

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Eighteenth Legislature

Friday, March 12, 1976.

10:00 o'clock a.m.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, dated the first day of March, 1976 for meeting of the Second Session of the Eighteenth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan, and the Assembly having met:

Mr. Speaker informed the Assembly that he had received a communication from the Private Secretary of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor stating that His Honour would open the Session at 10:00 o'clock a.m. today, Friday, the twelfth day of March, 1976.

10:01 o'clock a.m.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the Chamber and having taken his seat upon the Throne, was pleased to open the Session with the following speech: —

Mr. Speaker,

Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is my privilege to welcome you to the Second Session of the Eighteenth Legislature of Saskatchewan.

THE ECONOMY AND INFLATION

The halting performance of the Canadian economy in 1975 was confirmed last week when the Federal Government released figures showing virtually no growth in real terms over 1974. It was Canada's worst year, in relative terms, in over two decades.

In contrast, the Saskatchewan economy - spurred by record farm incomes and high resource revenues - achieved a new level of performance. Our gross provincial product for the first time exceeded \$6 billion.

Although the outlook in Saskatchewan for 1976 is for continued growth at a somewhat more moderate pace, the threat of unchecked inflation is for us, as for all of Canada, the most urgent problem to be faced.

My Government remains firm in its belief that a nation-wide effort is needed to help control inflation. My Government has enacted rent control legislation. My Ministers have set up the Saskatchewan Public Sector Price and Compensation Board. Price and compensation guidelines have been announced.

My Minister of Finance will, in his Budget Speech, announce additional measures to restrain public expenditures.

LEGISLATION TO BE RE-INTRODUCED

When the first Session was prorogued in late January, 13 Bills introduced by my Ministers remained unpassed. A number of these measures will be re-introduced in the current Session, including:

- amendments to The Fire Prevention Act;
- amendments to The Northern Co-operative Trading Services Act, 1959;
- amendments to The Dairy Products Act;
- amendments to The Agricultural Products Market Development Fund Act, 1974;
- amendments to The Rural Telephone Act and The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act; and
- amendments to The Forest Act.

AGRICULTURE

You will be asked to approve amendments to The Conservation and Development Act, The Agricultural Implements Act, 1968, and The Veterinarians Act.

SNOWMOBILES

You will be asked to consider legislation which will clarify the law relating to the responsibility of snowmobilers for their own safety when operating on private land and for liability with respect to damage caused to private property.

HEALTH

To protect persons who provide emergency medical assistance at the scene of an accident from the possibility of civil suit, you will be asked to approve a new Emergency Medical Aid Act.

Amendments to The Prescription Drug Act, 1974 and The Mental Health Act will also be placed before you.

HOUSING

Housing starts in Saskatchewan in 1975 set a new record, yet demand for residential units continues to exceed supply. Because of the singular success of provincial housing programs, you will be asked to approve legislation which will raise the borrowing limits of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.

DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

My Government recognizes that many problems of growth and development face our urban centres. At this Session you will be asked to approve legislation to reorganize the Department of Municipal Affairs to give greater emphasis to the solution of urban problems.

OLYMPICS

March has been proclaimed as "Salute the Olympics Month" in Saskatchewan. I know the people of this province would wish me to extend their best wishes to the Saskatchewan athletes who will be representing Canada in the summer Olympic Games.

For the first time Saskatchewan artists and cultural groups will be involved in the Olympics. Under funding from the Department of Culture and Youth, the Ministers' Special Fund of the Western Canada Lottery, and Sask Sport, Saskatchewan will participate in the Olympic Art and Culture program. A ceramic display representing a Saskatchewan community, and exhibition of paintings by Saskatchewan artists, performances by Persephone and Globe Theatres, and performances by seven multicultural dance

troupes will be features in the Province's portion of this program.

BRIER

Just 21 years ago our capital city of Regina hosted Canada's curling classic, the Macdonald Brier, for the first time. The winners of that occasion, Garnet Campbell and his brothers of Avonlea, were honoured in this Assembly.

Today, the Brier is back in Regina. I wish to welcome all the participants, here from every Province of Canada and the Territories, and all those who have come to see the greatest display of curling our country has to offer.

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, together with the Estimates for the year beginning April 1, 1976, will be submitted to you.

I leave you now to the business of the Session with the full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities.

May Divine Providence continue to bless our Province and guide this Legislature in all its deliberations.

MR. SPEAKER: — Rule 3(1) sets 2:30 o'clock p.m. as the usual time for the commencement of each sitting day. I ask leave of the Assembly under this Rule to open the Assembly earlier than 2:30 o'clock p.m.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

MR. SPEAKER: — I beg leave to inform the Assembly that Colleen Jesse, Margaret Kosa, Joyce MacKenzie and Jacqui McAfee will be the pages during the present Session. These are the same pages who ably assisted us in the last Session.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MOTIONS

SPEECH OF LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Romanow that:

The Speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be taken into consideration later today.

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) to amend the Motion by adding the following:

And that notwithstanding Rule 12(1) and Rule 84 when the debate on the Address-in-Reply has been adjourned on Tuesday, March 16th, 1976, the debate shall stand

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adjourned until the sitting day following the conclusion of the Budget Debate in order that the Assembly may receive the Budget on Wednesday, March 17, 1976.

The debate continues on the amendment and the Motion concurrently.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on the Motion. I think I cannot address myself fully to the amendment without recounting some of the background which brings us to this position and where we find a motion which I think is unprecedented in the history of this Legislature.

I wonder about the Motion itself since it implies that the Budget is going to be presented on a particular day. I suppose the argument is that it only permits the Budget to be presented on that day. With all deference it is not for the Legislature to say what day the Budget is presented by Her Majesty's Government. I leave that point aside and review where we are.

We left this Chamber on January 28th and we left it with an agreement that the Budget would be presented on March 12th. Everybody in the Chamber knew that the Budget would be presented on March 12. We thoroughly believed that we had an agreement of all parties. There are documents to support that proposition. I hope we don't get into the position where we are having to lay on the table the document signed by Hon. Members with respect to arrangements made. I leave that aside, although if pressed we obviously have them, even if the Hon. Member for Nipawin in the press says that he has never seen them. He may consult with the Member for Estevan and he might find out a little more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Leave aside for a moment all question of whether or not we agreed that there would be no debate on the Speech from the Throne. We all agreed that the Budget would be on March 12, that was the day we set, a Friday, for Budget day. We said we wouldn't have a debate on the Speech from the Throne. The Member for Nipawin later decided that his caucus will not agree with that. Fair enough, I don't think it is fair enough, but let's assume the facts as he presupposes them. I suggest common courtesy would have suggested that he advise the House Leader and the House Leader of the Opposition . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — . . . that he was no longer able to agree with that arrangement. Had that been done we could have convened the House earlier and presented the Budget on March 12.

MR. COWLEY: — Not tricky Dicky!

MR. BLAKENEY: — We could have done that and would have done that. He conveyed nothing to us until we sent the notice that the House was to convene on March 12. On March 2nd or 3rd thereabouts he issued a press release indicating that this agreement no longer stood. I say common courtesy would have suggested that if his caucus could not go along with that, which I understand to be

his position, he would have advised us. We would have convened the House earlier. We would have had as much debate as he wished on the Throne Speech, and we would have had the Budget on March 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — That was not the course of action he chose. He chose to convey nothing, not anything to us until he announced to the press that he would not agree.

Please note, Mr. Speaker, that the reason given was that the Conservative caucus had not agreed. Fair enough. I suspect that they knew that on January 28. Either the Member for Estevan had power to speak for his caucus or he did not. That would have been relatively quickly ascertained. But what did the Member for Nipawin say when he said he wouldn't agree? He said that he would not agree, and carefully stated that his caucus did not agree, because his party was not getting research grants.

Let me make a few points clear. With respect to research grants the estimates on which we are operating, the 1976 Estimates, provide in Subvote 5 under Legislation a grant of an amount to each caucus for secretarial services. And it is worked out on so much for 15 members. His caucus has got their pro-rata share of that since June. It also provides \$600, "For Sessional Research per Member" and his caucus has got that since June, in cash. It also provides in Subvote 10 that there would be a research officer for every 15 Members. By arrangement it was worked out that the Conservative caucus would have about half a research officer. They delayed putting a person on staff for a number of months so they could have a full-time one, and they have had a full-time research officer since December 1. The only thing they have not got is the grant which goes to the Leader of the Opposition, the grant which traditionally has gone to the Officer of the Leader of the Opposition.

Since June, the Conservative caucus has, on an annual basis, in the order of \$15,000. I am not suggesting that is enough or that it is not enough. I am suggesting that in all cases in the recent history of this province we have decided what the Leader of the Opposition should get or the third party should get by having a commission headed by a member of the judiciary to examine into this. We appointed a commission headed by Mr. Justice Woods in 1971. At the first opportunity in this House in November we indicated that we would follow that course of action and we have appointed a commission headed by Mr. Justice Hughes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I want to say one other thing. There are press reports suggesting that somehow we should have agreed with the Leader of the Conservative Party to pay him more money. I ask him to look at The Legislative Assembly Act and ask himself very frankly what his legal position would be if we had agreed to pay him some money without any statutory authority. I want him to consider that with some care. I wouldn't have done that because it would have left him, I think, in an exposed position as a Member, by accepting money from the Crown without any legislative authority. I leave that point.

I go on to the next point. He then went on to say, a few days ago, that he wanted the Budget Speech. Now, he didn't want it late, but he wanted it on the 12th or as soon thereafter as possible. Once he acted the way he did we set the date of the Budget for the first opportunity we could be sure that we could deliver it. The first opportunity that did not rely upon any consent from the Member for Nipawin, or any of his caucus. I think it is understandable why we would not rely upon such an undertaking . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — He then issued a press release on March 8th. It is a masterful press release. He starts out with a paragraph which goes:

I announced that because of the failure of the Government of Saskatchewan to provide recognition of the Progressive Conservatives in the Legislature by way of enabling us to do our job as legislators properly our caucus would no longer make so-called all party agreements to bend the rules of the House until our party was recognized.

Then he goes on to say that he wants the Budget earlier, well knowing, Mr. Speaker, that there was no way that the Budget could be earlier without the very all party agreement which he had denied in paragraph one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, if we relied upon this press release, and I may say he did not communicate to me in writing, just through the press, then we would have been exposed to yet another denial and he could have proudly pointed to paragraph one, where he said he would not agree.

He went on some more and said that the reason for it was that his caucus was not aware that school board budgets needed to be submitted to municipalities by April 1. Now if the Hon. Member says that in this House I will accept his word. My duty to this House requires me to accept the word of the Hon. Member. But I say this. If he is saying that his caucus did not know that, then I will accept his word. But the rule has never, or rarely ever, been asked to carry such a burden without support from any verifiable facts.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I point out that the Member for Rosetown is a school superintendent. We are asked to believe that a school superintendent in that caucus didn't know that school budgets were presented in March. We are asked to believe that! If the Hon. Member says so we'll believe it, but we will obviously have some difficulty in so doing.

Mr. Speaker, we have established in this House a custom which provides that the Budget will be presented on a Friday. The rule book provides that Friday is Private Members' day. Since those rules were introduced we have presented our Budgets on a Friday and we have uniformly had the acceptance of the

Opposition Party not to make objection. This agreement has worked under two separate governments. Never have we needed to have an agreement in writing and yet we always understood where we were. I regret to say that this Legislature has come to a point where agreements of that kind are apparently no longer possible. We did not have them in writing before.

Whatever I may have said by way of harsh comment about the policies of Members opposite of Liberal persuasion, we were able to deal with them on the basis of arrangements made and rarely if ever written. Because we had a new situation with new Members, we decided we would have a written arrangement on the 28th of January. But even that precaution, which should not be necessary in any House, proved to be abortive. Under those circumstances we set the date for the Budget at the earliest possible date permitted by the actions of the Member for Nipawin. The earliest possible date.

I don't know the rules of this House totally. The rule book is a very small book and was meant to be used in good faith. There may well be another rule there which could somehow be dredged up to impede the business of this House. I think we ought not under these circumstances, to reply upon any motion such as we now have before us.

The Member for Nipawin and his caucus obviously wanted a debate on the Speech from the Throne, they obviously wanted to address some important remarks to the people of Saskatchewan. In my judgment, they, having acted so that the Budget cannot come down on the 12th, and we having set the date at the earliest date thereafter, the proper course of action is for us to carry on pursuant to the rules of the House without any agreements to "bend the rules". All of us, I know, will listen with keen anticipation to the remarks of the Member for Nipawin and his colleagues which were of the degree of importance that they justified delaying the Budget for 12 days.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART:(Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before I rise to speak on this amendment, I should like if I may get a ruling that if I speak on this amendment, I will still be able to speak on the Throne Speech, the main motion which is on the Throne Speech debate.

MR. SPEAKER: — I think when the Throne Speech debate begins it will be a clean slate.

MR. STEUART: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If anything could be wrong here today, if anything it could be called a clean slate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I find this debate as unfortunate as it is unnecessary. Here we see in the beginning the Leader of the Conservative Party new to this House attempting after we rose from the earlier session, attempting to score political points. In fact, let's call a spade a spade, attempting to blackmail the Government into a position of giving them some grants that

he feels, and he may well be right, that he feels that his party is entitled to. After a rather belated discovery that school boards must bring down their budgets once a year, and these budgets depend on grants from the Government, providing to him the need of a research officer. I would think to anyone else observing the scene, he stated as the Premier has outlined that an agreement that was reached by Members from the Government, from the Liberal Party and from the Conservative caucus, was in his opinion not binding, was null and void.

This was most unfortunate and put the Legislative Assembly in an awkward position and I suggest put two very fine Members of his caucus in an impossible position, because what we had agreed on as we agree from time to time by Members of the Legislative Assembly to waive certain rules in the interests of getting on with the business we were elected to do, the business of this Legislative Assembly. It is the right, of course, of any Member on either side of the House to decide that they don't want to waive those rules and force this Assembly to work to rule as you might say. Then when he belatedly discovered as I said, that this would work a hardship on local government, he changed his mind, and said that he was prepared to co-operate.

I think the events leading up to that decision, as I say were unfortunate. If we can't have agreements from time to time between the Members of the Legislative Assembly regardless of our political persuasions, then the business of this House would indeed grind very slowly and inefficiently. While we are elected as individual Members of political parties, I think it is as well to remember from time to time that we are elected as Members of the Legislative Assembly representing, at least in theory, all the people in our constituencies regardless of political stripe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — However, having looked at what the Leader of the Conservative Party was attempting to do and having looked at what he now is attempting to do which is to retrieve the error that he made, let's look at the Government's position for a minute. Because really what are we trying to do? We are here to consider the Budget. We just heard the Throne Speech and the most definite statement in it is that Garnet Campbell should have represented us in the Brier again this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — So if we are here for any purpose, surely it is to consider the Estimates to vote money supply for the Government of Saskatchewan to carry on for the next fiscal year. I did have one strange note in the Throne Speech when they announced the support of the Olympics. I thought for a mad moment that Premier Blakeney was going to show some great statesmanship. What he really said, we'll send you the Ukrainian dancers and five athletes but no money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — A position I might say endorsed by the great Prime Minister of this nation, Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — However, let's not lose sight of the point and the fact of why we are here. We are here to consider the Budget. Whether the Leader of the Conservative Party has made an error, whether he has put us in a very difficult position he has now said publicly that he is ready to make an agreement. I am prepared to believe him, whether the Government is or isn't. Let us look at the Government's position. They say, no, we are not prepared to believe him and we are not prepared to advance the Budget. What reasons do they advance?

Well they say in the first place, the printing isn't ready. Well, if they were going to have the printing ready for today, surely it could be ready for next Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. They say the invitations have gone out, well, if we are considering a Budget of over \$1 billion for the advantage of a few bankers and investment dealers, and believe me, fellows, I will tell you from experience, you might think they are on your side now, Walter, but they won't be when you are back in Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — If we are considering the Budget for the benefit of the people we might invite here, I think that is pretty frivolous. Surely we are considering the Budget, the necessity of getting on with the Budget for the good of the people of Saskatchewan.

I did a little research, I called in my research officer and said, how do I find out when the Budget has been brought down? Go to the Library, I recommend that for consideration of Members to my left. I went to the Library and I found out that the Budget is usually brought down about March 1st or 2nd. Last year it was brought down the latest I think in the last 15 or 20 years, about March 14, but it has never been brought down as late as we are talking about this year. There is no question that it is going to make the job of local government, already difficult, even more difficult. So I say to the Government, I think your excuses or your reasons for not advancing the Budget are unworthy. I think, in fact, the Premier is in a fit of pique and that came out today. I think he doesn't want to lose face, he wants to show who is the boss of this Legislative Assembly.

MR. ALLEN: — No question about it.

MR. STEUART: — Well, of course, there is no question with that unthinking mob that he has got behind him who will go for anything he says . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — There is no question that he is in charge. Some day a bolt of lightning might strike some of those backbenchers and he might not be in charge quite as much as he is but until that happens there is no question of who is in charge. But I would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that he could have showed just a little leadership. I don't blame him, there is temptation to

tick off the Leader of the Conservative Party after he gave us that little lecture a few months ago about chewing gum and slumping in our seats and sitting up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — It was too great to resist and even I find the temptation too great to resist myself. But having had a little fun at the expense of the Conservative Leader, he is new to this House, then I say that we should get serious and show the leadership that the people of this province expect of us as serious MLAs and get on with the job we were elected to do. And in this case that is the consideration of the Budget, more important this year probably than ever, considering the demand or the leadership that the people are looking for from this Government and other governments in Canada, to fight inflation as the Throne Speech says is the most serious problem facing this nation.

I don't think it is good enough to say because you played games, Mr. Member for Nipawin, that we are going to show you that we can even play better games and we will score a political point or two; I just don't think that is good enough.

In view of that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say on behalf of the Liberal Party that we are prepared as we always have been to do whatever is necessary to advance the Budget to next Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday or whenever it can be brought down by the Government.

I am sure those people who were invited to come here for Budget Day, if you just took one per cent of the new civil servants you have added since you came to power and got them on the phones you would have no trouble informing all those people that are coming here that the date has been changed. I even think that the media might give you a little publicity. So the excuse that you can't do it because the invitations went out or you can't do it because the printing isn't ready or you can't do it because the civil servants aren't ready. Believe me I was a Treasurer, they were never ready. In fact some of the Budgets I brought down, it would have been better if none of us had ever been ready.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I notice they are still the same civil servants by and large, still doing the same great job, and they will probably defeat you just as quickly as they did us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say on behalf of the Liberal caucus that we don't intend to participate in this vote. We do say to the Government that we are prepared when we come back here Monday, we will close off the debate on the Speech from the Throne, and it certainly shouldn't take long to clear that one up, that we are prepared to co-operate in any way we can to advance the Budget Debate. Whether this date suggested in this amendment is the best time or not, I don't know, you have got the technical problems. Not created by you, created

by someone else I agree, but now I call on the Premier to bury his pique, forget for a moment saving face and get on with the job we were elected to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, in concluding the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: — What was the point the Member for Nipawin wished to raise?

MR. COLLVER: — I was going to speak, Mr. Speaker, but I am the mover of the Motion.

MR. SPEAKER: — The Member had the opportunity to speak when he moved the Motion. You do not have the opportunity to speak in closing off debate on an amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Amendment negated.

Motion agreed to.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Messer (Minister of Industry and Commerce):

That the Votes and Proceedings of this Assembly be printed after first having been perused by Mr. Speaker; that he do appoint the printing thereof, and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

Motion agreed to.

CONDOLENCES

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart):

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing since the last session of two former Members of this Assembly, and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contributions they made to their constituency, their community and to this province.

John Taylor Douglas, who died on February 19, 1976, was a Member of this Legislature for the constituency of Rosetown from 1944 to 1960. He was born on October 28, 1892, at Cumberland, Ontario. In 1906 he moved to Saskatchewan with his parents and obtained his high school education. He attended the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan and subsequently became a farmer in the Laura district. He

was Minister of Highways and Transportation throughout his 16 years in the Legislature and was Minister of Public Works from 1944 to 1948. He served as chairman of the Board of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. He was active in community affairs as a member of the board of elders of Laura United Church, as a member of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, as a coach of the Laura hockey club and as a superintendent of Craikfield Sunday School.

Peter Anton Howe, who died on February 3, 1976, was a Member of this Legislature for the constituency of Kelvington, from 1938 to 1960. He was born in Warren, Minnesota in 1888, and came to Canada in 1906 to the Foam Lake district where he farmed. For many years he served as a school trustee and secretary. For many years he was a member of the Leslie Co-operative Association and delegate to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. He acted as Party Whip from 1945 to 1960.

Mr. Speaker, may I add a few words of my own beyond the formal motion of condolence. I didn't serve in the Legislature with either Jack Douglas or Peter Howe, but it was my good fortune to know both of them reasonably well. Each was a pioneer in the founding of our party, and the building of farm movements and community movements which are so much a part of Saskatchewan.

Peter Howe was a leader of the farm movement in the Foam Lake district. As a young man in 1911 when he would only be in his early 20s, he took shares in the newly formed co-op elevators in that area and that gives you some idea of his direction. He was active in the Grain Growers Association, one of the band of people who organized farmers on the original sign-up of the Wheat Pool in 1923 and 1924. He was a key figure in organizing the rural telephone company in the Leslie area. He was a prime mover in organizing a livestock shipping association in the Leslie district. He became a wheat pool delegate in 1932.

He was active in the early years of our political organization and of the farm movement. He attended the convention which organized the Saskatchewan Farmers Political Association which was a forerunner of the farmer-labor group. Later he became an active member of the farmer-labor group and when the CCF was organized he joined that party. He worked to get George Williams, the then Leader of the CCF, elected in 1934. In 1934 Mr. Williams was running in Wadena, as I think some will remember. In 1938 he himself was a candidate in Kelvington, was elected and was re-elected at every election until he retired in 1960.

I think it is clear from this brief account of his achievements that Peter Howe was a pioneer in the best tradition of that word in rural Saskatchewan. He was one of those many people who had an unshakeable belief in the ability of people to organize to solve their own problems. His manner was quiet, those who knew Peter didn't hear him complain very much. His demeanor was polite but he was a determined and able spokesman for his constituents.

In many ways Jack Douglas was like Peter Howe. He, too, was active in farm movements, community organizations and his church. He was active in the United Farmers, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and president of the Laura telephone company. Generally he was one of those community men whom many of us know.

He took an early interest in politics where he was one of those who organized the Progressive movement. He served as secretary of the Rosetown Constituency Progressive Association in the '20s, until the formation of the CCF. He was an early leader of the CCF. He served as campaign manager for M. J. Coldwell in 1935. He also served on the Provincial Council of the Party for many years. He stood for election in 1938 but was not elected. He was elected in 1944 and became the Minister of Highways.

I knew J.T. best during his years as Chairman of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. I served as secretary of that Company for five years when J. T. Douglas was the Chairman and I got to know him very well. He certainly had a quite solid manner. He did a first class job in my judgment as Chairman of the Transportation Company, organizing a bus company to serve the farthest corners of this province.

It was as Minister of Highways that I think he left his chief mark on this province. He brought to that office an ability to perform near miracles with a very small amount of money. He brought a Scottish prudence, you might even say a canniness to the job of stretching a dollar. He was able to command the warm loyalty of the employees of the Department. I think it is worthwhile to note just a few of the achievements of Jack Douglas while he was Minister of Highways.

We have to cast our mind back to 1944 when shortages of labor and equipment confronted any Minister of Highways. Out of the whole of our provincial highways system of slightly over 8,000 miles, there was less than 140 miles of blacktop. There were 4,800 miles of so-called gravel and 3,000 miles of dirt. There were over 1,200 bridges that needed replacing, 20 years old or more.

Jack Douglas faced that challenge at a time when gasoline rationing came off, and there was a great increase in the use of motor vehicles. Within ten years there were not 140, but 1,060 miles of hard surface, and there were 6,400 miles of gravel and only about 400 miles of dirt roads left.

It was a monumental undertaking. There was an acute shortage of engineers, trained technical staff and machines were worn out. He had to start from square one. Those of you who can cast your mind back to this province in 1944, knew that there wasn't much money for the capital projects in the war years. And there wasn't much money in the 1930s. Those who had the responsibility of government in those days had to shepherd their resources very carefully. Anybody who came in in 1944 started with very little.

There were big floods in 1948 and 1952. Some of you may remember the winter of '47-'48 with the enormous snowfall. The trains being stuck. That sort of thing created great problems for the Department of Highways. The year 1952 was another year which swept out bridges and washed out roads. Yet the job went on. I think in some ways it would be fair to say that Jack Douglas took us out of the mud. He entered into a trans-Canada highway agreement with the Federal Government and we were the first province to complete our share of that highway.

Jack Douglas was a person who felt that there was a great future in this province and that he, for his part, ought to

serve in the area of highways. He organized the Department and did a great deal with respect to design, improving our road construction methods. We were the second highway department in Canada to become computerized, which is rather surprising considering the size of our province. We were early leaders in having appropriate design sections and using the latest technology.

Our winters were such that as winter travel increased we had to greatly increase our maintenance effort and this Jack was able to cope with. All in all a record of outstanding achievement in that area of government service which was in those days a very difficult area.

I couldn't conclude my remarks without saying a word or two about what made each of these two gentlemen what they were. They brought a level of integrity of old-fashioned honesty to public life which comes out of a particular tradition which regrettably for all of us seems to be passing away. It was a tradition of a firm belief in religious principles which were transferred to their day to day activities whether political or otherwise. People of that nature do honor to the calling of politicians. They have appeared on many occasions on both sides of this House and it was particularly true of the people who came out of our pioneering years. Each of these two men, Jack and Peter, served their province well.

We extend our condolences to the family and we do it with the full knowledge that their lives of service will be comfort to their families. Each of them spent their years well and their families, while obviously regretting their passing have nothing to mourn in the sense that each served his fellow citizens in a quite exemplary way.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathies with members of the bereaved families.

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to join with the Premier and I'm sure all Members on both sides of the House to pay the traditional homage that we do to Members of this Legislative Assembly who have passed away since we last met. At times like this I think it's worth noting that political differences are naturally forgotten and we pay tribute to people who served their communities and the province.

I knew J.T. Douglas quite well. I was the Mayor of Prince Albert when he was, part of the time, when he was Minister of Highways and we began in an effort to build a rather controversial bridge at that time, at Prince Albert. The beginning of the ecumenical movement. We travelled to Ottawa to meet the new government of John Diefenbaker and one of the Ministers we saw at that time is sitting in the House today, Mr. Alvin Hamilton, the Minister of Northern Affairs at that time, and we were successful in having the three way sharing to complete that very important project for our community.

Mr. Douglas was a tough Minister of Highways. He did an excellent job. He presided over the modernization of

Saskatchewan's highway system. It is remarkable when you realize today how relatively simple it is to get a stretch of highway paved or to get a new bridge, when you think back in those days the problems there were and the immense problems, of course, that faced people who came before Mr. Douglas. But he was a good Minister of Highways, he served his community and he served his province extremely well and he gained the respect of all who knew him.

Peter Howe I knew not as well, but I knew him as an outstanding farm leader. He played a very important role in local government and in provincial government. He was a very strong and outspoken advocate of his political philosophy, but it's interesting to note that he did maintain throughout his public life the respect and the friendship of political friend and foe alike. He too played a serious and important role in development of our province.

I join with the Premier in paying my respects to these two men and passing on to their families our sympathies and our condolences.

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to add our condolences to those already made by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

Although I did not know either Mr. Douglas or Mr. Howe personally, their records show that they served the interests of their constituents in the province well.

May God grant them eternal peace and their loved ones remembrance of the joy of their life.

HON. N.E. BYERS (Minister of the Environment): — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with all Members of this Assembly in paying tribute to both Jack Douglas and to Peter Howe, particularly, and to express sincere sympathy to their families.

Peter Howe served the constituency of Kelvington for a period of 22 years. The passing of Peter Howe, I think, really marks the passing of an era of those stalwart pioneers whose leadership and energy and initiative - that was applied both individually and collectively - in Peter's case, spanning some 88 years. These were the men who originated and shaped and developed many of the institutions and movements that form the foundations of our somewhat unique lifestyle in Saskatchewan. These institutions and organizations and movements were either non-existent or in their formative stages when Peter Howe at the age of 18 set foot into Saskatchewan.

I think we need to reflect on how things were when Peter Howe and Jack Douglas came to this province in 1906. As a newcomer to Saskatchewan, Peter Howe could not, for example, order a new phone to be installed within 24 or 48 hours. To obtain this service, he and his neighbors had to go out and build a rural telephone company, which they did.

It was with this same spirit that he helped to organize the Osland School District and also served as a school trustee

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for the Kristnes School, which is still standing and used occasionally for community gatherings, which is living testimony that the kind of community spirit that Peter Howe fostered, still thrives.

I think this ability to motivate and to mobilize others to obtain a better life continued on from his youth and all through the 22 years that he served in the Legislature. Peter Howe never hesitated to join and work for a cause, that would improve the lot of his fellow men.

It is, therefore, no surprise that he identified with such movements as the Wheat Pool in its early years and served as a delegate for several years. This interest may have dimmed but it did not diminish in his retirement years.

Many of the countless amenities that many of us, I think, often take for granted, today, are really here, because men like Peter Howe and Jack Douglas had the foresight, and they had the determination, the energy, the concern for others to build - often by volunteer labor - not only for their generation but for future generations.

With that background, I think it is not surprising that Peter Howe was elected to this Legislature in 1938, serving continuously for 22 years the constituency of Kelvington, until his voluntary retirement in 1960. Those were, I am sure, very difficult years for a rural Member of the Legislature. Because it required a good deal of time and energy and patience as they helped to lay out many of the new institutions that are commonplace within our society today. They were working at that time with the development of the grid road system, the construction of new schools and hospitals after the war, the taking of a power system to rural Saskatchewan, starting to build senior citizens' housing projects in our small communities.

It has been mentioned that he served as Whip from 1945 to 1960. In a very limited time, one really cannot do justice to describing the quiet, but effective manner that characterized his political service to his constituents. When George Williams, the Leader of our Party in this House went overseas, about 1942 or thereabouts, Peter Howe virtually assumed the responsibility for looking after his constituents in the adjoining constituency of Wadena.

Peter was a big man, in that he was always accessible to his constituents. All constituents freely made their way to his home to offer advice or to seek a solution to a problem. No problem was too big or too small for him to deal with. His frequent visits from farm to farm and from town to town are legend throughout the Kelvington constituency. He was in a sense a mobile constituency office, seeking ideas and offering help. This constant contact with his constituents built a solid bond of trust between himself and his constituents of all parties.

I did not personally know Peter Howe until after he retired from this Legislature, but for ten years our family had the good fortune to be a close neighbor of Peter Howe and his wife Alice who passed away in 1968.

After his retirement from politics he maintained a keen interest in the affairs of his community, his constituency, his

province and his country. As long as his health permitted, he frequently visited throughout his constituency, renewing associations with the people he had served for 20 years. They were his people and he was their Member.

In retirement his interests in political affairs never diminished. My wife and I visited him in late December, 1975. A stack of Hansards by his bedside, he had followed closely and accurately the events of the last session of this Legislature and was very conversant with the events in Ottawa. He was equally up-to-date on the events in the federal parliament.

Therefore, at this time on behalf of his former constituents, I am very pleased to pay tribute to this great man, Peter Howe, who has given a lifetime of dedicated and loyal service to his country and to his province and to his constituents and I join with the other Members of the Assembly in extending sincere sympathies to the family on his passing.

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Premier and other Members of this Assembly in paying tribute at this time to a former Member of the Rosetown constituency, J. T. Douglas. I remember the name J. T. Douglas from the beginning of the Tommy Douglas government years in 1944 and I also recall, and I can't remember the year a radio program, several years later which honored the late Mr. Douglas for his work that he had accomplished in this province as Minister of Highways. I met Mr. Douglas on one occasion only and I have fond memories of that meeting.

Jack, as he was commonly called, was a true representative of his constituency and like so many of the pioneers, Jack Douglas had his roots buried very deeply in the affairs of his community and his church.

In talking to constituents of mine who knew Mr. Douglas, I am told that he always had time to listen to his constituents and also time to listen to his colleagues, here in this House.

So today, I join with other Members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to offer sympathy and condolences to the family of Jack Douglas.

HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways and Transportation): — Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected in 1952 the Hon. J. T. Douglas and Peter Howe were veterans. Myself and Arthur Thibault are the only two people in this House that had the privilege of sitting with these two people that we are honoring and remembering today.

Peter Howe was a 14 year veteran of this House when I was first elected in 1952. J. T. or Jack Douglas, since 1944 was already a veteran of eight years.

I can remember as a freshman with what respect both these men were regarded by their colleagues of that day. They were two tremendous individuals. Peter Howe, Scandinavian extraction, a builder, as my colleagues have mentioned, a fine quiet gentleman, but not to be underestimated if you crossed his path and he felt he was right. He was our Whip and when things started to get a little argumentative as they sometimes do in any caucus,

Peter was the one who would stand and say, "Now gentlemen," and with his slightly Scandinavian accent, "I think we ought to be taking another look at this." You only had to hear Peter Howe say Minnesota to know what his antecedents were. I think it is a pity that men like Peter Howe must grow old and pass from the scene. I'm sure that those people of his community, who were mentioned by my colleague, Neil Byers, people who knew him and the family that he has left behind, have examples to follow that will be remembered long after his passing.

J. T., Jack Douglas who had the opportunity to serve on a broader scale as a Member of the Cabinet, left his mark and the Premier has gone over the history of his activities as a builder, starting from scratch as it were after years of depression and the exigencies of war.

I think I would be remiss if I didn't mention a few things at this time. Some of the younger people in this House probably take many things for granted and that is a bit of a mistake.

It doesn't seem so long ago since 1952. It was a new automobile and to drive down from North Battleford in 1952 was a seven to eight hour jaunt in good weather. In 1952 you doglegged from North Battleford to Regina, following road allowances and going here and there, going through towns and through the little villages meandering on roads that were, in winter or summer, scarcely more than troughs.

My first memory of the two men we are remembering today was sitting in the public gallery here when I took some cattle down to a bull sale here in Regina, the annual show which will be on here again next week, and watched the debate in the House at that time when the 11 CCF Members were in the House as Opposition. Peter Howe was a sitting Member, J. T. Douglas was here as a worker and an organizer. People, at that time, who made their way here, had somewhat greater difficulties in travelling. I can remember a famous cattleman in Saskatchewan, in 1944, won the Hereford grand championship for Saskatchewan, J. S. Palmer of Marsden, Saskatchewan, bought a new car in Regina. It was very difficult to get a new car in those war days. Somebody said to Palmer, "How are you going to get it home?" "Well," he said, "the people up around Davidson have told me that it has thawed and now frozen, I think I can get over the drifts between here and Saskatoon, then we'll leave it in Saskatoon until the road opens to Marsden in the spring." That was 1944. And that was a situation that no one complained too much about then because that was the way of life in those days.

Since that time we have come a long way thanks to men like J. T. I want to especially mention the building of a department, a service department and the people in it.

In order to get the job done in the late '40s and '50s the first thing that was required were service personnel to do the job at hand. A large number of new recruits from the university, young engineers were taken into the department and many of them are still here, or serving with other departments in Canada. Many of them have gone on to greater jobs and better positions in other provinces. The building of a service department where the engineers were given responsibility and their decisions were adhered to. The battles were many and the Leader of the Opposition will remember those when certain towns were going to be bypassed or they were going to take a shorter route across

country in order to take those doglegs out, it took a lot of determination on the part of any politician to say this is the way it is going to be, this is best in the long run, and suffer the wrath of the residents in areas that were being bypassed and from the owners of those farms that were being cut. I think we can see the wisdom of that policy today, when literally miles and miles of highway are shortened, and therefore less expensive. These are a credit to the determination of the Minister who brought those policies into being and which have been followed up and continued by other governments since that time, nothing much of the Douglas policy was changed. Emphasis was put in other places. The people and administrative organization who were put into place and given the responsibility to do the job have endured and I think that that was to the advantage of Saskatchewan and to Canada and will always be a credit to J. T. Douglas, my friend and a friend of Saskatchewan, as was Peter Howe.

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I got to know Peter Howe back in the early '50s when I spent some time in Kelvington constituency in the town of Foam Lake. I got to know him as the MLA for Kelvington, and there is no question that he was highly respected, even though there were differences in terms of the political philosophy. That was proven by his electoral success. I don't think there is anything a politician can hope to achieve more than to be respected by his constituents.

I got to know him again, we renewed our acquaintance in the late '60s, in an election campaign which brought success for Neil Byers. Peter Howe had retired, but he certainly hadn't slowed down so far as carrying the banner for his party, and I had a tough time to keep up to him, even though I was a lot younger than he was. An old saying we have on this side of the House about the pioneers of this movement - He was a great old CCFer," and I can say that Peter Howe was one of the great ones.

In paying tribute to Jack Douglas, it is pretty tough to be the chairman of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company because of the standards that Jack Douglas set. It was back in 1945, March 24 in fact, that the Hon. J. T. Douglas, who was then Minister of Highways announced a bus and trucking company for Saskatchewan on occasion of the first reading of the proposed Crown Corporations Act. Not only did he make the announcement but Jack Douglas got things done, for on January 29, 1946 the first board was established. By 1947 they had purchased a number of franchises from Greyhound and other local operators, they had purchased bus depots and garages and established them in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. They were operating 33 bus schedules on 29 routes, a total of 4,600 miles, and they had 53 buses. The truck line was established from Prince Albert to La Ronge in 1948 and that truck line is still operating. By 1947 there were 145 employees, and in that 1947 year the first union agreement was signed with the Amalgamated Transit Union.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people who say that the Saskatchewan Transportation Company is a pacesetter in Canada, a pacesetter in terms of their equipment, a pacesetter in terms of the calibre of their staff and a pacesetter in terms of the service to a very scattered population in the province. If that's true, and many of us believe it to be true, it's because

of the foundation laid and the building of the transportation company by the late John Taylor Douglas.

Mr. Speaker, Peter Howe and Jack Douglas lived a full life, and I think Saskatchewan is the better for the lives they lived.

HON. W.A. ROBBINS (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words too on behalf of Mr. Howe and Mr. Douglas.

I did not personally know Mr. Howe. I sat in the galleries on occasion and observed him in this House, but the late John Taylor Douglas I knew extremely well. He homesteaded within four miles of my farm home and our families were very close. We often had Sunday dinner in the Douglas home and I very much appreciated the personal contacts I had with him.

My latest recollections with relation to Mr. Douglas, were when I visited him in Sherbrooke Community Centre, where he was a guest, up until his death, and my earliest recollections of Mr. Douglas, occurred when I was a boy of six years of age. I remember him and John Evans, who was then the MP for Rosetown, visiting in our farm home. I also vividly remember the period when M. J. Coldwell was a candidate in the Rosetown-Biggar constituency in 1935, and Jack Douglas was his organizer. Our farm home happened to be one of the few farm homes that had sewer and water at that time. They travelled on dusty gravel highways and inevitably ended up in our home on Saturday night for their Saturday night baths. I remember Mr. Douglas very well as a Sunday School teacher, as a coach of a hockey team in which I was involved, and as a very close personal friend. I feel that he made a great contribution to the community in which he lived, both through farm organizations, through his church, through recreational facilities, through the rural telephone company, and through his constituency. I feel that Mr. Douglas was a model person, a good family man, a good community worker, a good Member of this Legislature and a good Cabinet Minister in his responsibilities as Minister of Highways and Minister of Transportation.

I wish to express my sympathies and condolences to his two surviving daughters, Joan in Saskatoon and Beth in Vancouver, and to all others who mourn his passing. I would also like to extend my sympathies to the family and friends of the late Peter Howe.

MR. P.P. MOSTOWAY (Saskatoon Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words in tribute to the memory of Mr. Douglas.

About a year ago I had occasion to visit Mr. Douglas, who at that time resided in my constituency of Saskatoon Centre. I well remember the occasion because I spent about an hour there and I found him extremely mentally alert, and interested in the activities of his fellow men. In fact, he questioned me on the activities of Members in this House, certainly not in a critical sort of way. It showed that he was still very interested. Incidentally, he also related to me some of the stories that he had to tell about years gone by. There was no doubt that Mr. Douglas could be labelled as being Mr. Highways of Saskatchewan, and certainly a pioneer and part of the rich heritage of Saskatchewan.

I want to express condolences to his family and say that I know from talking to many that he was very highly regarded.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart):

That the Resolution just passed together with the transcripts of oral tributes to the memory of the deceased Members be communicated to the bereaved families on behalf of this Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed at 12:30 o'clock p.m.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

MR. D.G. BANDA (Redberry) moved, seconded by F.J. Thompson (Athabasca):

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

TO HIS HONOUR THE HONOURABLE GEORGE PORTEOUS Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

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

He said: Mr. Speaker, in rising to move the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I am extremely conscious of the honour that has been bestowed upon myself and the constituency of Redberry, and I want to thank the Premier for that privilege.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — I am certain that all Members of the House wish to join with me in congratulating His Honour George Porteous on his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — I feel confident that he will carry out his duties with the sense of dignity and humility that has characterized this office in the past. I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the work of our retired Lieutenant-Governor, Stephen Worobetz, and wish him continued health and happiness in his return to private life.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — As the Throne Speech indicates, inflation is a serious problem and I am confident that the province will

approach the problem with the sense of fairness and equality that this Government has demonstrated in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — The 1970s in Saskatchewan may well prove to be as significant a decade for Saskatchewan as were the 1930s. In the 1970s Saskatchewan is at the crossroads that may determine our development and way of life for perhaps the rest of this century. Resource development, agriculture, rural life, northern development and transportation are all fundamental issues which have to be dealt with in this decade to ensure Saskatchewan's future prosperity and development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, today I wish to deal with one of these fundamental issues.

This Government's approach to agriculture and rural life is vastly different from that of both the Liberal and Conservative Parties.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Anyone disputing this needs only to examine the record. Let me briefly review the realties of the situation in Saskatchewan in the late '60s when we had Liberal and Conservative Governments jockeying for power in Ottawa and a Liberal Government clinging to power in Saskatchewan. In 1941 there were 138,700 farms in Saskatchewan of an average size of 432 acres. By 1971 average farm size had increased to 845 acres while farm numbers had decreased to 77,000. Over this same period of time the provincial farm population had almost been halved.

It seemed, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal Government's report in the late '60s which called for reduction of two-thirds of the farms in Canada was fast approaching reality. The provincial Liberal Government in the meantime, finding themselves in economic difficulties was closing down hospitals and reducing education facilities - a step in the rural areas that can be disastrous, and lead to the inevitable destruction of some communities. I notice that in Ontario at the present, the provincial Conservatives are following the same approach and I suggest they review their policy lest they find themselves in the same position as our Liberal Party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP offered an alternative to the depressing condition of rural development and agriculture in this province. The NDP were committed to providing an alternative that would allow Saskatchewan to build a solid agricultural base, to realize the potential of our rural communities and at the same time preserve the unique value of a Saskatchewan life style.

In 1971, the NDP was elected on this platform and in 1975 they returned to power because of the accomplishments of the previous four years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — I am certain that all Members in this House will agree that the rural Saskatchewan of today is a vastly different place than rural Saskatchewan of a few short years ago.

This can be attributed to several factors. Certainly world agricultural prices are high and we have benefited from this, but much can be attributed to the program and the foresight of this Blakeney Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Programs aimed at revitalizing our rural community, programs aimed at stabilizing agriculture in order to keep our young on the farm, and, finally, attempts to provide services in the rural areas comparable or better than those in other parts of Saskatchewan and Canada. I should briefly like to deal with some of these program implemented by our NDP Government.

Programs like Operation Mainstreet and Open Roads. Open Roads that oils the access roads of towns and communities and Operation Mainstreet that provided 70 per cent of the cost of oiling and 30 per cent of the cost to maintain main streets in our smaller communities. Mr. Speaker, well over 300 communities have benefited from these programs.

Programs like cultural activities grants or energy assistance to rinks. These programs are weighted in favor of smaller towns. They provide a focal point for community activities and recreational programs that our small centres never had before.

Programs like Community Health and social centres that provide out patient clinics, visiting doctor, home care, 24 hour nursing service, community services, meals on wheels, low rental housing for senior citizens, dental care for children.

School grants were increased with higher allowances for rural students and special allowances for population sparsity and enrolment decline. Education operating grants have doubled and capital grants have increased dramatically. When one talks of grants, mention must be made at the Community Capital Fund. It is hard to find a town or village in Saskatchewan that did not build or improve a local facility with the \$75 per capita grant introduced by this Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — I could go on, Mr. Speaker, and mention the Regional Highway Program, Nurse Practitioner Program, or the Grid Road Assistance, SEDCO small business loans, Sask Tel expansion or de-centralized government services, bringing government and government programs in contact with those they serve.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — All these programs, Mr. Speaker, all in less than five years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — More important, most are geared primarily to smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, new vitality in our communities, new life to our towns, new development in rural Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — The development and growth of rural Saskatchewan does not stop only in these communities. Only by ensuring a stable and prosperous rural economy can these communities provide the services and benefits necessary in our society. The Government has moved to improve the agriculture sector of our economy. I wish to mention some of the most significant programs.

The Land Bank

The Land Bank provides individuals who wish to get out of farming an opportunity to sell land at fair prices and at the same time allow young farmers an opportunity to obtain land for farming without requiring the tremendous capital necessary for farming these days. Now the Opposition can attack the Land Bank as much as they wish. They can be as critical to the point of irrationality but today in the Province of Saskatchewan, 1,700 young people are farming who would probably not be doing so, had it not been for this program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Crop Insurance Program. Under this Government, crop insurance coverage has expanded across the entire agricultural portion of Saskatchewan. Coverage is well over several millions of dollars with almost half of Saskatchewan farmers taking advantage of this program.

Farm Ownership Act.

It was bad enough that Saskatchewan experienced a loss of ownership of our agricultural land resource, but often this loss was to large foreign corporations or absentee landlords. The NDP enacted legislation to ensure that large scale corporate foreign ownership and absentee ownership could no longer occur.

Farm Cost Reduction.

What farmer has not experienced an increase in production costs in the last few years? The largest increases have been in energy costs and the Government moved to cushion farmers from the dramatic increases in these costs. To January 20, 1976 over 7,600 applications for reimbursements under this program have been received. The average payment is \$133 per farmer. Payouts in the province consist of \$440,928.92 in this fiscal year alone.

And let us not overlook the Prairie Farm Machinery Testing Institute, Hog Stabilization, Cow-Calf Advance Program and others too numerous to mention.

Now, Mr. Speaker, programs such as these have significantly contributed to the viability of an agricultural way of life in this province.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best illustration of the growth and the prosperity of rural Saskatchewan is to compare some of the these centres with their counterparts in other parts of Canada. Mr. Speaker, electrical power is more extensively utilized than natural gas in rural Saskatchewan. A residential user of 500 KWH of electricity residing in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan pays \$12.38 for that power. Over in Russell, Manitoba, the user of that same amount of power pays \$13.72. However, in Conservative Alberta, a user in Three Hills, would have to pay \$14.82.

I would expect the differential in rates to be much higher when it comes to natural gas because of the advantage of an energy rich province like Alberta, but this is not the case. For a consumer of 190 MCF of natural gas in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, would pay \$1.27 while in Three Hills, Alberta the rate is \$1.14. Not much of an advantage in a province as rich in natural resources as Alberta. Incidentally, a customer in Collingwood, Ontario would pay \$2.14 for this same volume of natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, in the rural areas of this province cars and trucks are a necessity, not only as a means of transportation, but in most cases, necessary for one's livelihood. A 1974 one ton farm truck costs \$89 to insure in Saskatchewan, while the same truck is \$144 to insure in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Before this year the difference was even more pronounced.

Mr. Speaker, last year when I paid my taxes I discovered that I actually paid less taxes in 1975 than I did in 1971.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — I have heard it repeated time and time again by the Opposition that taxes have gone up in Saskatchewan since the NDP came to power. I decided to find out myself. I took an RM in my constituency, RM No. 434 and added up all the taxes paid on three quarters of land in 1971 the last year of the Liberal Government, all taxes including municipal, school, telephone and hospital. The total come to \$630.52 less \$70, the Liberal homeowner grant, giving a total of \$560.52. In 1975, the total taxes on that same amount of land came to a total of \$521.80 after payment of the \$200 property improvement grant, less taxes after nearly five years of NDP Government and with an inflation rate of over ten per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, if the railway companies, the large international grain companies and the Federal Government are given a free hand to develop their policies, it will not make much difference how much money or how many programs are provided by this Government to smaller communities if the life line to these centres is cut off. If this is allowed to happen, then all the provincial government programs and aids will be of no consequence.

I speak about rail line abandonment. The Liberal transportation policy makers are still living in the fifties, when flying was glamorous and fuel was cheap. It is time for us to get them, literally, back on the rails. All the prairie towns that depend on CN face a quick end to passenger service under new guidelines for rail passenger service that were tabled in the House of

Commons in late January.

The rural areas face the same dilemma, where they have to unite their forces and prepare briefs to the Hall and Snavely Commissions to try and prove to the Liberals and Conservatives that the end of a railway is the end of a rural way of life in Saskatchewan.

Canada is the only industrialized country in the world that is reducing instead of expanding rail services. In France, the Government is rebuilding lines in the major rail corridor for service to begin in 1982 with trains running 160 miles an hour.

It is not just short routes that are being expanded in other countries either. International express routes are seen in Europe as the answer to inflated fuel costs and soaring air fares. What is the Federal Government's answer in Canada and Saskatchewan? Rail line deterioration, abandonment, more trucks and fewer elevators and fewer communities.

This is not an NDP Government's answer and the people of Saskatchewan know this isn't.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Only one political party has had the courage to say no. Mr. Speaker, the idea of rail line abandonment and inland terminals is just another step backwards. Why has the Federal Government allowed large grain exporters into our province and why have they come?

They have been allowed to come because the Members opposite and their colleagues support the big business concept. They are proving this time and time again in their fight in this province on government insurance, medicare, potash legislation and our orderly marketing system. The large grain companies know that as long as there is a Liberal or Tory Government they can reap the benefits at the expense of our rural people. It is interesting to read the report from the Regina Leader-Post of Friday, February 20, 1976, where Interpol (the International Police Organization) has been warned by the United States that grain exporters in that country have defrauded foreign customers by about \$120 million a year over the last five years.

Farmers must be made aware of what is happening in Saskatchewan at the expense of our pioneers' hard work to build and develop an elevator system owned and operated by farmers for their own advantage and not some large grain exporting agency.

I should like to quote a few lines from the Hon. Eugene Whelan's speech made in Kelowna, B.C. on January 21, 1976:

Farmers are producing food efficiently without the so-called free market system. They are the most productive farmers in the world and they're doing without a free market system. The wheat farmer was hurt by a free market system. He got hurt by monopoly control by big grain dealers who used shady grading and weighing practices. He got hurt by international sales and transportation practices not conducted with his interest at heart. The free market system has not worked to the benefit of agricultural producers.

We, in the NDP agree that the free market system puts the producers at the mercy of grain traders who are in the business to make a profit and that is all that they see.

This Government believes that the orderly marketing system is the only system which provides a reasonable guarantee . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — . . . a reasonable guarantee of price for a commodity and cannot be allowed to be destroyed.

We feel that our rail system should be upgraded in such a manner that trains can run on them. There is no reason why light trains cannot run on branch lines. Where are the railways going to get the money to upgrade all the branch lines to carry the heavy hopper cars? And, if this is done, where are all the hopper cars going to come from?

The Federal Government, with taxpayers' dollars is the only recent builder of hopper cars. All of a sudden the railways say we must upgrade all our branch lines to carry the hopper cars. All of a sudden the normal grain cars are to be put in moth balls and a new hopper car will emerge from somewhere. A good example of this is the procedure used now by the CN on the Heatherleigh subdivision in my constituency. Between Sandwith and Heatherleigh there are in excess of 150 boxcars in moth balls now. These cars have been sitting there for three weeks already.

Mr. Speaker, with joint running rights and a little upgrading we could develop and maintain our grain handling system to serve producers' needs and not just the railways' financial expectations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — This Province of Saskatchewan was developed by hard work, many sacrifices and hard times. We believe that the system must continue to function with the producers getting the benefit and not railroads and grain traders.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the whole question of rail line abandonment and grain-handling is the most serious threat to our rural way of life in Saskatchewan in the next few years.

We in the New Democratic Party will fight with our utmost on the side of the producers on this issue, just as we have in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with an area of concern to many farmers, not just in Redberry constituency, but across this province.

Our province is a natural mixed farming area. We have one

of the best livestock areas in Saskatchewan in our Redberry constituency. The people of our family farms as well as many others in the province, support the small towns, the churches, the curling and skating rinks in these areas.

The grain economy in this province has been fortunate because of relatively good crops over the past two years. But the livestock area is in some serious difficulty. We in the New Democratic Party believe that a livestock stabilization program is necessary to support this valuable industry in our province. Our Government has been able to help the hog producers by stabilizing the prices and setting up the Hog Marketing Commission. This kept many from bankruptcy two years ago. Our Government helped many young farmers, through Farmstart loans to diversify in livestock operations. We have helped the cow-calf operators the last two years with cash advances on calves, to help them get out of a sagging market. Thirty-five million dollars in 1974, in excess of this amount in 1975. But these are only short-term measures. Because of our livestock numbers, our provincial treasury, like Alberta, cannot afford a realistic price stabilization program. We have constantly pressured the Federal Minister of Agriculture to get some commitment to help in this area.

As of February 27, 1976 our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) and the Federal Minister have again met to discuss this important issue. We are hopeful that some announcement is to come soon. It is regrettable that we haven't had some announcement yet, because farmers must make their management decisions months in advance and must know as precisely as possible what their price expectations might be.

It is very difficult to convince federal authorities that livestock farmers need assistance when over there in the Opposition in this House they say that the only way out of the crisis is 'by eating our way out'.

Mr. Speaker, many bright young operators have placed their skill and borrowed capital on the line in the past three years to establish cow-calf operations. They are, because of this commitment, very vulnerable to returns which are inadequate to meet high interest rates, return a portion on borrowed capital, pay operating costs and provide a living for their families. These young men represent the future of the industry and need help now if they are to contribute in the years ahead.

I do not wish to end my remarks on a negative tone, but I should like to repeat that we in Saskatchewan are at the crossroads of our development and must be prepared to work together to preserve our way of life and protect it from powerful vested interests who only seek to advance their economic interests.

There are many other areas that I could comment on but I know my colleagues on this side of the House will cover many in their remarks in this debate. Our Government's record has been an impressive one and it will continue to be an impressive one in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech reintroduces some important legislation left on the Order Paper when the House last met, and I am therefore pleased to move this Motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. F.J. THOMPSON (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak I am aware of the honor that has been given to the Athabasca constituency through me to second the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I am even more honored when I realize that I have an opportunity to speak on one of the most significant accomplishments of the NDP Government and that is its northern policy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Before I begin, Mr. Speaker, I should like to join with my colleague, the Member for Redberry (Mr. Banda) in congratulating the new Lieutenant-Governor, His Honour George Porteous, on his appointment to that high office, and also to wish all the success, health and happiness to our retired Lieutenant-Governor, His Honour, Doctor Stephen Worobetz.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — A policy for the development of the North has not been an easy road to follow. The years of disparity in economic and in social terms made the solutions difficult. This fact, coupled with a formidable environment and government reluctance to act, delayed the development of a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to deal with the area known as northern Saskatchewan.

Only in the last three to four years has there been a change in attitude. Only in the last three to four years has the North taken on a new look.

Mr. Speaker, it took 70 years for the South to reach its present level of development. If the past three to four years are any indication then the North is well on its way to erasing its serious problems which it has faced over the years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — I feel confident that if the last few years are any indication of what is to come then the people of northern Saskatchewan can be assured that they will not have to wait 70 years to achieve a pattern of life distinct, yet comparable to their counterparts in the south.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — For years development in the North has been hampered by a variety of factors; transportation difficulties, nearly one-third of northern communities are inaccessible by conventional means of surface transportation for many months of the year: climatic and geographical situations, I need not elaborate on these difficulties; gross economic and social disparities that are self-perpetuating.

Mr. Speaker, government inaction for too long, band-aid approaches to northern affairs and northern problems failed to effectively narrow the widening gap. In the past, whenever a government required a cut-back, or curtailment of services, the northern programs were the first to be dropped. The lack

of local involvement in northern affairs, too often well intentioned but misguided bureaucrats, government from outside the North, failed adequately to relate to the problems and people of the North.

For these reasons, and countless others, solutions to the problems of the North remained unsolved. Mr. Speaker, only one political party has made a serious attempt to come to grips with the problems of the North and to undertake to provide this region with a comprehensive, social and economic program designed to deal with the reality of the situation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — The one government that has faced up to this situation is the present NDP Government, a government I am proud to be counted as part of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, I should briefly like to review some of the events which led up, not only to the creation of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, but contributed to the election of the NDP in 1971 and their re-election in 1975.

When the Liberals came to power in 1964 they did not have a northern policy. Mr. Speaker, they had enough difficulties in formulating policies to deal with the South, never mind the North. Now the Liberals of the day decided that the best method to deal with the North would be to apply the same principles of development that they were using across the province. That policy consisted of inviting large corporations, mostly American, to come to Saskatchewan, develop Saskatchewan resources to their financial benefit, and in return the province would provide tax concessions and provide all the benefits a company desired.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Which party?

MR. THOMPSON: — The Liberal Party. That same party today attacks the Crown corporations and labels them as inefficient, or mismanaged. Those Liberals are the same people who negotiated a deal for the Athabasca Pulp Mill. Imagine the delight of an American corporation who are offered 70 per cent of the control of a pulp mill while they contribute less than 30 per cent of the costs. Indeed, not only was the Government of Saskatchewan committed to pay 70 per cent of the cost, but they were to provide roads to the site, a natural gas line to the mill and stumpage rates at one-half the going price. As if that was not enough, the company received cutting rights in northern Saskatchewan equivalent to an area the size of the Province of New Brunswick.

What of the Anglo-Rouyn Mine, another shining example of Liberal mismanagement. After the mine had been abandoned the province had managed to secure \$94,342 from this enterprise, and this sum after having expended \$5 million on roads and services to the Anglo-Rouyn Mine.

Mr. Speaker, this was the Liberal attempt to develop northern Saskatchewan, and it was a failure.

In 1971 the people of Saskatchewan clearly indicated their displeasure with the Liberal developmental policies and elected a New Democratic Government with a clear vision and a plan for the North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, on May 1, 1972 it came with the creation of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

How did the Liberals react to the creation of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, as would be expected, they opposed it from day one, as they do all progressive legislation, and took every opportunity to criticize and hinder the operation of this department.

Following the recent provincial election and minus two northern Members, the Liberal Party are again without a northern policy. They are back where they usually are. But, Mr. Speaker, this time they have company on this no-policy stance of theirs. They have the company of our Conservative friends who lack a northern policy, or indeed, lack a policy of anything . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — . . . as they have proven with the Budget. They would disrupt the whole province for personal gain.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — In 1971 the NDP was elected on a commitment to work for the North. We believe in the North, and the people that inhabit that region of our province. We believe that given proper physical, economic and social standards, northern Saskatchewan could and would develop. Given proper sensitivity to the aspirations and concerns of the people, the Government could undertake to lessen the disparities and inequalities of life in the North and allow northern inhabitants the advantages of all the benefits that we, in the South, enjoy without forsaking that distinct quality of northern life which we all hold so dear.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan has been in operation for nearly four years now. Over the past four years we have seen many significant changes occur. Many of these changes are quite obvious. However, others are more subtle, though just as significant. By any standards of judgment I believe most northerners will agree that the Department of Northern Saskatchewan has been an unqualified success.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — The record is there for anyone who wishes to examine it. I invite all Members to examine the situation in the North now to that of four short years ago. Only then can you begin to discover the significant impact that the Government program has had. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by examining an area of provincial development, which as the Throne Speech indicates, is a particular success.

Mr. Speaker, in 1971, the last year of Liberal Government, there was not a single house constructed by the Government in the North. People were living in the crudest forms of accommodations without most modern conveniences. In 1972 the Department of Northern Saskatchewan housing program resulted in 40 houses being constructed. In 1973, 99 homes were constructed; in 1974, 151; and in 1975, 134 houses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Now, Mr. Speaker, this may not be much by Canadian standards but certainly in comparison to the Liberal average of 23 houses a year, the North is experiencing a housing boom. I speak of only the public housing. Not only has there been a substantial increase in accommodations, but employment opportunities have been generated by this increased activity. In the last two years alone, over 1,000 people in the North, 80 per cent of whom are Natives, were employed in the housing industry.

However, construction alone is not the only area where the North has benefited. In 1975 grants administered under the Department of Northern Saskatchewan provided \$1,100,000 for improvements to existing homes. These included improvements to homes occupied by senior citizens, social assistance recipients. This has not passed unnoticed. Providing for environmental needs does not end with housing, Mr. Speaker. Sewer and water must be constructed to provide adequate living conditions. Sewer and water has been established in communities such as La Loche, Weyakwin, Buffalo Narrows, Cumberland House. Starts have been made on systems at Green Lake, Isle-a-la-Crosse. New systems are scheduled for Beauval and Sandy Bay and many other smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, these are the obvious examples of which I spoke of earlier. Into this category you can include such accomplishments as highway construction, bridges, airstrip assistance. In strictly economic terms, these accomplishments alone have affected the North like no programs before have.

I spoke earlier of some very significant changes that though very subtle are more an indication of the success of the northern program than some of the obvious programs. An accelerated construction program was undertaken for the construction of educational facilities. The construction of an elementary school in La Ronge, extension of facilities in Buffalo Narrows, Camsell Portage, Michelle Village to name a few. Gymnasium construction in Beauval, Sandy Bay have been undertaken adding to the already completed facilities at La Loche, La Ronge, Isle-a-la Crosse, Cumberland House and Buffalo Narrows. Operating grants to the northern school boards has in the fiscal year alone totalled over \$5 million.

Education does not stop, Mr. Speaker, with the young. The establishment of three community colleges in the near future will bring adult education opportunities to those who never had an opportunity before. Five mobile training units will bring training opportunities to all that desire them. New and exciting apprenticeship programs have development with the appointment of the first northern apprenticeship supervisor. The opportunities for on-the-job training are as never before in the history of the North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most important accomplishment of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan has been in the area of health and social development. The greatest single lesson of the North is the interdependence of economic and social development. You cannot have development without adequate health and social conditions, while at the same time you cannot have adequate social levels and health care without the economic base to support these services. A balance between the two is no mean task. And, indeed, this recognition was one of the major factors in favor of the creation of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

I wish to present to the House the facts which I believe speak for themselves. In the last few years the North has seen a dramatic decrease in both social assistance payments and social assistance clients. During 1975 an average of 638 northern families needed social assistance in order to survive while in 1973, 1,118 families required assistance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, additionally during that same period of time the SAP payroll expenditure declined by 54 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — This decrease has occurred for a number of reasons, not the least of which is expansion of social service offices and staff in the North. This expansion has resulted in the social workers being free to devote more time to less people, thereby increasing their efficiency. Expanded staff includes an alcoholism rehabilitation program and a corrections program.

Sask Tel has constructed a micro-wave tower system through the North. Most northern communities now have access to direct dialling and what is more important is that Sask Tel and the CBC have reached an agreement on television for northwest Saskatchewan. On September 2nd of this year, Sask Tel will turn the equipment over to the CBC and they will start television programming for the first time from Green Lake to La Loche.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech talks of the economic conditions of the province and that is what I should now like to turn to.

As I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, there does exist a relationship between economic and social well-being. Prior to 1972 the welfare rolls were high and so was unemployment. Economic development is not always realized through headline grabbing or million dollar enterprises. We have those in the North. Genuine progress can be achieved through local enterprises with co-operation between government and the individuals involved. A case in point is the fishing industry of the North. Mr. Speaker, fishing is not only a means of sustenance, but is of tremendous economic consequence. The fishing industry is one of the most important industries we have. Fully one-quarter of the wage earners in the North are dependent on this industry. Recently commercial fishing has been victimized by escalating

costs with no comparable increases in price.

Mr. Speaker, in 1974 alone, commercial fishing costs increased by 30 - 35 per cent. In mid-1975 the Department of Northern Saskatchewan announced an \$800,000 program of grants to aid the commercial fishing industry. This program included \$250,000 in direct payments to the fishermen as well as \$50,000 in transportation equalization payments to defray the costs of transporting fish and fish products in the North.

Mr. Speaker, this program may not get the media coverage that a pulp mill may get, certainly we want development in the North, but not at the cost of the loss of control of our natural resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, the Economic Development Fund is an agency that helps create jobs and services in the North. This fund has resulted in locally owned bakeries, garages, laundromats, theatres, construction equipment. These loans are administered by 28 local government groups throughout the North. Loans in 1974-75 created an estimated 297 jobs, these were jobs in the North and which employed northern people. Surely this is meaningful economic development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Mr. Speaker, I could go on and talk of the other achievements but I believe I have made my point. As the mover of the Throne Speech indicated, the Government has embarked on a new program of development in many fields. I feel that in four short years of existence DNS has shown what it can accomplish. I commend the Government and the Minister in charge of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the Hon. Ted Bowerman for the work he has done for the North. I am pleased to second the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, my first words in this Throne Speech will be to join with other Members in offering congratulations to the new Lieutenant-Governor, George Porteous, to wish him well. I want to pass my respects to Dr. Worobetz and Mrs. Worobetz and thank them for the very fine and outstanding job they did on behalf of all Saskatchewan people in this office and to wish him well in whatever he chooses to do in the years ahead.

I should like to congratulate the mover and the seconder. I listened quite attentively for quite a while to see if they would touch on the Throne Speech. They managed to miss it and looking at the Throne Speech, I can't say that I blame them. However, they did a creditable job. Usually it is considered, one of the Members did mention this, that this was a great honor to be asked to move or second the Throne Speech. Normally this is. But looking at this Throne Speech, I feel it is like an aunt of mine, who was selected apple queen in British Columbia in the year of the blight. I am not sure that this is such an honor. But anyway with what you have to work with, I think

you did a very reasonable job.

Again, I should like to suggest to the Government and we have talked about this privately and we had a motion that was not passed this morning, I would urge and I hope they will consider re-examining their position about bringing the Budget down earlier than the 24th. There is no question that we are going to have difficulty keeping 61 MLAs fully employed from now until the 24th, with this Throne Speech and with the legislation that you have ready or the lack of legislation. When I suggest that because of the actions of the Leader of the Conservative Party that have been most unfortunate, I would question whether the Government should make the rest of us suffer, it will add time on the end of this Session, which is already late enough. Again, I would hope that the Premier would show leadership and do what is possible to advance the Budget Speech. If this is not possible, then it is not possible, but I would hope that it is. I would point out that what we have in this Throne Speech, we could have it cleaned up by Monday night without much trouble. We then face six or seven days. I have great sympathy with the House leader in trying to keep the House busy for six or seven days with little or nothing to occupy us.

In regard to the Throne Speech we were led to expect that it wouldn't be much and certainly that was an overstatement, it was even less than not much. The only encouraging reference was to National Olympic Week, National Cheese Week and paying tribute to the Roughriders or the last curling championship or somebody.

However, he did touch on inflation. I was seriously very disappointed. What the Government did again in the Throne Speech in talking about inflation was recognize that this is a serious problem, the most serious problem facing Canadians and certain Saskatchewan people. Again, what it did is exactly what the Government has done up to this point. It whines about what Ottawa hasn't done, or the weaknesses of Ottawa's anti-inflation policy, but refuses to come to grips in any meaningful way with a policy of its own. I was hoping that if they did touch on the question of inflation in this Throne Speech that the Government would clean up its own house. The Government says to Ottawa and I quote Mr. Blakeney speaking from Ottawa:

Premier Allan Blakeney says the Anti-inflation Board should show more evidence that prices are being controlled if the Government expects to command public support for the program.

I agree with him. Well, all the more should he read that and examine his own conscience. If there is any organization in this province that has added to the inflationary trend in Saskatchewan it is the Government opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — Power rates, 30 to 40 per cent, increase; gas rates, telephone rates. And now we have the insurance rates up anywhere from 30, 40 to 80 per cent. I am going to tell you something that the Minister in charge of the Power Corporation, the Member for Regina North West, is going to have some pretty serious explaining to do when he gets up in this House and tries to explain the outright misrepresentation he made over the

television when he attempted to put a good face on a very bad deal when in trying to explain these tremendous increases in insurance rates to the people of Saskatchewan.

However, that is only half the package when it comes to inflation. When the Premier announced an anti-inflation program in this House before we prorogued in January, I said that the Liberal Party would support it. I recognize that he may want to go in a slightly different direction than the Federal Government, and while he differs in this respect from most premiers in Canada who have decided to fully co-operate with the Federal Government in their effort that on the surface I didn't see anything immediately wrong with that. He announced the appointment of an Anti-Inflation Board, certainly no one could quarrel with the calibre of people that went on that board, and at that time the bare outlines of the program. It looked to me and the Members of the Liberal caucus as if the Premier at long last and an NDP Government were showing some courage and intended to come to grips with this problem here in Saskatchewan.

I can tell you that since then we have been shocked, first with the refusal of the Government to instruct or to ask or to include in the terms of reference for the Anti-Inflation Board what they have done themselves to the people in sharply increasing prices for essentials like electricity, power, gas and insurance and telephones, increases beyond the immediate demands of costs. Increases that I suggest would be struck down by the Anti-Inflation Board in Ottawa if they were put on a national level.

That's only part of the story. The other part of the story is the control of wages. There is no question that the Government opposite has been subjected, as has the Government in Ottawa, to unbelievable abuse from certain labor leaders in this province and across this nation. I think abuse over and above anything they deserve or anything they deserve from the Federal Government in attempting to come to grips with inflation.

It's interesting how the other surviving NDP Premier in this nation, Mr. Schreyer, faced this problem. That's exactly what he did. Faced it right from the beginning, co-operated fully with Ottawa and said that's our anti-inflation program, it's the same as the national. He took his abuse. I suggest he's got it over with and I suggest that while the people of Manitoba may be unhappy with him for some other reasons, the vast majority of people in Manitoba respect the stand that he has taken in the face of the problem he has created within the ranks of his own party.

What did this Government do? Well, as usual the Premier played for time. Get that low profile he likes since he became Premier. He knows the old problem. They say, you know, it's only when the whale that comes up to spout up, the spout gets harpooned. Well, I'll tell you if somebody waited for him to come up and spout to harpoon him, they'll wait for a long frosty day in June in this province. So he played it alone, hoped that the problem would go away. But it didn't go away. It's here. I understand some labor people were parading out here today in front of the Legislature, at least they said they were going to and they filled this Legislative Assembly up shortly after some of us left for warmer climates. I suggest that if some of us stayed here, the Premier for example, he would have had all the heat he wanted here without going any further south. However, again I can't say that I . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — He got tanned here too.

MR. STEUART: — He would have got tanned here is right. I can't say that I blame him, at a lot less cost too. However, again I can't say that I blame him. But what happened? This Government came out with their own program. At first the people of Saskatchewan thought this would be all right. I was hoping in this Speech from the Throne, and I'm still hoping that in this Session the Premier will stand in his place and he'll repudiate what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) has said or is quoted as saying, Mr. Smishek when he outlined in some detail the plan and I want to quote part of what he is reported as saying.

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

Exactly what is Mr. Smishek representing the Government and it has not been denied yet, what is he saying to the Labor unions? He's saying, boys you strike long enough, loud enough and hard enough and bring some part of our segment, some segment of our economy to its knees and we'll give you what you want. That's what you are saying to them, you are asking for trouble and you don't have to paint that picture on the wall very big for the union leaders in this province or any province to get the message. They have already got the message. I don't know why they are parading, I don't know why they are parading. They've got the message from you boys loud and clear. Here's what you are saying to them. You are saying, look boys, we are in a corner. We know we owe you, we know if you withdraw your support, take back your money in the next election, we're in real trouble. They might even get mad enough they would vote for us, nearly impossible, but they might.

Well, I'll tell you if the cost of their support to us was to find ourselves in your position, I wouldn't want it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — If I had to sell principles and had to play the role that the Premier of this province is playing and the Minister of Finance, to try and keep the support of labor unions after the performance they put up, I wouldn't want it. I tell you this, for your own information if you've got the courage to believe it, they are not speaking for the rank and file of the working people. The rank and file of the working people in this province and in this nation are just as concerned as anyone else to see inflation brought to its knees. What they want to see, I'm sure is fair play. They want prices, incomes, profits and wages controlled. I grant this is a big order. But what you people have said, you've said it publicly, Mr. Smishek has said it on your behalf, you strike and you get tough enough and we'll back down, but make it tough, he said, a crippling strike. In other words make it real tough so that we'll be able to go to the farmers and we'll be able to go to the old age pensioners. We'll say, what could we do, we had to save the province, they were going to turn off the lights, they were going to turn off the gas, they were going to close up our hospitals, they were going to grind essential services to a halt and so we had no other choice but to give them 15 or 18 or 20 per cent. In other

words what you are saying, is if you blackmail us strong enough and hard enough, we'll give in. Well I'd hate to be you people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I'd hate to be you people when you have to answer to the people in this province on fixed incomes, to the small businessman, to the old age pensioners and to the farmers who don't have that kind of guarantee from that government and don't have that kind of power to bring Saskatchewan's economy to its knees and then get a nice handout at the expense of everyone else, from their friends opposite. Don't try and kid anybody. You've offered to pay off to them and I say to the people of this province, you just watch them collect, because they will.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — Mr. Speaker, it's a sellout, it's a cop-out and it's a disgrace. The people of this province should be aware of it from day one. The only way the people of this province will stop it is if they flood the Premier's office and the Attorney General's office and the Minister of Finance with letters and telegrams and make their feelings known in no uncertain terms, that if they in fact do give in to the demands of labor who call an unconscionable strike and threaten to cripple us as the Minister of Finance says, that this Government if they dare to give in, in the face of that kind of blackmail, that they'll face even more grave consequences from the vast majority of voters at the next election from every other section of our economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — Mr. Speaker, there wasn't much else I can find for the moment in the Throne Speech. Since we rose last we've been subjected to some entertainment, that's about the only way I can talk about it. Potash hasn't quite disappeared from the news. Mind you the potash industry's not saying much, they are back home or they are down in Regina trying to entice the Government to come up and buy their potash mines at the same kind of prices they gave for Intercontinental Packers and for the price of Saskoil they are paying, I think most of them are lining up and would kind of like to sell out to you fellows right now.

But we've been subjected to some very interesting and I'll call it entertainment, a charade, put on, it's called, Mr. Blakeney meets the press. Well, it's put on by Dunsky's, that great Montreal advertising agency who comes out to Saskatchewan and clamped its tentacles in here like an octopus as soon as the NDP were elected and started sucking up the thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars of profit. They've got a lot more time now because I'm sure they have been dismissed from British Columbia. However, they are here and they are in real well. So they said to Mr. Blakeney, you've got to dust off your image. You know, this potash thing didn't go over very well. You can kid the public about those surveys but they were real and they were meaningful and most of the people don't like this naked power grab. They think it was a bad deal. How are we going to get around this? Well how about,

"Mr. Blakeney Meets the Press?" Well, okay so what did they do? Well they went to CTV and they went to CBC and they hired some time all over the province. Well, after I watched the show on CTV I wasn't surprised, because CTV have a very open policy, they'll do almost anything for money. CBC, it's been a little tougher. They weren't supposed to take political advertising, but I know now that the CBC while they won't do anything for money, they'll do damn near anything for the NDP after watching that program.

It's going to be very interesting when we try to put some political advertising on the CBC. I expect it to be welcomed with open arms. I don't know whether this is the policy of the new general manager, Mr. Al Johnson, who is a "cohort" and a friend of the Premier opposite. I don't think it is, I don't suppose he knows about it, I hope he doesn't. It was interesting though after the first show, the CBC dropped the second show. I don't know whether they were offered the second show or whether they wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole. I hope it's the latter.

Anyway, after the first show, what was the first show, we had stars on there, we had some local people, to give a little local color. We had one from the press gallery here and we had one former press gallery member, Sterling King and we had Barry Wilson. No, I know what Barry Wilson is, a very independent reporter, or was up to that time, I still think he is. I hope the money he was paid, I think he got the actor's equity fee. I suggest watching, they were a little overpaid if they got the actor's equity fee. However, the big star was Doug Fisher. Big independent, former NDP, Doug Fisher. Brought in at great expense from Toronto. So I watched it and I knew that Barry would be very independent and ask a couple of questions and he did. I knew Sterling King would ask a couple of questions. I thought that fellow from the Financial Post would know more than he did. I don't think he knew what day it was and he asked one question and never got an answer like anybody else did, and shut up and was never heard from after. Whatever you paid in, you got your money back, I tell you.

Anyway it started off with Doug Fisher. He says, Mr. Blakeney, how could you have the courage to take on the United States Government and the Prime Minister and the Ambassador from Washington, the former Ambassador and those big multinational companies and Otto Lang? He missed Adrienne, but he should have thrown that in too, how could you have the courage to take them on? You know if you watched the Premier lately, you know, since he became the Premier he has developed a real style. It's to show how brilliantly intelligent he is. He closes his eyes and he says, yes. And that gives him time to think, you see. So he looked at Doug Fisher and I thought he was surprised. I thought how the devil can he be surprised because they rehearsed this for three days before he started. Well the Premier says, I did it for the people. But he didn't mention the people were Roy Romanow, David Dombowsky, you know, and his wife and so on.

But really, honestly, the only questions that amounted to anything came from Sterling King and from our friend from the Star-Phoenix. But before he could answer that, like Sterling King he asked him a question the gist of which was, don't you think it's kind of stupid to pay \$150 million or something for a potash mine and borrow this money at ten per cent

when the facts show they are only making six or six and a half per cent and you are already taking about that much out in profits? So the Premier says, the figures are fictitious. Absolutely fictitious. And that was the last word Mr. King got in. Doug Fisher jumped in and that's the last we ever heard of the figures.

If it hadn't been so bad it would be funny. But it is bad. The sight of the Premier of this province using taxpayers' money. Then they brought in Patrick Watson. Now there was a real starter. They decided to have one on one. Patrick Watson phoned me. I made some statement about, they brought in another good NDP and he said he phoned Dick Collver. He said I want to phone Dick Collver and Dave Steuart and find out all they've said in the potash debate. Well he cleaned Dick up in about five minutes and but I might have been, but as counting, given the connection and breaking it off. I said to him, I was a little suspicious of him because I thought he was an NDP card carrier and he said, no, and he kind of assured me until I thought about what he said. He said, I never paid for an NDP membership. Well, after I listened I understood that. He didn't pay for one, he gets one complimentary. Well, he tried to make it a little better you know, but again it was a pat, put up performance. I don't know what you had to pay him, but if you got him for less than a \$1,000 or \$2,000 I'll be surprised. It was sick though. To begin with the Premier of this province taking taxpayers' money. I've got a few questions I'd like to ask. Is that going to be charged against your next campaign fund? If it isn't it should be. Are you going to give the Opposition parties the same kind of open handout from the Treasury and please don't tell us we can use the money you hand us to pay for our staff? You used up more there than you've given the Tories or the Tories are likely to get in the next two years, no matter what kind of motions they bring in or don't bring in.

You sat there, I watched you, you told half-truths, you didn't face the issue, it was a dishonest performance from beginning to end.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I think it sets a very bad precedent in this province. For the Premier to go out and try to put over, this is a slick, publicity trick, only I don't think it fooled anybody. To try and put over this idea that he was fearlessly meeting the press. Now isn't it amazing that Mr. Blakeney, the Premier of this province has said more over paid commercial television, paid for by the people of Saskatchewan about the potash issue, three times as much, than he's ever been able to screw up his courage and say in this House in any debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I say it was a dishonest performance. I say it was costly to the people and I hope they know exactly, I hope they judge it for exactly what it is.

I tell you this, Mr. Premier, you can pay for all the television commercials, you can bring in all the fancy high priced NDP help and hope that you'll get a listening audience. It cannot cover up and it does not cover up the people's

displeasure and their fear. That's what it is, of what you and your government are doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — We sent out just about the end of the Session in January, a mail out. We sent out 280,000 or 290,000. It wasn't just a sheet of paper printed on both sides and it had a little coupon on it. We paid for it. Oh no, we paid the grants, we thought we would squawk a little but you had to pay out of your mailing privileges. Oh we paid for it in the party, we paid our share, we paid for the printing and so on. I want to tell you what is amazing about that. People had to clip that coupon and they had to fill it out. Now the results that came in were ten to one against the Government takeover. Now I don't put a great deal of credence to the ten to one, because it was a Liberal mail-out and, of course, most people who would answer would tend to be on our side.

I'll tell you what's amazing. We have had over 13,000 replies. Thirteen thousand replies. Don't tell me I'm kidding.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I intend to bring them in here and I intend to dump them on the floor and you can come over here and count them yourselves. I'll lay them on the table and they'll bury the table.

MR. COWLEY: — That's only half your membership . . .

MR. STEUART: — And there is another man who has now made a greater speech on potash than he ever had the courage to do when we stand up and give him the whole time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — And the more intelligent one I might say.

I'll tell you something else those funny little television shows put on by Dunsby and company won't cover up. They won't cover up the problems you are facing. You can run all over Canada and you can invent a new excuse every week of why you took over the potash industry or why you were forced to. The latest one is that those dirty Americans, God if the dirty Americans ever disappear the NDP are going to have a tough time making a speech, aren't they? You'll just be out of it completely. But those dirty Americans are now interfering with the sales. Well, now I haven't seen any proof of it. A couple of companies have pulled out of Canpotex. Well, of course, let's talk about how those companies got into Canpotex. Well, they got into it under threat by the NDP Government. In those days prorationing was the law of this land. They were told very simply, either you come into Canpotex or we'll cut your prorationing, your share by about 20 per cent. So they came in, they had no choice.

Now some of those companies have decided to pull out. Why?

Because the courts have struck down prorationing for the time being. Said it's ultra vires your powers and they want to sell their own potash. This little smoke screen you've raised, this latest red herring you've come up, that you just discovered, you never mentioned it before, that suddenly one of the major reasons that you had to take it over, because the Americans were interfering and we couldn't sell nation to nation and if these people didn't get out of Canpotex, the anti-trust laws of the United States would be brought to bear.

This is nonsense, this is untrue, this is false and you know it. That's the reason you never brought it up before, but you are desperately trying to think of new excuses, new reasons to cover up and to make some valid excuse for your naked use of power, the unfair deal and this stupid business deal that your Government has launched the people of this province on in the potash grab or the potash takeover.

There is only one little venture I'm going to talk about before I finish today and that is Saskoil. Again we see the news that Saskoil just bought out the oil rights and reserves and some wells from Atlantic Richfield, another multinational American company. They paid \$23 million and the NDP will hail this as a great breakthrough.

Let's examine what they have exactly done with this. Here we have got Atlantic Richfield, an American company with holdings in Saskatchewan. So Saskoil bought them out, and I am willing to bet a plugged nickel to ten dollars they paid them about \$4 or \$5 million more than they really expected to get. This, I am told, is the story of Saskoil. What they have really done is taken \$23 million of Saskatchewan people's money, handed it over to this multinational corporation who will take it into Alberta, the Northwest Territories, or will take it down into the United States, they will take it anywhere else in the world to find more oil for somebody else. By handing over \$23 million we haven't added one barrel of new oil to our reserves. We haven't added one new job in the oil industry. We have done nothing except put this company farther into the oil business and hand out \$23 million for someone else to take out of our province and go somewhere else.

If there is any excuse for Saskoil, surely, this is one of the terms of reference when it was talked about was to go out and find new oil to add to our reserves. To go into areas that maybe the private sector of the oil industry refused to go or wouldn't go.

Instead of that what have they done? They have spent millions and millions of dollars, and this is the biggest investment I think to date, to buy up what they think are proven reserves.

I want to bring into this House, and it is a fact, it is a kind of a good news bad news story. This particular small company, I talked to one, they said we have had some bad news and some good news. The bad news is we drilled a well and all we got was salt water. That was the bad news. But the good news is, we sold it to Saskoil.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — I suppose Saskoil worked on the theory that they struck so many dry holes that anything wet is better than nothing. But I tell you, and we will advance proof, we will bring proof in when Saskoil comes before the Crown Corporations Committee and in this Legislature, that Saskoil has consistently paid more for oil reserves and oil rights than they have been valued at by the oil industry themselves. In fact, they are a sorry, sick joke in the oil industry in western Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — The joke, unfortunately is on the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I have studied the Throne Speech, we haven't had it very long, we haven't had time to look at it. It doesn't take much studying but I am sure there must be something in here besides the Brier and the Olympics, it has escaped my attention. So, I should like the weekend to pour over it more assiduously, if that is the word I am clutching for. With that in mind I have a few more remarks to say on Monday. I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, I believe we called no. We would like a recorded division on that if possible.

Adjournment agreed to on the following Recorded Division:

YEAS — 46

Blakeney	Pepper	Thibault
Smishek	Romanow	Messer
Snyder	Byers	Kramer
Baker	Lange	Kowalchuk
Robbins	MacMurchy	Mostoway
Larson	Whelan	Kaeding
Dyck	McNeill	MacAuley
Feschuk	Rolfes	Cowley
Tchorzewski	Matsalla	Skoberg
Vickar	Nelson (Yorkton)	Allen
Koskie	Johnson	Thompson
Banda	Steuart	Stodalka
Wiebe	Malone	MacDonald
Penner	Cameron	Edwards
Nelson	Anderson	Merchant
(Assiniboia-Gravelbourg)		
Thatcher		

NAYS — 6

Collver	Larter	Bailey
Berntson	Katzman	Birkbeck

Debate adjourned.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn) moved, second by Mr. Malone (Regina Lakeview) that The Interim Report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon you tabled an interim report of The Select Special Committee on Rules and Procedures of the House. At the conclusion of my remarks I wish to move a motion, seconded by the Member for Regina Lakeview, Mr. Malone, that the Interim Report of the Select Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in.

As a member of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures of this Assembly, I can only say that the Committee thus far has shown true and great dedication to the task that they have been asked to perform. As all Members have been presented with a copy of this Interim Report, I urge and I ask all of you to read it over carefully.

The Assembly at the last session, Mr. Speaker, requested the Committee to review several matters. These were: improving the debates and proceedings; the televising of proceedings of the Assembly; necessary renovations to the Legislative Chamber and sound system; and an oral question period, which this report deals specifically with.

The Committee recommends that changes be implemented in the area of the oral question period. But let me stress, Mr. Speaker, that it is on a trial basis only. This can only be operated successfully, I believe, if all who participate discipline themselves according to the regulations that are recommended in the Report. And then at the end of this trial basis we shall then have an opportunity to have another look at the procedure and the rules and make if necessary, changes.

Having had the opportunity to see and to witness the procedures in action in both Ottawa and in Edmonton, I am convinced the discipline of all members is the important factor. The types of questions and answers given, if we adhere to the rules and regulations can certainly be beneficial to all concerned. I would urge the co-operation of all Members to this end.

So with this in mind, Mr. Speaker, I so move.

MR. E.C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to join with the Member for Weyburn and say a few words about the Interim Report. I guess this will be one of these non-partisan speeches we hear from time to time. I must say in my view the members of the Committee really did not follow any party lines in their investigations in regard to the question period. I think except perhaps for one item, we were in basic agreement as to what should be done and what would be of advantage to this Legislature.

I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that when the Committee observed the question period in Ottawa there was almost a consensus immediately at that time to adopt the Ottawa format. The only problem really coming to light to the Committee was how long the question period should be. As the members of the Committee know, but perhaps the Members of the House do not know,

the question period in Ottawa is 45 minutes. There was a certain amount of negotiating between the members of the Committee as to how long it should be in Saskatchewan. I think it is fair to say that the Government Members tended to want a shorter question period than the Opposition Members. But in the spirit of compromise all Members agreed to the format that is now included in the Interim Report.

I think that the trial period that is referred to in the Report should be emphasized. I think all Members will have to give consideration as to whether the new format of the question period is working. Hopefully they will have constructive suggestions as we go through the next few weeks.

As the Member for Weyburn has indicated, the most important person in this new format will be the Speaker, and he can only make it work if he obtains the co-operation of all Members on both sides of the House.

You can be assured, Mr. Speaker, that I think all Members on both sides of the House will give you their co-operation and hopefully this will result in a vigorous question period.

The Committee met with several well-known parliamentarians in Ottawa, one of whom is a very well-known Canadian politician, Mr. Stanley Knowles. Mr. Knowles when we discussed the question period with him indicated that to him question period was a form of political warfare. And that the sharper it is, the better for both sides of the House. I think he perhaps could have gone on further and said that it is not just for the benefit of both sides of the House, I think it is for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan. That is, if the Opposition performs its traditional function of being a watch dog of the executive, it helps the people of Saskatchewan and if the executive are on their toes, and they are doing their homework, that also helps the people of Saskatchewan. It also, I think, Mr. Speaker, tends to keep a check on any government from becoming secretive in their business, I am not suggesting this Government is, but any government tends to do this over a period of time.

In keeping with the non-partisan aspect of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should stop there. But I do take pleasure in seconding the motion of the Member for Weyburn.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. E.A. BERNSTON (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, as the Conservative representative to this Rules Committee, I should also like to offer my support to this Motion. We all recognized on the Committee that it is indeed an interim report, an experiment so to speak. I am sure that with the co-operation of all the Members of the Assembly familiarizing themselves with the guidelines in the Interim Report and disciplining themselves accordingly, that it will work here as well as it does in Ottawa and in Alberta, even though perhaps it is not as long as either Ottawa or Alberta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

March 12, 1976

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to add a few words. I think that all of us want to see what we can do to strengthen the Legislature. Recognizing that whatever its faults, it is the form of government that we have and all of us owe a duty to the Legislature and to our constituents to make it an effective form for Legislative business.

Certainly a question period can be a very important part of an active Legislature. Although I may say that this Legislature operated for a number of years without an extensive question period. We are moving into different times. We for our part are prepared to embark upon this experiment to see whether or not we can make it effective.

I think it will depend, from a Government point of view, whether or not the Government has that degree of notice of controversial matters which is provided at Ottawa or elsewhere. If the rules that are followed there are followed here, I am sure we can make it work.

I note the comments of Mr. Knowles who has spent his entire lengthy career in Opposition and never on the government side. I am sure that he would see the merits of a question period a little more clearly than, let us say, his colleague, Mr. Douglas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — We, I think, are prepared to see if we can make it work. I want to underline that in our understanding of the report it is an experiment and that the decision on whether or not we continue the experiment will depend upon the way it works. We clearly want to share with Members of the House the information which is properly theirs. Just as obviously we don't wish to be taken by surprise and asked elaborate questions about things that no Minister should be asked to know without notice.

I think it is important that Ministers not devote their time to thinking up what questions might be asked and spending their time boning up on obscure details. On the other hand there is no reason why any detail, however obscure, should not be made available to the House under the proper arrangements.

I know that the report makes clear that Ministers and others can make use of the methods set out in Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, and Sir Erskine May's Parliamentary Practices to deal with that sort of a problem by indicating that it should be put in writing or notice or as the case may be. I hope that no Hon. Members feel that a Minister who may find himself without complete details on a point is in any way evading the questions by simply asking that notice be given and that he will equip himself to answer it on the morrow. That is certainly the method in which the spirit in which we are approaching this. My understanding is that it is the spirit in which the Committee members are approaching it. On that basis we are happy to participate in the experiment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 4:07 o'clock p.m.