Opposition twice. I stand before you as that person. And I think that we know from that, that people move from being Leader of the Opposition to higher office or oblivion, as the public may dispose. But I expect to be in the office a little more than the average of two years. In fact I am looking forward to a career of approximately four years in this post.

Mr. Speaker, my next words is to congratulate the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, the hon. Members for Melfort and Saskatoon-Riversdale.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Excellent choices.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I join with the interjection of the member for Souris-Cannington in saying that I think that excellent choices were made. The member for Melfort spoke clearly and well – a fine maiden speech. I associate myself with his words of admiration for the city and the constituency of Melfort. I have noted great improvements there during the last 10 years, I may say. And I join with him in saying that while I take the position that Saskatchewan is already a great place, I join with him and all others in thinking that we can indeed make it greater.

I congratulate also the seconder of the motion – the member for Saskatoon Riversdale – for a thoughtful address with solid content. I congratulate her on what I felt was an excellent maiden speech.

I particularly congratulate them because the speech itself, offered very little assistance. It is not easy to wax eloquent on a speech which promises firstly that it is going to confirm a tax cut which has already taken place, which deals with a mortgage interest reduction program but offers no details (the details of which, I think, will indicate a far more restrictive program than was offered during the election campaign), and moreover deals with a good number of other matters which are largely of a housekeeping nature.

We noted that there was a proposal for what is another administrative organization, another tier of bureaucracy – a utilities rate review commission. I think the public will make its own judgment as to whether the utilities rate review commission is a good idea, based not on whether we have a commission but on whether the power and as rates go down, or on whether at least the increases are moderated. That, I suggest, will be the test and I have no reason to believe, based on the activities of public utilities review commissions anywhere else in Canada, that this has been the result of establishing review commissions. Accordingly, we will withhold our judgement on that,

as members of the public, until we see whether the power rates go down. To quote yet another political leader in this province, "That's the acid test."

The first basic question to be asked about this throne speech is: what is it? Is it a statement of what the government intends to accomplish during the next short weeks of this short session? Or, is it an outline of the government's legislative program for a year or more? That's a pretty fundamental question. Shortly put, does the government intend to bring in a throne speech outlining its full legislative program before the next regular session of this legislature?

If not, then we are very sadly served by this throne speech which is long on political rhetoric and short on content. Mr. Speaker, I would have no objection to that, if, in fact, it is the program of activity for this short session. No one can reasonably ask a government to lay out all of its legislative programs in its first couple of weeks in office, in its first eight weeks since the election. So if we have an undertaking from the government opposite that this is, in fact, the throne speech for this short session, then I will make some comments on that basis. However, if there is a suggestion that there is not going to be a Speech from the Throne when we next resume, and that this is the legislative program for the regular session, then clearly the public is being short-changed. Clearly then, we are not doing the job in debating the government's program which we ought to do, and which I tried to say earlier is our role as members of the legislature.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Definitely agreed.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I am happy to have the interjection by the member for Souris-Cannington. As I understood his interjection, he said that it is definitely agreed that prior to the next regular session of the legislature we will have a full throne speech and an opportunity to debate it. I know that if I have misconstrued his remarks, he will, in his intervention in this debate, clarify the matter because . . . (inaudible interjection). . . I know that we will have an opportunity to hear from the member for Souris-Cannington clarifying the matter.

In any case, be it a speech for a short session, or be it a speech for a longer session, the speech fails to say a great number of things that it should say. It fails to say things which people are listening for. It fails to deal with many, many issues which are being talked about by my constituents. It fails to deal with issues which are on the minds of a great number of people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make one interjection before I deal with the contents of the speech, and that has to do with radio broadcasting. As the official opposition, we were advised by the government that at this session no arrangement would be made for radio broadcasting. The official opposition raised no objection on the understanding that this was a special session, and on the further understanding that there would be an opportunity to have a throne speech which would be debated on radio or television, depending upon the progress of television, so that the public would have an opportunity to know what the new government's program was and have it debated by this legislature, which they have elected and are paying to perform that function.

I am very happy to note that the members opposite are acknowledging the clear obligation of the new government to our line their legislative programs in a further throne speech, prior to the commencement of the next session.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Rosthern is interjecting. We always welcome his interjections. They are strident, if not humorous. There is no question that he has great facility in the constituency, even if it isn't revealed here in the House. He has mentioned what happened in 1971 when we did, shortly after the election of a then-new government, have a short session at which we introduced a short throne speech, and at which we had a debate on that throne speech. Then, prior to the assembling of the next regular session we had a long throne speech, outlining the full program of the government with a full and regular debate. I commend that example to members opposite.

Having dealt a little bit with the question of what it is, a throne speech for a short session or a long session, I want to turn to the question of what is in it, and that won't take long.

What would be welcome would be a general review by the government of the provincial economy, and the steps that the government would propose to take to deal with the emerging problems. There is no question that they acknowledged that there were emerging problems. The throne speech opened with those words – that we have difficult economic times ahead. One would have expected that a government in those circumstances would have given some outline of how it intended to cope with those difficult economic times. I did not think it did that. I did not think that what we heard was a statement of how the government proposed, in the next six months, or eight months, to deal with the economic problems which are going to be faced by this province.

After all, it is now eight weeks since the election – it's not yesterday, but eight weeks. We as an opposition have held our tongues; we haven't been critical of the government, particularly. We have said that they must have a chance to get their feet under their desks, get a chance to line up the problems, a chance to see which problems they need to deal with now, which problems they need to deal with on a temporary basis now, and which problems could reasonably be delayed. But instead they seem not to have done this. They seem not to have lined up the issues and decided which ones they are going to deal with and which ones they are not going to deal with. They seem to have gone into a trance, because aside from discharging public servants pell-mell in an apparent fit of vindictive pique, and hiring others at some of the largest salaries being paid by any provincial government in Canada, they have come very nearly to a dead stop.

There are reviews and there are studies, and there are task forces and there are commissions – fair enough. Task forces and commissions have been the time-honored way that every government has avoided making decisions. We know that, and every government has done it. No government has ever done it in the proliferation and profusion of the current government, but every government has done it. Meanwhile there is virtually a total freeze on government activity. We are seeing, in effect, paralysis by analysis. You people are doing nothing but study, review, look at, and you are not coming to grips with some of the issues that should be dealt with right now.

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

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The fact is that much of Saskatchewan's economic activity is grinding to a halt this summer. Some of it can be laid at the door of the construction strike, but most of it can be laid on the fact that many, many contracts which the government ordinarily would be proceeding with at this time have been stopped. Under the weight of this government's on-the-job training program, we have nothing, literally nothing, but studies. The economy has been put on hold while the government

struggles with the question of what it wants to do. I say that the government's dithering couldn't come at a worse time, because all of us know that there are serious economic problems in eastern Canada, and they have been rolling westward. They have been rolling westward because of the deficiencies of the national energy program. They have been rolling westward because we are hit when high interest rates are abroad in the land, because we have so many capital-intensive projects in this province. And all of us know that. Therefore we should be announcing things that the government is going to do – not what it is going to study but what it's going to do. We are seeing a policy vacuum, and when there is a vacuum something moves into a vacuum, and I tell you that what is going to move in is recession and unemployment in this province. And they are rushing in.

True we have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, but I predict that that unemployment rate will rise rather than fall even during the months of summer when traditionally it has always fallen. That will be a test to see how well this government is responding to its obligations to the people of Saskatchewan.

The government really has three choices in dealing with many of these issues. It can carry on with the programs of the previous government; it can launch new programs of its own; or it can do nothing. In almost every case the worst decision is to do nothing. It could have got on with the old highway projects, or it could have gone with the new highway projects, or it could have let no contracts at all. In its first eight weeks since the election, it has let virtually no contracts – virtually none.

The Minister of Highways will have an opportunity to outline when he let contracts, what contracts he has called, and on what date he let them. He'll have an opportunity to explain just how many jobs have been lost because he couldn't make up his mind which highway contracts to let. He'll have a full opportunity to do that. We'll have a good number of other ministers who will have the same opportunity to say how many jobs the old NDP programs; they didn't have any new PC programs; and so they did nothing. As a result, many, many people – young and old – will be without jobs this summer, who would have had jobs. That's going to be the result of this dithering by the government opposite.

I say this, Mr. Speaker: you cannot put a provincial economy on hold, while the government makes up its mind which proposals it wishes to accept and which to reject. The clear and sensible alternative would have been to quickly decide which of the old programs should continue and which of the new programs had to be launched.

We have an interesting one with respect to the Minister of Agriculture. I thought we all agreed that we should assist young people to get on the land; everybody agrees with that. We had a land bank program, which we felt did that. Members opposite felt that was the wrong way to go. They have another proposal to introduce – a loan program.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Obviously somebody out there agrees with it.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — That's right. No one objects to your saying that our program was a bad program and should be stopped. It seems to me, however, that if you stop our program and don't start your own (and that's where you are) then a whole summer goes

by when no young people get on the land and the land grabbers are out there picking up the land. We will see whether their program is in place in time for people to buy land at the end of this crop year. We will see whether it is in place when land starts turning over again at harvest time. We will see whether their program is in place. My prediction is that it will not be in place, and we'll lose that opportunity.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Tell us about the 15,000 farmers that were lost under your land bank program.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Thunder Creek is, as usual, making his best speeches sitting down. He is now interjecting. I know that we will all welcome his interjection in this debate as we always do. He is always so forthright, so remarkably charming in his method of presentation.

My point is this: whether or not people liked the programs of the previous government (and of course, they are more than entitled to reject them because they were elected and we were defeated), they have an obligation either to accept those old programs temporarily or to put some new programs in place – but not simply to do nothing. To do nothing will mean that students will not work this summer; students will not be working this summer who would otherwise be working, and I noted that the Speech from the Throne had no program for summer employment for students. That's very, very interesting. I predict that this summer student employment will be harder to get than in any summer for years and years and years. We will see, but my prediction is that this is going to be as tough a year for students to get jobs as we have seen for years. Yet, not a word in the Speech from the Throne about employment, not a word about a summer student employment program. I urge members opposite, even if it isn't in the speech, to mount a program for summer employment for students so that a good number of the university students who don't have jobs yet, and some of the high school students who will be coming on the market in a couple of weeks, have some opportunity to obtain employment.

Members opposite will have many, many ideas, I'm sure, as to how this can be done. But I'm very sure, whether they follow their ideas or ours, that it's going to be far better to have students working this summer than to have them not working and being disgruntled with the fact that this economy ought to be offering them opportunity and is not doing so. There are literally thousands of people who are looking for jobs. They're men; they're women; they're young people; and they're students. All of these people are looking for jobs and they are not getting jobs because of the rigor mortis which has set in opposite and we're not having decisions. That, I say, is going to come home to haunt all of us who have a responsibility to those people, young and old, who want to work, who want a job and can't get a job. I ask the government, now, to mount an effective program, firstly for student employment, but also to get some of the capital projects rolling to see that we have some opportunities for people who want a job and can't get one.

Mr. Speaker, I will have a good deal more to say about the Speech from the Throne and the approach of the government to the problems of Saskatchewan on Monday next. Accordingly, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:47 a.m.