

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Seventeenth Legislature
19th Day

Monday, March 17, 1975

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. J.E. Brockelbank (Saskatoon Mayfair): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to this House a group of 86 students from Bedford Road Collegiate in Saskatoon. It happens that the students in Bedford Road Collegiate take a very close interest in current events and the political scene in the Province of Saskatchewan and will make a point of being here every legislative session to witness what happens in this Chamber. The 86 Grade Eleven and Twelve students today are accompanied by Mr. Houghton, Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Serienko. I am sure they will find today's time spent in the Legislature of interest to them and I look forward to meeting them afterwards to discuss matters with them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.C. Malone (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to other Members of the Assembly eleven students from Alta Vista School who are sitting in the east gallery. They are brought here today by their teacher, Faye Cameron. I hope they will find the events today both informative and enjoyable and I hope to meet with them later to answer any questions that they may have.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.C. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to introduce to you and to all Members of the Assembly 24 adult students from the Wascana Institute at Christ Lutheran Church in Regina North West. They are seated in the Speaker's Gallery with their teachers, Stan Metcalfe and Terry Hanson. We welcome these citizens; we wish them every success with their studies. We hope they find their stay here educational and informative.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENT

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Mr. Whelan: — Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet and before the Orders of the Day I should like to call Hon. Members' attention to the fact that this is St. Patrick's Day — the day when the world recognizes that the people of Ireland are superior in every way and make a great contribution in the fields of politics, literature, music and art. They have earned a reputation for diplomacy, for humor, for righteous wrath and exuberance,

Mr. Speaker. On this day everyone is Irish. The Lord loves the Irish; they are a humble, meek and a modest group.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — People are forced to admit that they are also extremely intelligent and emotionally stable and dedicated individuals. To every Irishman and particularly in the city of Regina and the Province of Saskatchewan I say, the top o' the morning to you and God bless the people from the land of the four leaf clover.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. T.L. Hanson (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I too should like to welcome the group from the Wascana Institute and their teachers, Stan Metcalfe and my namesake Terry Hanson.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENT

PEE WEE HOCKEY — FILLMORE

Mr. Hanson: — While I am on my feet, I should like to bring to the attention of Members the fact that a team of Pee Wee Hockey players from my hometown of Fillmore was successful yesterday in defeating the team from Lake Lenore, and as a result the Fillmore Pee Wees win the D Division Pee Wee championship of the Province of Saskatchewan. I am sure you would like to share with me in congratulations to them and their coaches, Andrew Short and Gabe Keene.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

WEYBURN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL BASKETBALL VICTORY

Mr. J.A. Pepper (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to place on record by announcing to you and through you to this Assembly the recent Weyburn Comprehensive School 3A Basketball victory. Their team, called the Eagles, coached by their social studies teacher, Mr. Morris, won the provincial championship on Friday, March 14th by defeating Prince Albert Tech. in the northern part of the province.

I am sure that you join with me in extending congratulations to them as I think they are very worthy representatives for our province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

STRIKE AT SAWMILL IN MEADOW LAKE

Mr. H.E. Coupland (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Speaker, I don't know

what Minister to direct this question to. I was going to ask the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) because I think he's a member of the Board of Directors of the sawmill.

Due to the fact, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has a 30 per cent interest in the sawmill in Meadow Lake, I wonder if the Government could tell me what action they have taken to settle the strike that has been in effect up there since last July?

Hon. E. Kramer (Minister of Highways): — Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, but I don't really know what that has to do with the Department of Highways. If he would like to place his question on the Order Paper in the usual manner I would be prepared to answer it if he can make me understand.

Mr. Coupland: — I apologize for asking the Minister of Highways; I should have asked the Minister of Labour (Mr. Snyder). He is the Minister concerned with the labor problems in Saskatchewan. I should like the Minister of Labour to tell me what action has been taken. These fellows have been off for nearly ten months and they are having a bad time. Maybe I could ask the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Taylor) how many of these fellows are on social welfare because there is no way they can exist for ten months without jobs.

Hon. G. Snyder (Minister of Labour): — Mr. Speaker, I am in a bit of a quandary to know which of the Ministers the Member for Meadow Lake is shooting at. If he is directing his questions to me, I can tell him that we have been in touch with the International Woodworkers and with some of the principals of the Prince Albert operation. You will be aware of the fact that the mill was shut down at a point which was particularly awkward, at a point in time when I understand the sawmill at Meadow Lake was in the process of losing some money and at a time when there was a considerable inventory on hand, which incidentally is not a set of circumstances which is conducive to a quick and an early settlement of a strike. We are all very much aware of it and we have had the opportunity to meet with the principals and are conducting some talks with them. At the present moment I think I should have to report to the Members that there is not an immediate sign that there will be a back to work arrangement in the immediate future.

MILK TESTING PROGRAM UNSATISFACTORY

Mr. D.F. MacDonald (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek). A little over a week ago Alderman Wally Coates of the city of Regina said that Regina's Medical Health Officer appears to be of the opinion that the present milk testing program which is done under The Provincial Dairy Products Act is unsatisfactory. As I understand it the milk testing is carried out at the Provincial Laboratory. I should like to ask the Minister that as this is a rather serious matter and a question of public health, what action has the Minister taken to ascertain the validity of these assertions by Mr. Coates and whether or not he feels there is any public health danger involved in this?

Hon. W.E. Smishek (Minister of Health): — The Hon. Member may not be aware that during the term of office of the previous administration the milk testing was transferred from the Department of Public Health to the Department of Agriculture and it is really the Department of Agriculture that is doing the testing. We have checked the allegations; our Department is always interested in such alleged problems and we can't find any substance to the allegations that have been made. The lab tests certainly don't indicate any high content of bacteria, because it is really the Provincial Laboratory in the final analysis that does this testing so I don't know where he got his information. We are not able to ascertain any evidence that there is any milk that is of any danger to the citizens of Regina or elsewhere.

Mr. MacDonald: — I realize where the responsibility lies. So you can assure the House that as far as you are concerned there is no public health danger as far as you, the Minister of Health, is concerned.

Mr. Smishek: — That's right.

PROGRAM 'NORTHERN NEWS' OFF AIR

Mr. A.R. Guy (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan (Mr. Bowerman). I wish to ask him if the program "Northern News" that was stopped by the Government because of the strike of CKBI management and employees, whether it is back on the air or not?

Hon. G.R. Bowerman (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan): — No, the program "Northern News" as broadcast by CKBI is not being broadcast from that station as I understand it, unless it started today or yesterday. But that "Northern News" program is being broadcast from other radio stations in the province.

Mr. Guy: — I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister. Don't you think that it is somewhat ridiculous that the station which covers the major part of the area for with "Northern News" is written should have to suffer because of the actions of the Minister in making a decision to interfere in the strike which really does not involve DNS to any extent? Yet the whole northern part of the province is being forced to suffer by the decision of the Minister to become involved in the strike which really was none of his business in the first place.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

BUDGET DEBATE

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

Mr. D.G. Stuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and

thank you for the applause from the other side. It's nice to see the Members of the Government awake; they didn't seem to be in the question period. I thought it was rather interesting in the answers that were given to both those questions, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Snyder) was quite prepared to state the fact that the sawmill, in which the Government is 30 per cent owner, has a large inventory and allow that to be used as an excuse not to settle the strike. I can imagine the howls of protest of those people over there if any private corporation in which they weren't involved financially used the same excuse. I think it is a weak excuse and I think they should do something about it. They howl and they whine about Ottawa and sometimes they are right in regard to settling that strike with grain-handlers, but here is a situation where we have got men sitting for seven or eight or nine months and I understand they are not even getting back to negotiations until April.

Mr. Speaker, the Budget Debate provides a needed opportunity to discuss the Government's record in economic development, its administrative ability, as well as its specific financial proposals. Members on this side of the House intend to discuss these matters in detail. A budget also indicates the general philosophy of the Government and this Budget is no exception. It clearly indicates what the Blakeney NDP Government plans for our province. There are no new programs or incentives to encourage private individuals to make an investment in our future. The tax cuts offered are inadequate, still leaving Saskatchewan citizens among the most heavily taxed people in all of Canada.

A look for example at five of the major tax sources shows this Government has, in only four years, increased tax collections from Saskatchewan people by over 150 per cent. When you add up the five major taxes taken directly from Saskatchewan people — the sales tax, income tax, corporate tax, liquor tax, licences and permits, the 1971 total was a little over \$237 million. In 1975, that total will be over \$632 million. A 260 per cent increase in the amount of money taken out of our citizens' pockets and placed in the hands of this Government.

Now the reduction in income tax is welcome, but it is a far cry from what should have occurred. The Government has merely put Saskatchewan's income tax back to the level it was when they were elected in 1971.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — The provincial income tax was then at 34 per cent; the NDP raised it to 40 per cent during the last three years when they didn't even need the money. All Mr. Blakeney is now doing is giving our people back some of the money he should never have taken away from them in the first place.

I would also point out that this \$7.50 per month, and that is what it amounts to, of the people's own money will not be given back until next year. I say to the Government that they should make this tax cut retroactive to cover 1974.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — We also say, as we said last year, that this tax relief could and should have been done two years ago when high

provincial revenues first made it possible. Instead, our Premier and the Finance Minister misinformed the public by saying that Federal income tax laws prevented them from giving Saskatchewan taxpayers the break they deserved. Mr. Speaker, as a result for the last three years we have been among the highest taxed people in Canada and the NDP should be condemned for this pittance they are now promising to give back next year.

The income tax cut is an election bribe and should be treated with the contempt it deserves. In the same class is the increased exemption from the provincial Succession Duty and Gift Tax. This tax was put on by the Blakeney NDP Government and it is as stupid as it is unfair. It is unfair because people have already paid every imaginable tax as they have accumulated their assets, whether it be a farm or a business. It is stupid because the Government will take in less than \$3 million from this tax or about one quarter of one per cent of their total yearly revenue.

The amount of money gained by succession duties is not worth the effort but the number of people with money and the number of businesses that move to Alberta to avoid this tax is a serious loss to Saskatchewan and its economy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — A Liberal Government will remove the Succession Duty and Gift Tax during our first year in office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know what this Budget does not do. For example, it has launched no new initiatives to save a rural Saskatchewan that is declining steadily. No new tax incentives for the average Saskatchewan citizen and certainly none for Saskatchewan investors. What the Budget has done is confirm the philosophy of the NDP. It promises, for example, more Government control over every aspect of our lives. An additional \$10 million to buy farm land with no guarantee that it will ever be sold back. Some 425 new provincial employees to administer and regulate the people.

Since the NDP have assumed office the number of people employed by the Government and Crown corporations has grown about 4,000 while the population of the province is 17,000 less.

Mr. Speaker, this is a record-breaking Budget in terms of expenditures by an administration that has repeatedly proven its complete incompetence to administer the taxpayers' money. The Budget reaffirms the Government's attitude toward resource development.

Private investment is to be actively discouraged while the public's money is to be gambled by people who know next to nothing about business and at a time when there is no need for any such risks.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — In short, Mr. Speaker, the Government continues to refuse to recognize that Saskatchewan has a once in a lifetime chance, right now, to move ahead. The NDP Cabinet has decided to stay within its small, confining shell and watch this golden

opportunity pass us by.

Mr. Speaker, let's first look at how this Budget treats our people. The shabby treatment given to our senior citizens is unforgivable. For over three years the NDP have turned a deaf ear to the pleas of our elderly people for some financial help to allow them a decent living in the face of rising prices. The senior citizens' own organization has asked for a guaranteed income of \$350 a month for single pensioners and \$500 a month for a married couple. This would be an increase over the federal pensions of \$140 per month single and \$100 for a couple.

What did the NDP give the people who built this province, our senior citizens? They refused to even consider their request for a \$140 increase, they never gave them half, they never even gave them one-third. The NDP have insulted Saskatchewan's pioneers with either \$14 a month or \$20; it's hard to know which from the Budget speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Either amount is a disgrace! Consider this: The NDP will take in over \$1,200 million this year and they toss our senior citizens \$7 million. In the same Budget, Mr. Blakeney refers to the \$13 million that has been spent for a hog subsidy. In other words our Premier gives twice as much to pigs as he gives to old people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I think this should be Mr. Blakeney's political epitaph, "The man who gave more to the hogs than he gave to senior citizens."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — A Liberal Government will guarantee our old age pensioners a minimum of \$350 a month for singles and \$500 a month for a married couple.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, we also call on the Premier to begin his drug plan without the deterrent fee.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — If the NDP insist on a \$2 deterrent fee every time a prescription is filled many of our senior citizens will actually have to pay more for their drugs than they do now. This drug deterrent fee will work a hardship on the old, the sick, and the young families, those least able to pay and it should be withdrawn immediately.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — It hurts members of the NDP. No matter how you spell it, the deterrent fee is exactly the same whether we charge it or

you charge it and if you don't take it off, you'll suffer the same thing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — While examining this Budget, Mr. Speaker, it is worthwhile to review some of the NDP record.

I'll begin with agriculture; still Saskatchewan's basic and most important industry. Nowhere has the NDP power grab been more obvious or more blatant than in agriculture. First we have the Land Bank. The Government has purchased almost 400 thousand acres of prime farm land. The present budget allocates to them another \$10 million to continue their land grab. They have not sold an acre, nor do they ever have to, nor in my opinion do they ever intend to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I have here the Land Bank Act and the lease form a farmer must sign before he can rent from the Commission. I shall now quote from these documents. Mr. Speaker, in both cases it states "that the Commission representing the Government may sell the land after five years to the renter." They don't have to; they may. I want to make it very clear that the Government is in no way obligated to sell the land. The option is not the farmer's, it is the Government's.

Reading further from the Act, Section 19 states "that the lessee shall pay the entire purchase price within six months." And the Long-term Lease Agreement states that it must be paid in cash. Added proof that the NDP have absolutely no intention of selling any of this land.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Add to this, Mr. Speaker, the many speeches made by the Members opposite, boasting about the so-called new land tenure system and telling how the NDP have relieved the farmers of the necessity of owning their own land and it's crystal clear that the Government has no intention of selling this farm land.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — As a matter of fact just as recently as two weeks ago the Minister of Agriculture is quoted in the Leader-Post saying that a farmer renting land from the Saskatchewan Land Bank should continue to rent rather than buy. Mr. Messer says he will encourage that policy. Mr. Speaker, he need offer no more encouragement than the present Land Bank legislation. The legislation makes certain no farmer will ever be able to buy the land he's now renting.

Premier Blakeney, as quoted in the Leader-Post of February 8, 1975, called the Liberals "liars" and said that there was clearly an option for farmers to buy land from the Land Bank. I challenged Mr. Blakeney to debate this question publicly and he declined, using the excuse that he didn't want to make a crowd for the Liberals, as he put it.

Well I can assure him that we're having no problem attracting large and enthusiastic crowds.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — All we have to do is tell the people we're going to tell the truth about the compulsory Hog Commission and the Land Bank and the halls are full.

The real reason Mr. Blakeney won't debate this subject, or any other subject publicly, is that he knows that it is he and the Members of his Government who are misleading and, in fact, lying about the Land Bank.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — The farmer has no option to buy, and I challenge the Premier when he speaks in this debate to show us this imaginary option. I predict that once again he'll back down. However, I think this raises the question of why the Premier and the NDP are so sensitive about the fact they're buying thousands of acres of farm land with no intentions of ever selling any. I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that they want to get past the next election without stirring up too much controversy. If they succeed, and if they are returned to power, they will have four more years to step up their land grab program.

Mr. Speaker, the threat is far greater than just the likelihood of state ownership of our agricultural land. There is no point in a Government controlling the land if they don't control what's produced on it. The NDP are moving down that road at an ever increasing pace.

First they amended The Natural Products Marketing Act to give the Government the power to impose compulsory marketing boards on our farmers, without the opportunity of a democratic vote. This Act also gives the Government far-reaching powers over the production and distribution of every agricultural commodity. The next step was the imposition of the compulsory Hog Marketing Commission. In spite of a pretence by the NDP of consultation with the hog producers, this plan was rammed down their throats and they have been given no say in its operation.

The Minister of Agriculture has made it clear that cattlemen are next, and money has likely been placed in this Budget to set up a compulsory Cattle Marketing Commission if the NDP are returned to power in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, The Natural Products Marketing Act, the compulsory government operated Hog Commission, the plans for a similar Cattle Commission, the purchase of Intercontinental Packers, the closure of Burns Foods Limited, are all steps that will eventually give the NDP total control over the livestock industry in this province.

I would ask those who claim this can't happen here just to take a hard look at the facts. It is happening and it is happening here!

But some people say why would any government want to own and control most or all of the land in any province as well as what's produced on it? Let me suggest that the NDP are the same people who boast that they will soon own and control the forest industry, for example. This is the same Government that is taking ownership and control of the potash and the oil industry.

The answer as to why they are moving in on the farm land and all other basic resources is that they are convinced the government, or the state, can do a much better job for the majority of the people if they own, control and eventually operate the major industries in this province and they hope some day in this nation.

Mr. Speaker, some people find this difficult to grasp and when the Premier and other Members of the NDP speak to the farmers they deny their true intentions because they're aware that if every farmer in Saskatchewan became convinced that the NDP really intended to socialize agriculture, they would vote them out of office at the next election, so they camouflage their real blueprint for the future of agriculture at least until they get by June or whenever Mr. Blakeney screws up his courage to call another election.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how many thousands of dollars they spend in government propaganda, their compulsory Hog Marketing Commission stands out like a sore thumb.

All Mr. Blakeney's pious utterances, or Mr. Romanow's smooth talk, or Jack Messer's smiling assurance that they won't socialize the land, cannot hide the 400,000 acres of farm land that the Government has bought with the farmers' own money and refuses to sell. An ocean of paid political announcements will not wash away Mr. Messer's statement after the Government grabbed up the Matador Co-op Farm, that this was just the beginning of many more such deals.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — May I remind the Liberal Leader it is customary to call other Members by their title or constituency, please.

Mr. Steuart: — Thank you very much, Sir.

It must be, Mr. Speaker, a new high in hypocrisy to call a state owned farm a 'co-operative'. Surely the basis of a co-operative is ownership by the members, not the state. Fortunately for Saskatchewan, the Government has failed miserably in its attempt to have farmers believe that the Land Bank Act is a good thing. Premier Blakeney knows it.

He was at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities' Annual Convention in Saskatoon last week when delegates overwhelmingly passed a resolution asking the Government to allow farmers to immediately buy the land they are renting from the Land Bank.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I pledge to the people of this province that a Liberal Government will abolish the NDP Land Bank Program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — We will replace it with a Family Farm Development Plan that allows farmers, wishing to retire, to sell their land for cash. By placing the credit of the Government behind the new farmer, or the smaller farmer wishing to expand, we will ensure the largest numbers of buyers possible and, at the same time, make it practical for farmers to own their own land.

If necessary, we would subsidize the interest rates for the first three years to enable new farmers and expanding farmers to establish themselves on a farm on a profitable basis. Backed by the Government of Saskatchewan, farmers will be able to obtain the long-term credit necessary to keep payments at a reasonable level.

I want to say this too, we will offer to sell, on easy terms, the land now being rented to those farmers presently holding the leases.

I also want to say that if they don't wish to buy, they may continue to lease. Since we believe in freedom of choice, we will not force any farmer to buy the land he is now renting. If it is his wish, he may continue to lease.

However, I'm convinced that by allowing them to eventually become owners of the land, on terms as good or better than they are now forced to pay simply to rent, almost everyone will choose to purchase and own their own land.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — It will also be Liberal policy to amend The Natural Products Marketing Act to ensure a free and democratic vote of the producers of a commodity and only if they are in favor.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — And only if they are in favor will a Marketing Board be instituted which will then be operated by the producers themselves.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, the grain farmer has enjoyed two or three years of relative prosperity and while there is little a provincial administration can do to hurt or help grain farming the NDP did assist in sabotaging the first Grain Income Stabilization Program proposed in 1971 by the Federal Government. I can only urge that the new Stabilization Act now before Parliament will be given full support by the Government opposite so that a measure of stability can be assured to prairie grain farmers.

However our farmers engaged in the livestock business are facing some of the most difficult problems ever encountered by this most important industry. In spite of the hundreds of millions of dollars of new money pouring into the Provincial Treasury the NDP have done nothing to help the cattlemen. In fact, their program of cash advances has backfired on many of our farmers engaged in the livestock business. Many of our farmers held onto their calves because of the interest-free

cash loans advanced by the Provincial Government. This move only added to the problems faced by cattlemen when the cost of feed increased and the price of cattle dropped. Again we call on the Government, with the farmers in the cattle business, to use some of their money, some of their imagination, if they have any, to help these people out.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP policy of attempting to control Saskatchewan farmers and their callous disregard for the problems of the rural business community has resulted in a continuing decline of our rural population. Statistics contained in the 1974 Annual Report of the Department of Municipal Affairs indicate that the population of Saskatchewan's rural municipalities in the two years between 1971 and 1973 dropped by eight per cent, a total of over 16,000 people. This is the largest percentage drop in the last ten years.

Now to be fair, our rural population has been dropping since 1939, and in the ten years between 1961 and 1971 we lost over 90,000 people from the rural part of Saskatchewan. No one has yet found a solution but that does not have to mean that continued population loss in our rural areas is inevitable. The main cause for the drop is the slow or even declining rate of growth in alternative employment opportunities within rural Saskatchewan. If we can provide jobs at good wages people will stay in Saskatchewan and new people will come in. The answer must be development.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Once we have found how to attract people to our province, then we must convince a good percentage of them of the advantages of rural living and the benefits of rural life.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, before we can get people to move to rural Saskatchewan we have to find a way to increase our overall population. As I said earlier, we must produce jobs and to do this we must depend on the natural resources we have in this province.

We will never be a large manufacturing centre, but that doesn't necessarily force us to stand idly by and watch our population decline to less than half a million as recently predicted by Statistics Canada. We should be aiming at a population of between one and a half to two million people and we in the Liberal Party think this is an attainable goal.

However, it will only be accomplished if we take the necessary steps to develop the resources that nature endowed us with. It will never happen if we hide our failure behind slogans such as the "Saskatchewan Option" coined by one of Mr. Blakeney's ghost writers.

I have here a slick, expensive four page piece of political propaganda mailed out to over 300,000 people by the NDP at a cost of probably \$30,000 or \$40,000. This is probably the work of Dunsky's, the Montreal advertising firm who have been wallowing in the NDP pork barrel ever since 1971.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — On the back page is a message from Premier Blakeney and he asks the question, “What is the Saskatchewan Option?” Then he goes on to tell us it is clean air, a big prairie sky, unspoiled northern wilderness and being close to nature. He says the Saskatchewan Option is the envy of many people. The Premier goes on to say that most of our people prefer to live in small communities and that his Government made a choice, that they had decided to work toward the strengthening of these same small communities.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let’s look at the results. In the first two years of Mr. Blakeney’s administration we witnessed the greatest loss of people from our small communities in over ten years. An examination of the population figures for the last four years gives further proof of what is happening in rural Saskatchewan. 102 out of 130 towns in the Province of Saskatchewan showed a marked decline during that time in their population. The truth is that the Blakeney administration has failed to implement any meaningful policies to revitalize or even to maintain rural Saskatchewan.

They are not the first government to fail in this regard. But the NDP are certainly the first government to take that failure and try to call it a success. Premier Blakeney does not have the honesty to admit failure; he attempts to cover it up by talking about fresh air and wilderness and open spaces. I can tell him that the Saskatchewan people discovered this a long, long time ago. And they don’t need him to remind them of the fact. Incidentally so did the people of Alberta. They have got about twice as many people as we have and they live in one of the richest provinces in Canada.

However, the major reason Mr. Blakeney must shoulder the blame is because he is throwing away what could be the only chance we will get for a long time to become a prosperous province with a solid and diversified economic base.

Mr. Speaker, I will return to the top of rural Saskatchewan a little later in my speech.

At this time I should like to turn to the question of resource development, because it is related to rural growth.

For a great many years there has been an awareness of Saskatchewan’s great resource potential. For example, coal was mined in the Estevan area 50 years ago; oil and gas were discovered in the 1930s; investors were attempting to develop our salt and potash deposits 40 years ago; Saskatchewan had a flourishing timber industry before the First World War; we had a gold mine in the 1930s and uranium was actually taken out of this province in the Second World War.

Successive Governments, Conservative, Liberal and CCF have tried every conceivable inducement to bring investors to our province to develop our resources and produce jobs and prosperity. They met with some success, but it was always a struggle, and we failed more often than we succeeded because of competition from other provinces and other countries.

Beginning in 1972, for the first time in Saskatchewan’s history, investors began knocking on our door because of the world demand for our resources. However, until that time it was

we who pursued the investors.

I think a review of some of these efforts is worthwhile so that we can appreciate the enviable position the Blakeney Government has found itself in and also appreciate how badly this opportunity has been mishandled.

The first efforts at the development of a potash industry failed because of the cost of penetrating the Blairmore Sands; this was in the '40s. During the late '40s and '50s the CCF Government took action to attract the oil industry. Their efforts were successful, but only after Premier Douglas had given the strongest possible assurance to those companies prepared to risk their money looking for Saskatchewan oil, that they would not be unfairly treated and they would never be socialized.

I have a copy of two letters here, both dated April 12, 1949. The first one is signed by Eleanor McKinnon who was the secretary to Premier Douglas, and it is on his stationery. It is written to Mr. M.A. MacPherson, K.C., a prominent Regina lawyer at that time. I will table it. It reads as follows:

Dear Mr. MacPherson: With regard to the telephone conversation Mr. Douglas had with you yesterday, he asked me to send you the enclosed copy of a letter which we have been sending out to those inquiring about the Government's policy with regard to oil and gas production. Yours sincerely, Eleanor McKinnon.

The other letter was sent out by Mr. Douglas to companies in the oil and gas business who were considering investing in Saskatchewan. The letter reads as follows:

With regard to the Government's policy on oil and gas production, I desire to advise that the view that has been taken and expressed on numerous occasions, is as follows:

It is the Government's policy in the next few years to promote the maximum exploration and development of petroleum in Saskatchewan which natural circumstances will permit. This policy is based upon a recognition of two principles. First, a fair return from the production of petroleum of which the people are the true owners, (a) by means of crown reserves in all parts of the province, and (b) in the form of royalties upon the petroleum that is produced. Secondly, the province will stand by all agreements it enters into and it has no intention of either expropriating or socializing the oil industry.

In the same context I will quote from an article that appeared in the Regina Leader-Post dated April 6, 1950. The headline is, "CCF will keep Agreements on Oil." The article states in part:

Premier T.C. Douglas will resign as Leader if a convention of his Party ever asks his Government to repudiate promises made to oil companies, he told the Legislature Wednesday night.

In the same article is another statement by Mr. Brockelbank, senior, who was at that time Minister of Resources. The exact

quote is:

This Government will live up to its agreements, asserted Mr. Brockelbank. That is not contrary to the CCF policy.

These letters and statements are doubly interesting.

First, they indicate the problems faced by Saskatchewan in their efforts to attract oil investment. Second, they prove conclusively the difference between the CCF government of T.C. Douglas and the NDP government of Mr. Blakeney.

Mr. Douglas promised that his government would not break their agreements and he kept that promise. Mr. Blakeney, however, has shown absolute contempt for any promise, any contract, or any lease signed by his government, or any government on behalf of the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, we find the same story repeated in regard to potash. The first successful potash mine was developed near Saskatoon by the Potash Company of America in the mid-1950s. Again, they were given by Mr. Douglas and his CCF government a guarantee of fair treatment and a low royalty rate extending until the year 1981. Again, Mr. Douglas kept his word; again Mr. Blakeney broke it. Once again the difficulty of obtaining investment in Saskatchewan resources is currently illustrated.

An interesting footnote to the promises given by the CCF government and broken by Premier Blakeney is that he was actually a Member of that government for four years. I don't know how Premier Blakeney squares this double-dealing with his own conscience, but what he has done to the reputation of Saskatchewan is unforgivable.

A look at the timber industry shows exactly the same pattern. The old CCF tried everything under the sun to obtain a pulp mill for our province. They offered incentives, far in excess of anything given to Parsons and Whittemore to Canadian and American companies alike, but they failed. The Thatcher Liberal Government approached almost every major Canadian pulp company, urging them to come in and help us develop this renewable resource, with no success. We finally achieved a pulp mill, but only with an American company and by providing incentives and guarantees.

In short, up until 1973 as far as the development of Saskatchewan's basic resources were concerned, we were the sellers and it was a buyer's market. Then suddenly, Mr. Speaker, things changed.

The realization of an energy shortage, coupled with a new worldwide demand for other products we produce, focused new attention on our great potential. Almost overnight people were showing a new interest in our coal, oil, potash, timber, uranium and other hard rock minerals. Investors were ready to flock to our door. For the first time in our history Saskatchewan was in the driver's seat. We didn't have to offer incentives, just a fair deal. At long last we were in a position to broaden a base of our economy and develop thousands of new jobs. We could finally reverse the 40 year downward trend of our population.

In short, we were on the verge of becoming a real 'have' province with an assured future, not totally based on the sweat of our farmers.

We had the resources; world demand was high; prices were even higher; people were ready to bring in their capital, the know-how, and the markets. Nothing could stop us, but something did. We had a Premier and a government who were so tied up in their hatred of business, in their contempt of private enterprise and individual initiative, in their narrow socialism that they literally slammed the door in the face of this golden opportunity.

In spite of the promises they had given at an earlier date under a different name, the CCF, with many of the same men, they have savaged the resource industry, confiscated their assets, crippled them with taxes and embroiled the province in an unnecessary and divisive squabble with the Federal Government.

In the hard rock mining industry they demand literal control before anyone can proceed with a mine. They have taken control of the future of our forest industry. They have strangled the present potash mines and reserved sole rights to the Government for any future development. The oil industry has been harassed and driven out. We have become the black spot on the investment map of North America.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, investors neither understand nor trust Saskatchewan's present Government. This almost irreparable damage has been done by a group of small men who have the unmitigated gall to say they are protecting the interests of Saskatchewan people. I ask the Premier, what people? What people is he protecting? Surely not the thousands of people in northern Saskatchewan who rot on social aid with no mines or mills to offer employment. Not the 16,000 people who were uprooted from rural Saskatchewan because there were no jobs. Not the thousands of high school and university graduates who, whether they like it or not, are forced to go from this province just to find a job.

How about the 300 Burns employees out of work because this province evidently can't support a thriving packing house industry? Is he working on their behalf? Let Premier Blakeney tell all these people that he is acting in their best interests. Let him tell them that their frustration and their defeat is really the glorious Saskatchewan Option.

Mr. Speaker, I call it the worst failure, the most tragic and unnecessary loss ever suffered by Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Ever since our first Premier, Walter Scott, Premiers have dreamed of the opportunity that was handed to Premier Blakeney and he threw it away. Premier Blakeney will go down in history as the weakest, most short-sighted first Minister that we have ever had since we became a province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — How should we have handled our resources in the face of this unprecedented demand, keeping in mind the first right of the people of Saskatchewan and the vexing problem of federal-provincial jurisdiction?

To begin with I will state categorically that the Liberal Party recognizes the resources belong to the people, and our concern is not for the oil, potash, or mining industries, large or small, except inasmuch as their presence is of benefit to our people. I don't think there is anything sacred or unique about a dollar invested by an individual or a private corporation as opposed to a dollar invested by a government. The battle of whether the government should be in business was settled a thousand years ago. Surely all we are talking about now is what method produces the best results.

If private investment will not come to Saskatchewan to help us develop our resources, then I would be the first to have the government do it, either as a partner or alone. I am not hung up, nor is the Liberal Party, with phoney labels or narrow political philosophy. We say get the job done the best way we can and if you are in a tough worldwide competitive industry such as oil and minerals, and potash, the people with the best track record of success are the private enterprisers. They have the money, the know-how, and they have the markets. We have the resources and they need us.

We can set tough rules, we can demand a high rate of taxation for our people, but at the same time we must be prepared to leave these investors a fair return and also to convince them that they can trust us to keep our word.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Let me give you one example of what I mean. The nine potash companies which have already invested over one billion dollars in our province who know how to mine potash, who have markets to sell what they produce, were prepared to invest hundreds of millions of dollars more in our province. They were ready, Mr. Speaker, to produce thousands of new jobs and a solid tax base to give us revenue over the years to guarantee our people a better way of life. These people have spent a lifetime in the mining industry, but Premier Blakeney turned his back on them and instead we are to have the Saskatchewan Potash Company. Premier Blakeney is ready to gamble \$110 million, that is about what it will take. Money he takes from farmers and working people, and risk it in the mining adventure.

Let's look at who is going to direct this giant corporation on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. I have here an Order-in-Council dated February 4, 1975 and signed by Mr. Cowley, Minister of Mineral Resources and Mr. Blakeney, the Premier. It reads as follows:

The undersigned has the honor to recommend that it is deemed advisable for the public good that the following persons as a corporation for the purpose of engaging on behalf of the Crown in the right of Saskatchewan, in any or all aspects of the potash industry.

Who are they? David Dombowsky, Roy Lloyd, John S. Burton,

Garry H. Beatty, Don R. Ching. All of Regina, Saskatchewan. Of course the name is the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Who are these men? I happen to know them all, and have a high regard for most of them. Some of them I only have a medium regard for. However, let's look at their credentials to guide the destiny of a multi-million dollar potash company.

Don Ching — a lawyer, former partner of the Attorney General Roy Romanow. Business experience — nil.

Garry Beatty — formerly of the university, lately Deputy Finance Minister. Business experience — nil.

John S. Burton — he is well qualified. Former NDP Member of Parliament, more recently speech writer for NDP backbenchers. Business experience — less than nil. Of course he was a defeated candidate or he wouldn't be working for them.

Roy Lloyd — Economist. Advisor to several governments on the intricacies of federal-provincial agreements. A good civil servant. Business experience, again — nil.

David Dombowsky — former Deputy Treasurer and chairman of the Board of SEDCO. Business experience — some exposure to the business community as a negotiator for the Government but personal business experience — nil. He is a fine individual and I presume he was made head of this corporation on the theory that over there in the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king.

There is nothing wrong with these gentlemen but in truth they don't know a pound of potash from a peck of potatoes and their guidance of the gigantic investment it will take to operate a modern potash mine is as ludicrous as it is unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker, if I wanted to run a successful mine I would look for someone like Steve Roman but I wouldn't want him to run the Welfare Department.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — That shows the humor, Steve Roman knows how to run a mine, I'll back him up against the people you have got running that mine any day of the week. But I wouldn't hire him to run the Welfare Department.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — And the braying of those . . . whatever type of animals bray, over there indicate their total ignorance of business. Most of these appointees are excellent civil servants but in all fairness they have neither the knowledge nor the background to perform the task that has been thrust upon them by the Premier.

SaskOil is another unfortunate example of the Blakeney Government's move into the business world. In spite of the millions of dollars poured into this Crown corporation they have yet to add one barrel to the oil reserves of this province.

The manager, Mr. Berg, may have some qualifications other than being Kim Thorson's uncle, but his record so far indicates

that SaskOil would have trouble finding oil in a well-stocked service station.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, this has been the NDP way. Dictate, confiscate, slam the door on private investment. They have done this in the guise of protecting the people from large multinational, profit hungry corporations when, in fact, they have driven out the very people who could produce the jobs and the revenue to give our citizens a brighter future.

An honest, common sense approach to the development of Saskatchewan's resources at this time will be the dedication of a new Liberal Government and one of the favorable results will be a steady growth of our population.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Then we will take practical steps to encourage a return of people to our smaller centres and our rural communities.

Returning to the topic of rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party recognizes that job opportunities are not enough. Provincial grants to local governments to improve the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan must be increased, as a first step in any program to revive our smaller cities, our towns and our villages.

A Liberal Government would at the same time offer a program of loans and grants to businesses located in smaller centres to allow them to rebuild, modernize and to expand.

You know, with the uncertainty that exists in too many of our smaller centres, businessmen are reluctant, even if they can obtain the capital, to invest more money in an area that is, or may be, losing its population. You can't blame them. Now this tends to hasten the demise of some of our smaller centres as the shopping districts and other facilities deteriorate. People demand, rightfully so, the best, and if they don't get it they move to larger centres where it is available. A well financed program to share the risk with small businessmen in rural Saskatchewan is a necessity, if we mean what we say about revitalizing these important areas of our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Budget Speech, as was the case in the Throne Speech, continues the NDP Government's unceasing attack on the Federal Government. The fact that a provincial administration, especially in western Canada, will differ from time to time and fight with the central government is not new, nor is it unusual.

In a federal state, such as Canada, a provincial jurisdiction must stand up for the legitimate rights of its people against the power of the central government when the occasion demands it. However, the NDP have made a career of whining and crying and backbiting against federal governments, both Liberal and Conservative, over every real and imaginary grievance. They do this because it is good politics.

If Premier Blakeney can divert the attention of the people

of Saskatchewan away from the mess he has made in his leadership of the resource industry and put the blame on Ottawa, he may escape with his political hide in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to deal at any great length with this issue, but I want to put a few facts on the record.

It was in the early fall of 1973 that the Federal Government imposed an export tax of 40 cents a barrel on oil being sold into the American market. Over the next few months that tax was raised until the price reached \$6.50 per barrel. They did this for two reasons: (1) because the Canadian oil was being sold too cheap in the United States and (2) in order to institute a two-price system for Canadian oil, that is, a higher world market price for export and a lower price for domestic consumption.

It is worth reminding ourselves of Premier Blakeney's actions at that time. To begin with, it was his fault we were selling our oil to the Americans below the world market price. He should have acted before the Federal Government was forced to move in, and secondly, if he felt so strongly about the Federal Government moving in on our provincial resources, he should have immediately forced up the wellhead price and had the confrontation right then in the fall of 1973. Instead, he said he would agree with the Federal Government putting on an export tax as long as they turned the money over to the Provincial Treasury. He really wasn't concerned about the principle — only the money.

Then in December of 1973 he called this Legislature into session and he forced through Bill 42. Now, Mr. Speaker, this Bill not only confiscated the oil rights of 25 companies, large and small, most of them Canadian, operating in Saskatchewan, but also rolled back the wellhead price by 11 per cent and gave, by law, every cent of this increase from then on to the Provincial Government.

The Premier went to Ottawa. He went down East and he made great speeches and he roared and he thundered that he would get \$9 a barrel for our oil. But then he collapsed at the meeting. In January of 1974, he came back after that meeting and he only got \$6.50 for our oil, and another dollar extra if he could get it. You know, the Premier also claimed at that time he had secured an excellent deal for Saskatchewan people by keeping intact our equalization grants from the Federal Government.

Subsequent events have proven how badly he negotiated on our behalf, or how much he misrepresented what actually happened in Ottawa at that Conference. He soon lost the dollar a barrel and he also claims that he lost \$35 million in equalization grants. But in the meantime he had raised provincial taxes on oil three or four hundred per cent and he slapped some new taxes on the potash industry, increasing his take there by over 500 per cent. Then, in the Federal Budget, brought down in May of 1974, Ottawa struck back at what they claimed was a squeeze play by many of the provinces, Saskatchewan in particular, in regard to the taxation of the resource industry. The Federal Government stated they would disallow provincial royalties as an expense in calculating corporate income tax by the people engaged in the resource industries. This, of course, was the straw that broke the camel's back for many of those people engaged in the oil and potash business in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government was defeated so that Budget was never passed. After the Liberal Government was returned to power they reintroduced almost the same measures but they had modified their stand to some extent, but the measures went in almost intact. Now this was in October of 1974. That Budget is still under consideration. I have mentioned these dates to put the lie to Premier Blakeney's claim that it was the action of the Federal Government in disallowing provincial royalties that has reduced new oil exploration so sharply in Saskatchewan. I say, and so does the oil industry, that it was Mr. Blakeney and Bill 42, the action he took at that time over one year ago, that has ground the oil industry almost to a halt in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — The change proposed by the Federal Government in the tax laws were not even passed in 1974 and so they played no part in the troubles facing the oil industry in Saskatchewan, the troubles that have cost hundreds and hundreds of ordinary people their jobs and have seen the forcing out of the province technical and skilled people whom we may have trouble ever getting back.

Let me place one added bit of proof of this fact on the record. I have here an article from the Toronto Globe and Mail, dated January 16, 1975 and it reports that British Columbia drilled more wells in 1974 than in 1973. It also reports that more wells were drilled in the Province of Alberta in 1974 as compared to 1973. But only in Saskatchewan was the number of new wells drilled down in 1974 as compared to 1973. In fact, there were 369 fewer wells drilled in Saskatchewan in 1974 as compared to 1973. This is when the trouble started. It's true, Mr. Speaker, up in Alberta, up in British Columbia, down in Saskatchewan. They have the same Federal Government in British Columbia, the same Federal Government in Alberta, they had the same federal tax laws and they work under the same federal regulations. Yet they were up and we were down. The reason is stated clearly in the same article, and I quote:

The drop of 369 well completions in Saskatchewan last year has been attributed by operators to the unfavorable provincial royalty system.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — That's where the blame lies. That's what has cost the oil jobs, that's what has cost us, I say, the biggest slam, the biggest hurt that we have ever seen brought on this industry just at the time when we need it the most.

Now, when Premier Blakeney came back from the Energy Conference a year ago, he stated he also obtained some 'trade-offs' as he called them. He said, because we finally agreed to a lower price for all Canadians, the Federal Government agreed to give us some things in return. He informed us that the Federal Government, through DREE, would be giving Saskatchewan a great deal of help in adding to and improving our steel industry. In April of 1974, because he was afraid Otto Lang would scoop him on the announcement of Ottawa's help, Premier Blakeney held a strange little press conference. He gave the Press the full

story of the great iron and steel development. He then asked them to promise not to tell anyone that it was he who made the announcement. They never told a soul, most of them, for about 20 minutes. Well, we know Premier Blakeney lost his dollar a barrel, within about a month, he claims he lost a great deal of the equalization grants, if he ever had them, but let's see what's happening to his great steel development. Well again, Mr. Speaker, I quote from an article in the Globe and Mail, dated February 25, 1975:

IPSCO is said to be leaning toward participation, probably with United States interests, in the development of the Carter Creek Iron ore deposit in Montana.

The story goes on:

Originally, the iron reduction plant was scheduled to be located near IPSCO's present ingot producing installation at Regina. However, an undisclosed Alberta location, probably Edmonton, is said to be under consideration for the iron reduction plant.

The story continues:

As part of the proposed expansion program, IPSCO last year bought a galvanizing line that will be installed with a cold rolling mill and a large-diameter pipe mill acquired more than a year ago in Calgary, Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether this is just Press speculation, or whether we are actually going to lose the iron mine, the galvanizing plant and the rolling mill. But I do know that a study by Scriveners indicated that the iron mine at Choiceland, Saskatchewan is viable and I also know that we did have a deal in 1971 when we were the Government, to develop that mine and a pellet plant, and I also know that Premier Blakeney cancelled it and has been trying to put that kind of a deal back on the rails ever since.

I also know that if we lose most of the steel complex, then our Premier has again proven himself to be the most naïve, inept negotiator ever to represent us, or anyone else, or else he has been misrepresenting everything that came out of that Conference during the past year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, when we examine his record, his lack of credibility and his record as a negotiator make either or both a distinct possibility.

After all, Mr. Speaker, this is the same man who paid that kindly old gentleman, Mr. Fred Mendel, \$10.2 million for 45 per cent of the shares in the Intercontinental meat packing plant when he had a statement in his possession proving that 100 per cent of the shares were only worth \$6.3 million.

You know, Mr. Speaker, not satisfied with that piece of lunacy, Mr. Blakeney then agreed to buy another 20 per cent of Mr. Mendel's share for a further \$6 million. Then add to this the fact that Mr. Mendel now owes this Government about \$9

million, we find that we will soon have \$23 million sunk into Intercontinental.

It's no wonder Premier Blakeney didn't even spend two minutes of his time, or two dollars of Government funds to talk even once to Mr. Art Child about the partial closing of Burns Company in Prince Albert and the loss of 300 jobs to this province.

An Hon. Member: — — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — That's right. I guess Premier Blakeney lost most of his hide the last time he visited a packing plant and I think he is a bit gun-shy. The real reason, I have to believe, that this Government never lifted a finger to do anything about the Burns closure is because of the \$23 million tied up or committed to the Intercontinental plants in Saskatoon and Regina. I think they were happy to see their opposition driven out of this province. And I know that the people in Prince Albert, the employees of Burns Foods Limited, 300 of them who lost their jobs and witnessed total lack of interest by Premier Blakeney and his Government when not one Cabinet Minister would even come up to Prince Albert to meet with the employees, not spend five minutes of their time, is a clear indication of their regard for those working people and for that company.

Not quite as costly as a meat packing plant, the Saskatchewan Potash Corporation, or SaskOil, but just as unnecessary and as unbusinesslike, was the Government's creation of the Saskatchewan Development Corporation. This company was never needed in the province. It has cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan about \$100,000 so far, and has produced nothing of value for our people. Once again, the Government turned to a fine individual, a former school teacher, paying him \$23,500 to run this Government investment corporation. Now his qualifications to operate such a business were impeccable from the point of view of the Blakeney Government. He had absolutely no business experience and he was a defeated NDP candidate. Mind you, he did set a record of sorts. He was the first NDP defeated candidate that was ever hired before he was defeated. The NDP ran him against Ted Malone in the Lakeview by-election, but they actually had him hired before election day. So far this company has invested most of their money (that we can find out) in short-term bank deposits. I am sure this pleases the local bankers, but it doesn't fill much of a need for the rest of our people.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP administration has not confined their inefficiency and waste and mismanagement to Government investment in the business world. Every department of Government, almost without exception, has literally thrown away millions of the taxpayers' dollars.

The Department of Northern Saskatchewan is, of course, the most outstanding example. The mismanagement of that Department is so bad that it has received the harshest criticism any department has had in the last 25 years from a Provincial auditor working for this Government. Five hundred thousand dollars lying around in shoe boxes unaccounted for, expenditures in some offices exceeding the authorization of \$100,000 and almost total lack of proper controls were just some of the charges levelled at this Department. The people of northern Saskatchewan are almost in open rebellion against many of the misfits hired by the NDP

and sent North to dictate to those residents and, in case anyone thinks the situation has improved, a visit to Buffalo Narrows or Lac La Ronge or Cumberland House will soon set them straight. And in fact this Budget gives them another \$45 million and adds 120 new employees in the DNS. If you go up into northern Saskatchewan, if this Government stays in power, there will be one northerner and two NDP so-called civil servants for every mile, watching. It was something less than a surprise to read the recent announcement that Mr. Norm MacAuley was contesting the NDP nomination and he won it in the northern constituency of Cumberland. Mr. MacAuley happens to be the north-central coordinator for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, so his political activity on behalf of that Government is a matter of course.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this, northern people are tired of the Government's habit of hiring their political hacks and political supporters rather than individuals who are genuinely concerned with the problems of northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Another example of gross inefficiency of the NDP Government in general and Health Minister Smishek in particular is the Plains Health Centre in Regina. This great hospital begun by the Liberals was completed in 1972 at a cost of about \$20 million. The NDP even had an official opening, complete with cocktails and speeches in the fall of 1972. However, they failed to get the hospital open in 1972, they failed to get the hospital open in 1973 and for all practical purposes they even failed to get it open in 1974. So, Mr. Speaker, to cover up their embarrassment in the fall of 1974 they opened a few beds. By last November they had nine patients recovering from what they described as minor surgery in the most expensive hospital in Saskatchewan. Nine patients in a \$20 million hospital while hundreds of seriously ill people are unable to find a hospital bed in this city and in this province.

Mind you, Mr. Speaker, the NDP haven't let the building sit empty. They began a few months ago to fill it up with some of the 4,000 new Government employees. In fact, they are using that expensive hospital facility for ordinary office space. It is a disgraceful and wasteful situation, brought on by the mismanagement of Mr. Smishek and the NDP Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, they stand condemned; they have failed to hire the proper staff. Because of their attitude they can't get nurses or other professional help and the morale of those that they have on staff is extremely low. The Plains Hospital stands as a monument to the Blakeney Government's poor planning and inefficiency. It has been described as the most expensive first aid centre in the entire world. The sad face of this story, Mr. Speaker, is that while the mess goes on in the Plains Hospital, Regina's two older hospitals continue to deteriorate and health service sinks to a new low in our capital city.

Mr. Speaker, I say that the mismanagement and incompetence of the Blakeney NDP Government is scandalous. However, I am their political opponent; I am naturally biased, so instead of

taking my word, let's consider what the Provincial Auditor, W.G. Lutz, has to say.

In his annual report, tabled in the Legislature last Tuesday, Mr. Lutz pointed out, among other things, the following:

1. The Saskatchewan Hog Marketing Commission's financial records for its first eight months of operation were so inadequate, their accuracy is impossible to verify.
2. He said there were "serious deficiencies" in accounting procedures and "a number of weaknesses" in internal control of funds handled by the Commission.
3. There were also accounting deficiencies in recording expenditures from the Public Works advance account.
4. There are \$13,000 worth of hearing aids under the authority of the Saskatchewan Hearing Aid Plan actually unaccounted for.

Here is another gem from the Department they were going to clean up, the DNS. A year ago when the mess in the DNS came out in the auditor's report, we heard the Minister, who is not here today and is not here very often, claim that they would clean this up, that this was growing pains. The Premier got up and said, "Well, these are expected, we are trying to do something, we are hiring people and we will have this all straightened up," so let's see the results. This year's auditor's report states that:

1. \$580,000 worth of overpayments in social assistance benefits were made from the Government office in Buffalo Narrows in a four year period ending last August.

Other parts to the report:

1. Grants to organizations were made without proper authority.
2. A single Government department had committed itself to the expenditure of \$1,299,779 more than this Legislature had appropriated.

This is not the first time that the Provincial Auditor has publicly criticized the Blakeney NDP Government for the mishandling and even the illegal use of public funds. Last year the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, as I say, was charged with the mishandling of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Minister of Industry, Mr. Thorson, was responsible according to the auditor's report for an illegal payment to Service Printers, a company wholly owned by the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, this tawdry record of questionable and suspicious dealings by the NDP Government not only continues but actually worsens. I say they are not fit for public trust and they have proven it by their actions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, this Budget presented to the House last Friday was the product of a Government that is obviously not capable of bold new initiatives designed to ensure a prosperous

Saskatchewan in the future. Our prosperity today is based on the turn of circumstance and largely of luck. We have received for the last year or two excellent prices for our grain; we have had excellent supplies of grain because of good weather here and poor weather elsewhere. We are also able to charge more for our oil because of the political climate in the Middle East that we are powerless to influence. Potash prices have soared upward because of a tremendous world demand and because at present our supplies are available while others are not. Mr. Speaker, we are not the first region in Canada nor the first country in the world to experience prosperity because of largely unplanned or unforeseen events. But we must be, and I am sure we are, the first to face this prosperity with an administration that is so short-sighted that they do nothing to take advantage of this opportunity and build for the future. On the contrary, as I have pointed out before, they have taken this golden, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and they have literally slammed the door in its face because of their narrow, socialistic outlook, their attitude if we can't develop the resources we won't let anybody do it. The real losers are the people of this province. The real loser is the future of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — You know, Mr. Speaker, this Budget contains nothing for the development of a growing business community, nothing to encourage people to create stable secondary industries, and nothing to foster the more imaginative use of our primary resources. Had Mr. Blakeney sat down and dealt fairly with the potash industry, for example, we would see the equivalent of double the potash mines we have in the next few years. That would mean if he had used the proper incentives, given them fair play, a flow of secondary industries in here to service that gigantic industry far in excess of anything that has come in so far. I say that we lost six or seven or eight or nine thousand jobs directly in the potash industry because of your actions, Mr. Speaker, and probably four or five times that many secondary industries that would come in to service the potash industry.

What is true of that industry is true of the oil industry. You go to Lloydminster, you find up there that the city of Lloydminster is still prosperous. The people say instead of the oil workers getting in their cars and driving five or ten miles east into Saskatchewan to work in the heavy oil fields, they are now getting into their cars and driving five or ten miles west into the Alberta heavy oil fields. We had the big play in heavy oils, it was in Saskatchewan and it should have stayed in Saskatchewan. That surely is where we will find some of our greatest untapped reserves. The price went up high enough so that at long last the people were ready to go in there and experiment and invest millions of dollars with the technical know-how to really give us a solid base under the oil industry for years and years in the future. An assured supply, good jobs and an assured revenue. But instead the Blakeney Government with Bill 42 and their short-sighted policies have driven them out of Saskatchewan. And where have they gone? They have gone to Alberta. Why? Because that Government recognized what was happening and they backed off. Alberta backed off, even NDP British Columbia backed off. The Federal Government backed off a little. The only government in Canada in regard to the resource industry

that has stubbornly, stubbornly refused to make any concessions to common sense and to the future has been the Blakeney administration and they should stand condemned for what they are doing to our people now and what they are doing to our future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, there is no question when you read this Budget and you couple it with the speeches and with the Throne Speech that the NDP will continue as long as they are in office to wage war on business, large and small. And any businessman large or small that has the slightest idea that if they re-elect the Blakeney Government that they will see anything but worse treatment than they have in the past four years is living in a dream world. The business community stands at the mercy of that Government and that Government's philosophy is to eradicate private initiative, private business and there can be no clearer understanding substantiating that fact than looking in this present Budget. Small business warrants only a three line reference in the speech that said, in effect, nothing has changed, we do not believe in your worth, and we have no room for you in our plans. And then the Premier stands up and says, we want to revitalize rural Saskatchewan, and he spurns and slams the door on the very people who can revitalize it. The small businessman is prepared to invest his time and his future and he knows or he should know that there is no hope as long as that Government sits on that side of the Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, the total failure of the NDP to move Saskatchewan forward and seize the opportunities available to us is the single most tragic and inexcusable aspect of this Budget. They sprinkle money all over wherever they can to try to ensure their re-election, handing out a few bribes here, a little bit there. You study that Budget from front to back, you study the Budget Speech and go through the Estimates and you find one thing — the Blakeney Government has said, whether they realize it or not, they don't really believe in the independence and the freedom of choice of the Saskatchewan people and they don't really believe that this province can have an assured future.

The fact is we've got more resources than Alberta; the fact is that this has been the one chance we have ever had in our history to get a real base under the economy of this province. The one chance since it became a province to get people to come in to look at our coal and our oil and our potash and our hard rock minerals. If the Government was doing it in their place there would be some excuse but when you look at the Potash Company of Saskatchewan, SaskOil, Sask Minerals who have done literally nothing but are prepared to risk and gamble the people's money when they don't have to, that, Mr. Speaker, is the real theory of the Blakeney Government, the real tragedy of this Budget.

I cannot support it and I am confident that the people of Saskatchewan will not support it either now or whenever the election is called by the Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. K. Thorson (Minister of Industry and Commerce): — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter this Debate and in doing so I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague, the Minister of Finance, for his very able presentation to the House last Friday.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — I am sorry that the Leader of the Opposition could not imitate the Minister of Finance and follow the good precedent that has been set at the beginning of the Debate. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition too often this afternoon failed to tell all of the facts, or misrepresented the facts about our economic situation in Saskatchewan. For instance when he cries out about the oil industry he fails to tell the people of Saskatchewan that about \$100 million a year is being taken out of Saskatchewan by the oil producers who are operating here. He fails to tell them that while we undertook when we passed Bill 42 in December, 1973, to allow the same price that existed on the average in 1973 so that they could have the same profits as before, we did say that the people of Saskatchewan, the owners of the oil (consistent with the Douglas letter of 1949) insisted that we should have the first claim on the major benefits from the windfall of the oil.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — In the potash industry, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition fails to tell the people that while our gross sales in 1969 were about \$70 million out of Saskatchewan, in this year 1975 they will be more than \$400 million. In 1975 the value of our potash is about six times as much compared to 1969. And when we say in Saskatchewan, as we surely have the right to say, that a larger share of that revenue should come to the people of Saskatchewan who are owners of this resource, surely that expresses the will of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — The Leader of the Opposition suggests that somehow the partial closure of the Burns Plant in Prince Albert is a blot on the record of the Government. Mr. Speaker, it was the management of the Burns Company that wrote off the Prince Albert Plant, not this Government. And he fails, the Leader of the Opposition, to tell the people that it is a partial closure, not a complete closure, and that all that Burns is doing is cutting down on its processing particularly of cattle and it will continue to buy hogs at Prince Albert as it has always done. It will kill them at Prince Albert but then of course it will ship them to Edmonton for processing.

The Leader of the Opposition suggests that there is a Scrivener Report on the Choiceland Iron Mine and it says the development of the mine is feasible. Not so, Mr. Speaker. If it were true, the development would take place. There is nothing standing in the way of the people who own the Choiceland Iron Mine from proceeding if they think this is a feasible project. The fact is that it has not been proven to be feasible any more than it was feasible when the Liberals promised to do it back in

1971 on the eve of an election in the hope that people would be deceived by that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say categorically and emphatically, when the Leader of the Opposition raises the question of the Provincial Auditor's Report, that there has been no wrongdoing or illegal act on the part of any of the Ministers or the staff. True, there have been difficulties in some of the agencies in establishing proper accounting procedures and administrative methods but no one should take from that that there has been misconduct on the part of the Government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition invites us in this debate, when he began, to compare the records, to look at the situation in Saskatchewan and to judge the Government on the basis of that situation. I should like to spend most of my time in this debate dealing with the economic record of Saskatchewan during the Liberal years 1964 to 1971 and during the New Democratic years since 1971 up to the present time.

Let's first of all take a look at four key economic indicators for that period when the Liberals were in office and for the period when we were in office. Let's look at per capita personal income; let's look at the value of manufacturing shipments; let's look at the value of retail trade; and the fourth item, housing starts in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada shows us that on the average in the Liberal years, from 1964 to 1971 per capita personal income increased on the average each year in Saskatchewan 7.7 per cent but trailed the increase in Canada which was over 10 per cent. In manufacturing shipments in those years on the average each year we increased just over 6 per cent in Saskatchewan but trailed the rest of Canada which increased at more than 7 per cent annually. In retail trade in those Liberal years while our increase was 2.2 per cent annually in Saskatchewan, we trailed away behind the rest of Canada which was increasing at the rate of 6.4 per cent. In housing starts, Mr. Speaker, in those years when the Liberals were in office in Saskatchewan, while Canada was increasing its housing starts on an annual average basis of over 2 per cent each year, in Saskatchewan housing starts annually on the average declined by almost 60 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the most recent years — since we came to office in 1971 — and the picture is completely reversed. Instead of Saskatchewan trailing the rest of Canada in these four economic indicators, we are now way ahead of Canada in each of these areas.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — In per capita personal income our average annual increase is 55 per cent since we have taken office compared to only 13 per cent in the rest of Canada. The value of our manufacturing shipments has increased each year by 20 per cent since we have taken office and the rest of Canada by only 16 per cent. Our retail trade value increased on the average over 10 per cent since we came to office in Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada just over 8 per cent. In housing starts, Mr. Speaker, the contrast to the years when the Liberals were in office and when the rest of Canada was increasing its housing

starts and we were decreasing, now in the years when we have been in office, in Canada the rest of the nation has seen a decline in housing starts on the average of 3.7 per cent per annum but under our Government housing starts in Saskatchewan have increased by 20 per cent each year since we came to office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — Note the contrast, Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals in Saskatchewan we fell behind in Canada; under the NDP Saskatchewan is ahead of the expansion in the rest of Canada. And in housing starts we have been moving up while Canada as a whole is declining.

Mr. Speaker, our economic performance in this province in 1974, the most recent completed calendar year, has been outstanding. Ask any businessman. Look at the figures. Let's take five indicators. Total personal income in 1974 reached \$4.1 billion in Saskatchewan, that's up 19 per cent over the previous year. Retail trade \$1.7 billion, up 20 per cent over 1973. The value of all of our production, all commodities produced reached \$3.1 billion in 1974 and that is up 19 per cent over 1973. Total investment in Saskatchewan in 1974 is up 22 per cent over 1973. Mr. Speaker, this achievement is all the more remarkable because in the last year there has been a serious slump in the Canadian economy as a whole.

I should like to quote from a Financial Times News Service story which appeared in the Regina Leader-Post on March 11, 1975 under the headline, Real Growth Decline Worst Since 1960-61. Mr. Speaker, the headline of course refers to the nation as a whole in Canada. Here is part of what that story says:

The fourth quarter was the worst quarterly performance . . .

(that's in 1974)

. . . since the recession of 1960-61, said Statistics Canada. Within the economy, production at the end of last year slumped to no higher than its level at the end of 1973. At \$144 billion, the total value of goods and services measured by the GNP rose 0.7 per cent over the third quarter but the gain was entirely due to rising prices. For 1974 as a whole, real GNP increased 3.7 per cent, with all of the growth coming in the year's first quarter. Price increases set new records. Inflation during 1974 was at a rate of 13.1 per cent — higher than the previous years of 1948 or 1951.

Mr. Speaker, that is the end of the quotation from that story, but note that our gains of about 20 per cent in all of the key economic indicators in 1974 is away ahead of the inflation at 13 per cent in the nation and that we are going up while the rest of Canada is going down.

I want particularly, Mr. Speaker, to set the record straight on the matter of jobs and manufacturing in Saskatchewan. On page 8 of the printed Budget Speech, reference is made to 24,000 people employed in manufacturing in 1974. That Statistics

Canada figure includes jobs in construction of manufacturing facilities as well as factory jobs in processing and manufacturing plants. I want to deal with only those people employed by manufacturing firms both in the plant and in administrative positions. Again my figures come from Statistics Canada. Mr. Speaker, just as I began I had distributed to each member's desk a little sheet headed, Look at the Record. I won't take the time to repeat all of the figures there but that sheet sets out the actual employment by manufacturing firms in Saskatchewan in each of the years since 1964 up to the end of 1974.

Let's look at the Liberal years, Mr. Speaker. In the period from 1964 to 1971 manufacturing jobs started at 14,147 and ended at 14,578. Now there were some increases during that interval but by the time of the end of the Liberal years we were down again. The total increase in those seven years was 531 people, or about 76 per year on the average under the Liberals. In the last three years, Mr. Speaker, since we came to office we have gone from the 14,578 to 17,600 which is an increase of about 3,000 in three years or 1,000 per year on the average. Mr. Speaker, there is the record — 76 a year under the Liberals; 1,000 per year under the New Democrats in manufacturing jobs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — Our record is at least 13 times better than the Liberals, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's take a look at that same table, Mr. Speaker, and see how we compared in percentage changes with the rest of Canada when the Liberals were in power and when the NDP were in power in Saskatchewan. The percentage increases are higher than the rest of Canada when the NDP is in charge of the economic affairs of this province and Saskatchewan in recent years is increasing manufacturing jobs at about six per cent or more per year, while Canada's rate is about five per cent. But if you go back and look under those Liberal years, you will see that Saskatchewan was lagging behind Canada — even when there were increases. And when the rest of Canada was suffering a reduction in manufacturing jobs, then Saskatchewan's rate of decline under the Liberals was greater than the nation as a whole.

In manufacturing in Saskatchewan, Liberal times are bad times. NDP times are good time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — Our political opponents may talk all they like about manufacturing firms that closed or did not get underway in Saskatchewan in recent years. But such instances are the exception and not the rule. For every case of that kind there are ten or fifteen success stories.

Let me just list those firms in the past year where employment is 20 or more. I will not include the several projects of the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation which have and will add many new jobs in the forest area of the province. Here is a list of firms in the private sector which have new plants or expansions coming on stream this past year or are about to start production: Canasphere Industries at Moose Jaw with an employment

projected of 20 jobs; Pyramid Mobile Homes, North Battleford, 80 jobs; Kleiman Manufacturing at Saskatoon, 25 jobs; Sakundiak Equipment of Regina, 40 jobs; Intercontinental Packers of Regina opened in 1974 with 50 jobs; Sportsman Campers in Saskatoon, 30 jobs; Vista Limited in Saskatoon, 32 jobs; Univision Industries in Biggar with a projected employment of 40 jobs; Fibro Industries in Regina just opening in a new plant supplied by SEDCO with 90 jobs; Westank Industries in Regina, a new expansion with 80 jobs; North American Car at Regina, 25 jobs. Mr. Speaker, these are 12 firms with projected jobs totalling more than 500. If I included those firms with projected jobs of under 20, I would add another 20 firms and at least 150 more jobs.

Mr. Speaker, if I went back to 1973, I would also list the following: Alfa Cubers at Broderick with 23 jobs; Degelman industries at Regina with 70 jobs; IPSCO's expansion in Regina in that year was 250 jobs; Duncalfe Furniture at Saskatoon was 35 jobs; Rite-Way Manufacturing at Regina was 25 jobs; Great West Garment at Saskatoon was 240 jobs; Saskatoon Boiler at Saskatoon, 20 jobs; and Dairy Producers Co-op at Yorkton, 40 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, there are eight firms with over 700 jobs. In 1973 I could list another 30 firms with more than 140 jobs if I included those with less than 20 employees each.

If I look ahead to projects that will come on stream in 1975, I can list the following: Canada Packers at Moose Jaw with 58 jobs; Leon's Manufacturing at Yorkton with 45 jobs; Crawford Foods at Wynyard with 70 jobs; Federal Pioneer Electric at Regina with 50 jobs; Fiberforms Limited at Tisdale with 35 jobs; Morris Rod-Weeder at Yorkton with 30 jobs and Lenkurt Electric at Saskatoon in its second phase at 100 jobs. Mr. Speaker, that is eight firms with jobs totalling over 430 that will start production this year.

Mr. MacDonald (Moose Jaw): — New jobs? Are they all new jobs?

Mr. Thorson: — Yes. Mr. Speaker, let me refer just quickly to the labor force in Saskatchewan. The latest figures from Statistics Canada show that in December of 1974 there were 360,000 people in our labor force and that was up 15,000 from December of 1973. Of the total 360,000 people in the labor force only 11,000 were recorded as being unemployed, giving us the lowest unemployment rate in any Canadian province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — Mr. Speaker, let's look at Saskatchewan's population as a whole. Statistics Canada estimates that our provincial population in October, 1974 was 909,000, up 3,000 from October of 1973. This is the first time since 1968 that Saskatchewan's population increased rather than decreased. In the late 1950s and early 1960s we experienced modest population increases so that the peak in June 1968 was 960,000. Thereafter the decline has been as follows: In 1969, 2,000 people; in 1970, 17,000 people; in 1971, 15,000 people; in 1972, 10,000 people; and in 1973, 8,000 people. Mr. Speaker, those figures are for the measurements taken by Statistics Canada in June of each year. And it is interesting to note that in those last years when the

Liberals were in office in 1970 and 1971 we experienced our most severe population declines — 17,000 in 1970; 15,000 in 1971. By June of 1972 the loss was only 10,000 people; by June of 1973 only 8,000. It is estimated by Statistics Canada that loss continued until October of 1973 by another 2,000 people which gave us in October of that year, 1973, 906,000 people in Saskatchewan. But in the next year from October 1973 to October 1974 we reversed the trend of recent years and we gained at least 3,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to place undue emphasis or weight on the total population figures but my opponents in the Liberal Party have all kinds of statements which they have uttered publicly about that being the acid test. About how important it is, as the Leader of the Opposition said today, that if we are going to create more employment opportunities in rural areas we have to have an increasing population in the whole of the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would hate to stand on his record in that regard. We have at least in less than four years slowed down the decline in population, brought it to a halt and have reversed the trend since we came to office.

Let me say just a few words, Mr. Speaker, about this Government's assistance to economic growth and particularly people in business in the province. This Budget continues programs which we have initiated and got underway since we came to office. I particularly want to refer to the Department of Industry and Commerce which has taken on a new look since 1971 and that has been characterized by three things. First by a build-up of permanent professional staff; secondly by an emphasis on careful research; and thirdly by our determination to build on our strengths in Saskatchewan, that is to help those who are here in the province and in business here rather than chasing around the world after some saviours and investors from outside.

I particularly want to refer to the establishment of the Business Assistance Branch with representatives outside of Regina. Mr. Speaker, that was part of our election program in 1971. We now have business representatives with permanent offices at North Battleford, Prince Albert, Tisdale, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Estevan, Swift Current, Moose Jaw and, of course, Regina. In the past year and one-half these business representatives have handled something like 2,800 inquiries.

Now let me illustrate the work that these men do from actual case histories in four instances. I will not mention names or places but these are actually true accounts of work done by our business representatives.

First, take the case of a small upholstery shop owner in a small Saskatchewan city. Here was a man running this business who was losing money because he was not doing an accurate job of costing his product. He asked the local business representative for help. The representative discussed and analyzed the situation and found that the man was including labor costs and material costs in estimating his total costs but he was neglecting to include any other overhead costs at all. The business representative assisted in estimating what the actual additional overhead costs were and also in developing a price structure for this man to carry on a successful business. In one year that businessman increased his net profit by \$2,500 and he gives all of the credit to the assistance of this particular business representative who worked with him.

Here is the second example of a farm equipment dealer in a small town who wanted to have an overall assessment of his operations done and asked the local business representative to assist him. He felt, this dealer, that his income was too low by the industry standards. The business representative analyzed each section of his business in some detail, and he found that there was a particular weakness in effective control in the parts department. He recommended that the dealer implement a work order system so that he could cost each job and control price variations. With this recommendation underway the dealer turned a losing repair department into a profit of \$6,000 per year.

Here is a third example of an individual who wanted to start up a small business in TV and radio repairs. He was turned down by his local bank when he wanted to borrow money to expand his business. He then went to the business representative and asked for assistance and the business representative did an analysis, developed a new proposal for financing which was taken to the bank, and there met with success.

A fourth example, Mr. Speaker, which is a common situation in Saskatchewan — a general store operator who was experiencing cash shortages because of a heavy inventory. He also asked our business representative for help and again there was an analysis done of the total business but particularly the matter of inventory controls and non-paying lines in the inventory. As a result of that work and consultation the store operator was able to reduce his stock and improve his working capital position. With those improvements and further improvements in his total merchandising practices his sales increased substantially.

Now, Mr. Speaker, of the 2,800 inquiries not all of them led to such detailed work. But we undertook in our New Deal for People in 1971 to give that kind of advisory assistance to businessmen in a way that is traditional in Saskatchewan when agricultural representatives provide assistance and advice to farmers. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that service has been welcomed by the business community in Saskatchewan and particularly those businessmen who are located outside of the major cities of the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — In this general theme of our assistance to people who are in business now in Saskatchewan, let me say something about the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation. In August of 1972, the Government broadened the terms of reference for SEDCO so that its financial services could be offered to service industry firms as well as to those in manufacturing businesses. Again may I say that since we have taken office, in SEDCO we have placed a heavy emphasis in building up a permanent professional staff in providing SEDCO services. This has paid off. The Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation is giving greater attention to the financial needs of smaller business enterprises, particularly those located in rural areas. A growing proportion of its loans are now made to assist rural-based enterprises so that industrial development can be spread more uniformly across our province.

The determination of SEDCO to foster and develop small business and to create job opportunities, particularly in small cities and rural areas, is confirmed by the fact that 56 per

cent of the number of loans and guarantees approved in 1974 went to small business in Saskatchewan. SEDCO approved in that year 176 such applications. Of this total, 98 loans went to small business. This represents a 58 per cent increase in the total value of small business loans approved over the previous year of 1973.

In spite of inflation, Mr. Speaker, the average size of loans approved in 1974 was just over \$300,000 compared to almost \$370,000 in 1973. In the past year 61 per cent of the total number of loans that were approved were for \$100,000 or less.

Mr. Speaker, I want particularly to put on record the fact that under our economic policies the most disadvantaged people in an economic sense have received the most benefits. Our objective has been to do just that and we have done it in various ways.

Let me just list some of them. We have eliminated the deterrent fees and per capita premiums for hospital and medical services. That most benefits the lowest income people in the province. We have established a family income plan to provide work incentives to family heads on low wages with children to support. We have increased grants to local governments so that services in schools or in roads or in rinks can be kept up and taxes held down. We have increased grants to property taxpayers who pay taxes on homes, farms and small businesses, with limits so that the main benefits are for the smallest taxpayers. We have increased revenue in the Provincial Treasury from natural resources which are the rightful benefits of the owners, the people of Saskatchewan. In this Budget the \$100 income tax credit for all provincial taxpayers will again be of greater help to those with the smallest incomes.

In another way we are also helping those who need help most, particularly the people on wages and especially those on minimum wage. Let me illustrate, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living index for Regina-Saskatoon in 1961 dollars set at 100, was measured in January 1971 at 121.6. Four years later in January 1975 the cost of living for Regina-Saskatoon was 157. That is an increase in those four years of 35.4 points or 29 per cent. So the cost of living from January of 1971 to January of 1975 in Saskatchewan by that Statistics Canada measure has increased by just under 30 per cent.

In that same period of time, Mr. Speaker, what has happened to the average weekly wage for people who earn their living by receiving wages in Saskatchewan? In 1971 the average weekly wage in Saskatchewan was \$121.71. In December of 1974 it was \$170.45 — that is an increase of \$48.74 or 40.05 per cent. So while the cost of living increased in those four years by 30 per cent, the average weekly wage in Saskatchewan has increased by 40 per cent.

What about the people who are on minimum wages? Let's just recount where we were in 1971 when this Government came to office, what sort of minimum wage legacy we were left by the Liberals who were departing with the cheering of the people of the province. In July 1971 we had minimum wages as follows. In the cities for those who had reached their 17th birthday and were over 17 years of age the minimum wage was \$1.50 an hour and in the balance of the province it was \$1.40 per hour for those who were over 17 years of age. Under 17 years of age if you were in the city the minimum wage was only \$1.35 and if you were outside the city it was only \$1.30.

Mr. Speaker, the first increase we brought about in the minimum wage came in January 1972 when we moved it up to \$1.70 per hour and made it province wide. The next move came last July in 1974 when it moved up to \$2.25 per hour and again province wide. On April 1st of this year the minimum wage in Saskatchewan will go to \$2.50 per hour across the whole province regardless of age and regardless of residence. Now some people may suggest that somehow that is a fairly substantial increase but at \$2.50 and hour on a 40 hour week you can earn \$20 a day or \$100 a week or only \$5,200 a year. Anyone who has a family to support, his own cost of living to meet which continues to increase, knows that no one is going to live very high in Saskatchewan on \$5,200 a year. But, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that in this area we have given the help where the help was needed the most.

I remind you again that the cost of living had increased in the four years from January 1971 to January 1975 by 30 per cent. Our increase in the minimum wage, if you take it at the \$1.50 per hour it was for those in the city over 17 years of age in 1971, and remember it was lower than \$1.50 per hour if you were under that age or if you lived outside of the city; but if you take it just at the \$1.50 per hour it was in July of 1971 and compare it to the \$2.50 per hour it will be on April 1, 1975, that is an increase of 66 2/3 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I think the people on minimum wages in Saskatchewan needed that kind of an increase in order to keep pace with not only the increase of the cost of living but to keep pace with their neighbors if they were going to have some of the economic advantages and amenities that most people expect should be the lot of a Saskatchewan citizen.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — Under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, in these past three and one half years, Saskatchewan has been way out in front. The picture I have presented shows our good record in economic development. Let me remind you, job creation in manufacturing is 13 times what it was under the Liberals. Per capita income in 1974 at \$4,500 is double what it was under the Liberals in 1970 at \$2,270. Investment in manufacturing premises, that is new facilities and expansions, in 1974 was \$17.4 million which is more than three times the last full Liberal year of 1970 when it was only \$5 million. Investment in manufacturing machinery, the equipment that goes inside the factories, in 1974 was \$30.5 million, more than double the \$12 million it was in the last Liberal year of 1970. As everyone knows Saskatchewan has the lowest rate of unemployment in Canada. We are, as I pointed out earlier, going ahead at a much greater rate than the national average in things like personal income, retail trade, manufacturing, commodity production and total investment. All are up about 20 per cent in 1974 over 1973 at a time when the rest of Canada is having serious economic slowdowns.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — Our economic growth is at a greater rate than inflation and therefore our gains are real as well as positive.

Wage earners and those on lowest salaries have benefited from our policies of increasing their real incomes. Our

population drain has been halted and the trend has been reversed. More of our young people are entering the labor force with confidence in the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, people in every walk of life are doing well in Saskatchewan now. Would any of them want to go backward with the Liberals to the kind of policies and conditions which existed before 1971? Mr. Speaker, I think not. Or would any of them want to exchange the solid progress we are making for the rag-bag of uncertainty and no policy of the Conservative Party? Mr. Speaker, I think not. All over Saskatchewan the farmers, the wage earners, the professional people and the businessmen want to continue to move ahead and move up. Mr. Speaker, that's what this New Democratic Government is all about.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thorson: — And that is what this Budget is all about. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Finance to consider the detailed Estimates of the Budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. F. Meakes (Touchwood): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this Debate with mixed feelings. Over the years I have taken part in many such debates. There have been a few budgets that I have refused to support and others that I was happy to support. On the aspects of this Budget I am proud to support it and I will be saying more about it in a few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this, in all probability, will be the last such debate that I shall be able to speak in. I have mixed feelings in this regard. In one way I am counting the days until I am free and in another way I shall miss this Legislature and the companionships that I have made. Now I will have more to say about that a little later. In other words, Mr. Speaker, in a way this is my swan song.

First I must, Mr. Speaker, address a few words to all of the people in Touchwood. In four elections the people have given me their confidence, patience and friendship. And for all this I say thank you. These friendships I will treasure as long as I live. Few people realize that the life of a politician is not all a bed of roses. At times one feels very alone, frustrated and sometimes one cannot help but feel some inferiority complexes. Their patience and their friendship have been a great help and assistance to me in my task.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I have a special feeling toward the membership of our party and the executives whom I have worked with through the years. The words 'thank you' seem to be inadequate. Without their support and encouragement, tolerance, patience and friendship my whole political career would never have been possible. To quote the Bible, "They are my ever present help in trouble." Their homes were my home away from home. Their unstinting dedication to the things we believe in always encouraged me. Many times when I was feeling depressed, I always came away from their homes feeling better. I have found precious friends whom I treasure, admire and love.

To any young person who is thinking of entering public life I say this: enter it. There is sacrifice, there is lots of it. One will never become wealthy entering politics but one becomes rich in other ways. One gets a broader outlook on life, new fields of knowledge are opened to the mind. One becomes enriched by new and great friends and one has the feeling of having accomplished many things. I would not have missed it for anything. It was a great experience.

I will miss the Legislature itself. I have always had a feeling of awe when I rose to speak in my place. To me it represents nearly 1,000 years of the common man fighting to speak for and govern himself.

When I first came, I was impatient over some of the traditions and the pageantry and the protocol that there was. That impatience has gone. To me it is harmless and it does tell the story of man's struggle to gain independence.

We need to remind ourselves how hard won are many of the things that we take for granted. It was not always possible for a representative to speak freely. There was a time when one might have lost his head on the block for doing so. This right to speak, we must always guard and guard jealously. Too often citizens of nations have lost that right to speak by neglecting the democratic process. Nazi Germany is a prime example. Nearly 65 per cent of Germans didn't vote when Hitler came to power. He received less than 50 per cent of those voting. I have some sympathy for the Australian voting policy. There, there is a fine for not voting.

Mr. Speaker, each of us is the product of two great forces. One is the genes that we inherit from our parents, the other is the environment that we live in during our early years. These two forces have made an imprint on my life and looking backward I see their effects on how and why I have lived and acted as I did.

There is no doubt that the 1930s have affected my thinking and my acting. In 1930 I was 13 years old. I remember vividly the great 'depression'. It was during these years that I came to realize how cruel our society was. All around I saw corporate enterprise kicking people off the land, people's spirits broken, families destroyed, all as a sacrifice at the altar of the dollar bill.

I will never forget seeing a widow with six children evicted from their land on April 7, 1935. After everything had been removed from her farm, she was carried out, sitting in her rocking chair, and placed on a bare piece of ground on the road allowance.

That night I declared war on capitalism and I have never let up. Nor will I as long as I have a breath in my body. It is based on greed, thrives on exploitation of mankind, and sucks the blood from the whole society.

If this world is to survive, if we are to be our brother's keeper, if we are to find peace in the world and if we are to save the world from being destroyed, we must through our educational system begin to teach co-operation, not competition. So-called competition, the mecca of the corporate society, teaches that only the fit shall survive, that we trample our

brother down. If I am stronger than my neighbors, they go down too. There is no love or compassion in private enterprise. It's for me and let the devil have the rest.

It was natural that under those conditions I took an active support of the co-operative movement. In the early '40s we started our co-op store and credit union. We had nothing to lose and everything to gain. I had seen the economic injustice of capitalism, I saw that the co-operative movement was out to change our economic system to one of sharing rather than grabbing.

Very soon I saw that we would never win on the economic front alone. I realized that we had to have sympathetic governments if we were to survive. I looked at all the political parties and only the CCF were out to change the system. Because of this, I threw my support and work to the CCF. This move, I have never regretted for one minute. A number of the things that became CCF policy, and later government policy, came from our own local at Westmoor school. We were able to direct policy for government. The CCF and now the NDP have been and continue to be a grass roots movement. I say to the younger Members of our caucus, make sure it remains that way. I would not have been around as long as I have if it had been any other way.

In this province, more than in any other area of Canada, there is a real philosophical difference between the Government and the Opposition. The NDP Government is governed by the people of the province, the Liberals are governed by the dollars of the privileged few — by the CPR, the oil companies, mining companies and so on. I think these deep differences are important. The people have a real choice. This is good.

I look at myself in those early days and I see that I was a rebel, an incensed human being, mad enough to work to change our society. I was for radical change. I still am a radical, out for radical change. I have learnt some lessons over the years.

I realize that society will only change slowly. If we get too far ahead of it, then they will lose sight of us. I am not interested in just being a member of a debating society. I want to have government be able to attack our enemy, to get things done. Government is power. To change our economic system, we must have power. When I was young, everything was black and white. I've learned that there is a lot of grey in between.

When we study history, it is clear that the progress of man is not a straight line but rather a series of going ahead and then sliding back. But each time they went ahead, they went further than they had been before.

Looking at this society, there was never a time in its history that democratic socialism was needed as it is today. In this country, wealth is concentrated to a far greater degree than income is. I should like to put a few figures on record first dealing with income. The top 20 per cent of our society in terms of income is represented by about 43.3 per cent of the population. The next 20 per cent down is represented by 24.9 per cent of the population. I might say, Mr. Speaker, I am using 1971 figures. The next 20 per cent is represented by about 17.6 per cent of the population. The next 20 per cent by

10.6 per cent of the population. And the bottom 20 per cent, the lowest incomes, is represented by 2.6 per cent.

Let us look at the wealth; in 1970, 12 per cent of the national wealth of this country was owned by the top 1 per cent; 17.4 per cent of the wealth was owned by the top 2 per cent; 28.6 per cent of the wealth was owned by the top 5 per cent; 41.8 per cent of the wealth was owned by the top 10 per cent; 60.8 per cent of the wealth was owned by the top 20 per cent; and 93.3 per cent of the wealth was owned by the top 50 per cent.

High income recipients receive a larger share of income from wealth than low income recipients. Turner's tax measures will help increase the share to the wealthy. I will admit that Canada's record is not as bad as some.

Let us look at South America. In that continent, 95 per cent of the wealth is owned by 5 per cent of the people and 5 per cent of the wealth is owned by 95 per cent of the people. No wonder there are revolts, rebellions and war. Until there is a more equitable distribution of the wealth, there will continue to be unrest, death and destruction. After a time, the ordinary people will revolt.

Add to this that the 5 per cent of the population who own that wealth, a good percentage, are foreigners. Mostly people representing foreign and international cartels, people who have no interest in the condition of the citizens. They have only one thought — that is to grab the money, all they can get, and then get out.

As the people get fed up with the present military Junta the CIA of the United States sees that there is another paper revolution, and another military Junta is formed, to continue the exploitation of the country involved and of its people. This cannot go on for many more years. The people will arise. These conditions breed communism. Only through democratic socialism can real freedom prevail. It is my belief that this will come. I still remain an optimist. I still have faith in people. Give them the facts and I believe the majority will act and act wisely.

To reach our goals of democratic socialism we must be patient. There is little hope of taking a giant one mile step overnight. We will have to take the 1,760 steps to get the mile and indeed maybe the 5,000 steps. Let us build and build carefully our society, so it will be a fair and just society.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago a young man asked me whether I was satisfied with the progress made by this Government in the last three years. My answer was something like this: "I can't really answer that question, rather I must look at it from the time that I started to act in politics. That goes back to the early 1940s."

Looking at it in that light, we have made great progress. Maybe not as much as I had hoped for in those days, but with age, I realize that not all our dreams come true. Secondly, some of those dreams, when tried, did not work. Nevertheless, we have in this province made great achievements and improvements in our society.

In the 1930s there were several communist cells in my area. I said then and I still say that I could never be a communist. I did and still do believe in the democratic process. Their view was and is to allow the system to break down, and then build a new one. What they didn't say, but it is a fact, is that when the system breaks down, there will be a revolution. I am a pacifist, and could never condone bloodshed.

I did then and still do believe that we can achieve the same end through the democratic process. Maybe I'm wrong, but it is too late for me to change my views. I will continue to try my way and I believe, in time, it will be successful.

When I think of conditions of 1944 to 1956 in Saskatchewan, I marvel at our progress. My memory goes back to my father who was a municipal secretary. How many times he was awakened at night by some hospital to be told that some resident of the municipality was at the hospital door and would the municipality guarantee payment. If he said yes he could go back to sleep. But the municipality was nearly broke. At times, the answer had to be no. Then he went back to bed to toss in the bed wondering whether the person would die. After all, the hospital was broke as well.

Mr. Speaker, a CCF Government did away with that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — I remember all the farmers who were ousted off their farms by land companies in the 1930s. That was stopped by the CCF in 1944 by The Farm Security Act. I remember the drop in insurance rates to Saskatchewan citizens after SGIO came into being. Our house insurance dropped by 35 per cent in one month after SGIO took over. We transferred our policy to SGIO, yes, Mr. Speaker, and that company was Wawanesa that we had been insuring with, an insurance company supposedly controlled by its members.

I remember the seed grain debts of the farmers who had been forced to take seed relief. The then Provincial Treasurer, Clarence Fines, tried to get Ottawa to cancel this relief. The then Liberal Government refused. A CCF Government then refused to collect the seed grain debts. Then Ottawa deducted \$16 million off Saskatchewan's equalization grants. Still the CCF Government cancelled the seed grain debt that farmers owed.

Here was a provincial government who believed in humanity first. Here in 1946 was a Liberal Government in Ottawa, little different from the present one in Ottawa. Both were determined to trample Saskatchewan in the dust; both had Liberal Cabinet Ministers prepared to betray the people who sent them down there. These were the judgments, Mr. Speaker, that I made at that time to support a humanity first government. I have never regretted that decision.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — I think of those years from 1944 to 1956 and the smear campaigns of the Liberal Party, calling us communists and fascists. I used to at one time argue with them but I got so used to being called a communist that I just quit worrying about

it.

Mr. Guy: — You admitted it.

Mr. Meakes: — No, I certainly don't. I just said I didn't and I never joined the community party and I certainly couldn't do it now. I come back to the smear campaign. I think of the Liberal comic books, John Birch comic books, dreamed up by slick ad men, mailed from Toronto or Ottawa. They scraped the bottom of the barrel with their dirt, slime and their lies.

I think of the medicare dispute of 1962. A dispute that left scars on all those who were involved. Some things which I will never forget. A storm in a teacup by Liberals. Hammy McDonald and the late Ross Thatcher holding meetings across this province stirring up strife, advocating civil disorder. But I also remember the people of this province standing firm, not being stampeded. And out of that dispute came a medicare plan that became the pride of this province and one that swept across Canada within the next decade.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — Mr. Speaker, I said it left scars, scars that are hard to forget. How can I forget the doctor whom I had had such great faith in saying publicly that if he had the opportunity he would dissect me into three pieces. Since then I have forgiven him, but I am sure glad I never got sick in that long month. And yet six years later medicare had swept across Canada.

I remember when rural electrification came about. Liberals referred to Tommy Douglas and Sandy Nicholson and others as preacher dreamers. I heard Jimmy Gardiner poking fun at them and said that the only power for rural people was the windmill. Of course, Mr. Speaker, around Mr. Gardiner's farm there was lots of wind.

I think of the winter of 1955-56 when I was busy campaigning for my first election. There were no grid roads in those days. I must have got stuck in the snow a hundred times that winter. And again the Liberals of that day said it couldn't be done. Within a few years we had 12,000 miles of all weather roads across the Province.

I think of the terrible battle when the larger school units were brought in. Liberals screamed dictatorship, communism, socialism, etc. I rode many miles on horseback to make sure the vote in the Cupar School Unit was positive in 1949. Up until then not 10 per cent of the rural children ever got past grade eight. That was Liberal justice. When the history of Saskatchewan is written, the name of Woodrow Lloyd will be written in big letters for his contribution to education in this Province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — To me, he was the greatest human being I ever met. The greatest thing of all about this socialist movement is the great human beings it has attracted to it.

It has been a rare privilege to serve under men like Tommy Douglas, and Woodrow Lloyd and now Allan Blakeney and to work with men like Toby Nollet, Alex Kuziak, Russ Brown and you, Mr. Speaker, and Bob Wooff and dozens more like them.

I have sat with over 140 different members of the Legislature. Regardless of politics, I have found the great majority are honest people. I might disagree with their philosophy, but I do not question their integrity and I have made many firm friendships which I will always treasure.

I am the first to admit, as a democratic socialist, we have been unable to make the real changes in our economic system. I have come to realize that no real fundamental changes can come about until we win on a federal basis. I firmly believe that this time is not too far away.

On a provincial basis, we have done many things and have achieved many steps toward a just society. There is lots left to do. We have attracted and must continue to attract young people, dedicated and concerned about the injustices in our society, so that they can replace old crocks like myself.

Let me, Mr. Speaker, turn to the Budget, the document that we are debating at this time. A Budget that I am proud to support.

Mr. Guy: — It's about time.

Mr. Meakes: — I've just started. A Budget that I am proud to support, based on the philosophy that I have spelled out, one of another step towards a democratic socialist society. A society based on justice to all, where all may take a share of society's earning and none may take it all.

I couldn't help, Mr. Speaker, listening to the Leader of the Opposition, the financial critic yesterday and I want to suggest that he should apologize to all farmers for calling them pigs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — He called, he compared the assistance to old age people to the \$14 million spent on pigs. The Leader of the Opposition should know that pigs don't get money, only farmers receive money. And I suggest he has called every hog producer in this province a pig and they'll remember it.

It was interesting to listen to the financial critic. He was up to his usual form, saying very little of real interest. As usual he spent a lot of time talking in generalities, one minute he seemed to be talking for the ordinary people of Saskatchewan, but when one listened closely he was talking for the corporate elite of this province and Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — The philosophy of the Liberal Party has always been thus. Forty years ago it supported the mortgage and land companies; today it supports the oil and mining companies. It hasn't

changed a bit. It still supports the corporate structure. The Liberal Party still has the dollar bill sign in its eyes and its mind. To the Liberal Party, dollar bills are more important than people.

This, as in 1934, is a basic difference between the Liberal Party and the People's Party, the New Democratic Party. In 1934 the CCF was fighting to save the farms for the farmers, was fighting for the worker for a decent living. Today, they are fighting to see that the farm land remains in the control of farmers, that the people of Saskatchewan control and get a fair share of the natural resources of this province, and that corporate enterprise does not get the lion's share of those resources.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — The financial critic, throughout his whole address, was pleading with the people of this province to let his corporate friends have control of the resources of this province.

He spent some time on the Land Bank. To listen to him it was a nefarious plot, a socialist takeover and a plot of the devil. As usual it was a lot of Liberal tripe. He now talks of how a Liberal Government in 1975 (God forbid) would sell land to the young farmer. The people of Saskatchewan will not be fooled. They'll remember the Liberal promise of 1964. Let me quote a Liberal brochure of 1964, and now I quote:

A new Liberal Government will immediately revise present legislation on farm credit to give a square deal to young people wishing to start farming and to small farmers wishing to enlarge and improve their farm operation. It will make loans to these people at a low rate of interest, covering 80 per cent of the farm value, with 30 years to repay.

And my hon. friend from Athabasca says, "Hear, hear."

The Liberal Government, Mr. Speaker, from 1964 to 1971 had seven years to keep that promise and yet not one dollar was loaned through the Provincial Government to buy one acre of land in those seven years.

What hypocrisy and what nonsense! The people of Saskatchewan will remember the Liberal record. They will remember the value of Liberal promises. In my lifetime, Liberal promises were not worth the powder that would blow them to Hades.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — Let us compare the record of the Liberals and the New Democratic Party. In 1971 the New Democrats promised a Land Bank in their election platform, the New Deal for People. They were elected. The Land Bank now has over 1,000 lessees, and 178 of these are new farmers who owned no land before they received their Land Bank lease. Let us look at the record of FarmStart. 28 per cent of the loans went to new farmers, another 28 per cent of all loans have gone to farmers of low equity that have managed their own farming operations for two or less years. Mr. Speaker, let me put some figures on the record. Let us look at the Weyburn area. 23 per cent of the people who now use these

programs had never owned their own farm. Another 38 per cent had owned their farm for less than two years. A total percentage of new farmers in the Weyburn area was 61 per cent of those to whom loans were granted. With an average age of 23.8.

Swift Current. Let us look at Swift Current. 45 per cent of the applications, of the people who applied, got land, had never owned their own land. 14 per cent had managed their own farm for less than two years. A total of the new farmers, Mr. Speaker, under this program was 59 per cent, with an average age of 26.6 per cent. I know that my hon. friends don't like these but they are the truth.

Let us look at Yorkton. The Liberals wouldn't know the truth if they saw it, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Sure I would.

Mr. Meakes: — Let us look at Yorkton. There was 33 per cent of the land allocated to farmers who had never owned their own land before starting farming. Another 27 per cent had owned their land and managed it for less than two years, making a total of 60 per cent of the applicants for land who were new farmers. And the average age was 22 years of age.

Let's turn to Kindersley. 31 per cent had never owned farms. 35 per cent had managed their own farm for less than two years, making a total of 66 per cent of applications that went to new farmers, with an average age of 23.1 years.

Let's look at Tisdale. 12 per cent who had never owned their own land before. 21 per cent had managed their farm for less than two years. A total of 33 per cent went to new farmers. An average age of 26.2.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, North Battleford. 29 per cent had never owned their own farms. Another 29 per cent who had farmed for less than two years making a total of 58 per cent new farmers. An average age of 23.8.

Mr. Speaker, these figures tell the story. A New Democratic Government has brought young farmers on to the land. A Liberal Government brought zilch! A New Democratic Government brought action.

I'm not scared, Mr. Speaker, to see this Government go to an election. I prophesy that it will be returned with a larger majority than in 1971.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — The Saskatchewan people have long memories. They know the little value of Liberal promises and the real value of New Democratic promises.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party reminds me of the mother watching the army march by, who said the whole army was out of step except her Johnny. I have here several cuttings from several papers. Let me read the heading from the Wall Street Journal of February 5, 1975. You can hardly call that a socialist paper. "Saskatchewan Government buys up land to help

keep farmers down on the land”. And to quote in part:

And though the program is the work of the avowed socialist New Democratic Government, it may well serve as a model for other areas of North America.

And later in the same article, I quote again:

After seeing how Saskatchewan is supporting young farmers, rather than large corporate interests, we are doing some hard investigating into how to help our young people remain on the land, says Wayne Olholm, one of a group of Minnesota State Senators who recently came to see the program in action.

I repeat again, Mr. Speaker, that the Wall Street Journal is hardly a socialist rag.

Let me quote from the Toronto Star of September 4, 1974. Let me quote just a few of the headlines: “Saskatchewan Keeps ‘Em Down on the Farm” and paragraph headings of “Reversing the drift to the cities”, “Fierce competition for land leases”, “Sees little point in ownership”, “The wealthy don’t qualify for help”, “27 million spent on land and buildings”, and the last one, Mr. Speaker, tells the real story, “In Ontario, farmers keep quitting”.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, everyone but my Johnny is out of step. The Liberal Party, with its 19th century philosophy, is still opposing, opposing, opposing and does not know or realize that this is halfway through the 1970s.

Mr. Speaker, I say the Land Bank is a success story. The proof of that statement is in the effort of the Liberal Opposition to discredit it. They know that it is a popular program. It is against the philosophy of their party, that of monopoly capitalism. They are like a drowning man, going down for the third time, yelling “Save me.”

And I suggest the Saskatchewan people, whenever an election comes, will let them drown. 19th century politics is not needed in the 1970s.

I know this, that never in all the years that I’ve been in politics, has the Liberal Party been as unpopular as it is now. “Liberal” is a dirty word.

Let us turn to another subject that the Liberal critic talked of, and that is Saskatchewan’s natural resources. Here again, there is the fundamental difference.

The New Democratic Party believes that the natural resources of the province belong to the people of the province, and that they should receive the major benefits of those resources. Again the Liberal Party comes down on the side of the oil, mining and timber companies. It’s natural that they do this, because after all, this is where the money for all those Liberal ads one sees on TV and on radio and newspapers are coming from. He who pays the piper calls the tune.

Here again the Liberal Party shows its true colors. The Federal Liberal Government has tried and continues to try in court and out of court, in conference and out of conference,

in the media and out of the media, to put stumbling blocks in the way of Saskatchewan people to achieve their fair share of their own heritage. A heritage spelt out in the British North America Act, and turned over to them by a Federal Government in 1931.

I am curious what the political donations of the mining, oil, and timber companies will be to both the federal and provincial Liberal Parties. Since last fall the Liberal Party has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in the media. Let me tell this House in my travels in this province, I find people are not believing this tripe. They are sick and tired of seeing and hearing the Leader of the Opposition on TV, on radio and in the Press.

Take that full page ad on the back of the Western Producer. That ad alone, Mr. Speaker, costs nearly \$2,000 a week. This money comes from the pockets of every Saskatchewan citizen through the profits of the corporate structure of this province and add the cost of ads in every paper in Saskatchewan, every TV station and every radio station, and the cost is terrible. Certainly the money does not come from the pockets of the ordinary people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there is much more that one might say regarding the Budget before us. It is a Budget that takes into consideration the needs and aspirations of all the citizens of this province. It is a Budget based on the philosophy of the party that I am proud to have represented in this House. It is one that I will be proud to vote for. It is a Budget that I can look for as a fulfilment of many of the things that I have worked for all my life.

There will be many other Members from this side of the House that will cover other aspects of the Budget, as well as the subjects I have covered. I have talked at some length, and do not want to hog more time than I should.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit down, there is another subject that I wish to discuss. A few years ago, Marshall McLuhan referred to the world as a global village. Today it is not even a village, it is just a block, or maybe only a house. Modern technology has defeated the problem of space. Today, the starving millions of the world are within the house that we call Earth. We have landed on the moon, yet we can't find a way to transport the food necessary to save those starving millions on earth.

It seems to me that we, as residents of this world house, have the moral responsible to solve this problem. Finding ways to get food to these people solves only an immediate problem. I think the real solution is being able to get the new farm technology knowledge to the farmers of the Third World, so that they can grow their own food stuffs. Only about seven per cent of the earth's surface is arable. As our population grows, we must use methods so each acre of land produces more. Daniel Webster said, "When tillage begins, other arts follow, the farmers therefore are the founders of civilization."

In his savage attacks on the false values of his time, Dean Swift wrote:

Whoever could make two ears of corn to grow, or two

blades of grass to grow upon a spot where only one grew before would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.

To me, Mr. Speaker, this is the real answer to this great problem. We must be prepared to supply money and people to teach these people self-sufficiency. Countries like India are getting closer to this, but we must continue to assist those in need. The making of these people self-sufficient is not only a must for the saving of lives, but it also builds moral characters, Mr. Speaker. It builds character into the tiller of the soil. Back in Roman times, Cicero wrote:

Of all occupations from which gain is secured, there is none better than agriculture, nothing more productive, nothing sweeter, nothing more worthy of a free man.

Mr. Speaker, something that never fails to amaze me is how nearly every business and professional man dreams and talks about getting a 'place in the country'. I am reminded of Bob Edwards, the famous western editor, who never failed to puncture a windbag, including himself. He once said in his Calgary "Eye Opener", "Why is it that city people envy the farmers but not to the extent that they take advantage of the continuous opportunities to be one?"

In this connection, it seems increasingly true that almost all business and professional men dream and talk about getting a little place in the country, raising a few cows, a few chickens, or a small orchard or garden. The cities are full of these frustrated would-be farmers and the bigger the city, the bigger the percentage of men longing to live on the farm. I suppose when they talk of being farmers, what they really want to be is 'gentlemen farmers'. Using the word in this sense, a man can be a farmer or a gentleman, but not both. It will be interesting to see, Mr. Speaker, how many reporters will leave out my explanatory clause and quote me as saying farmers are not gentlemen. As a matter of fact, I wish some of my city friends who are always talking about the bliss and the heavenly life of farming would try it. I would love to see them dealing with an outbreak of cholera in a flock of chickens, or presiding over the arrival of a new calf. It would be hard to tell whether the cow or the city man would be most alarmed — as for the calf, it would likely wish it could go back where it came from.

Mr. Speaker, I have said what I have here because I believe that although farming is the most important profession there is, as the producer of food whereby man can live, he is the last group in our society to be remembered in the scheme of things. 'The Country Hick', the butt of all the jokes, the farmer down through history has been the forgotten one.

The most famous of American negroes, and a man of exceptional distinction, Booker Washington, told his own people:

No man can prosper until he learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

Canada's native philosopher, Sam Slick, advising a father on his son's future, said:

Make a farmer out of him and you will have the

satisfaction of seeing him as an honest and independent and respectable member of society. More honest than traders, more independent than professional men and more respectable than either.

Mr. Speaker, I can't finish before 5:30. May I call it 5:30 now?

The Assembly recessed until 7:00 o'clock p.m.

Mr. Meakes: — Mr. Speaker, before dinner I was speaking and I more or less reviewed my public life within this Legislature, the economic conditions over my lifetime. In short it was, I guess, what you would call my swan song. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, this is the second swan song today. Listening to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) today he sure sounded as though it was his swan song.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — Mr. Speaker, I had been talking about the world's problems and the fact that Marshall McLuhan had said that this was only a global village, and I had suggested that it wasn't even a village any more, it was maybe a block or even a house. I went on to talk about what I believe is a great moral issue facing us in the western world.

I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, the crisis that this world faces is a moral problem. During the last 200 years our material progress has been almost incredible in its force and its scope. The European or Asian peasant of 1775 was living and farming in ways but little changed from those of his ancestors in the valleys or the Nile, the Euphrates or the Yellow River, 10,000 years before. But the contrast between his outlook and methods and those of the mechanized farmer of Saskatchewan or North Dakota is the contrast between the hoe and the self-propelled combine, between ox carts and the supersonic jet, or between the parish gossip or world-wide radio communication.

Similar changes have taken place in almost every material aspect of life. Also this process is not slowing down but rather it is still accelerating with tremendous speed. Each decade now sees more scientific technical and material progress than was gained in the previous century. Let me represent man's existence on earth as 24 hours. There has been more change in the last three seconds than in all the preceding period.

As these changes in life continue and as they affect a larger and larger proportion of humanity, there has been an unparalleled growing concentration of political power, there hasn't been a comparative growth of humanity's moral growth. Add to all that the phenomenal population growth of about 25 million people each year. There is no one on the North American Continent who has not seen India who can imagine what 550 million people represents. Here every month there is a net population growth of a million. 12 million a year. In every two years their net growth is more than the total population of Canada. I saw it in 1971, and it is burned in my mind and my brain for life. My only description is a 'human ant hill'. Yet there are hundreds of millions of birth control pills passed out each year in India.

Next to war, and the threat of war, the most glaring example of the failure of humanity is its failure to use its increased knowledge for the common good. This is found in the fact that such a large proportion of the human race is suffering unnecessarily from ignorance, disease, poverty and injustice. Over half the world is illiterate, thus providing fertile soil for superstition, prejudice and fanaticism. Over half of the people of the world are ill, though most of them could be cured and many of the diseases could be permanently eradicated. Most of the people of the world are hungry most of the time, yet by applying our present knowledge to the problems of production and distribution, we could ensure reasonable standards of nutrition for all. Most of the people of the world cannot afford decent clothing, housing and recreation. Even in Canada, the average per capita income is just over \$4,250 per year, which means that the great majority of Canadians must do with less than that, and Canada is among the wealthiest of countries. Almost two-thirds of the world have a per capita income of less than \$200 per year.

Finally a large proportion of humanity is affected by injustice in one or more forms — slavery, peonage, forced labor, political dictators and legal corruption. I am reminded, Mr. Speaker, of Robert Burns when he uttered, “Man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.”

Mr. Speaker, what can we do, what can I do about what I have talked about? It is no use laying the blame on the United States or Russia or China or someone far away. Let us look into the mirror; let us look at ourselves. I have said before many times, unless we find the way to get food into the empty bellies of the world, unless we can get medicine and care to the sick, unless we can bring freedom to those who are enslaved, the day will come when it will be too late to help. Then they will come and take this land of plenty from us and we will deserve the ‘curse of Cain’ put on our heads.

I believe that every dollar that Canada spends in feeding these people, dollars spent on technical and financial assistance, may be saved from spending money for war. Every teacher, doctor, engineer, economist or farmer sent out today will reduce the possibility of us having to send sailors and soldiers and pilots tomorrow. I know this, it is better to send Canadians with seeds and test tubes and slide rules to help to build better farms, hospitals and factories, than by sending million dollar aircraft to drop bombs on cities and farmsteads. I will admit, Mr. Speaker, that Canada has not got a bad record for doing that. I am proud that Canada has led the way and made promises in Rome last fall, but I still say what we are doing is inadequate.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we do this not because it might be a fantastically good business venture, but we should do it because it is the right thing to do. We should not and cannot remain passive in comfort while human beings in other lands, men and women and children with needs, emotions, feelings and hopes like our own, suffer from ignorance and hunger, from illness and injustice. While they are in bonds, none of us can be free. In helping them we are raising ourselves to a higher level of human conduct.

We call ourselves Christians, Mr. Speaker, and we talk about our Christian society. What rot! What hypocrisy! It makes me

sick. Our society has long forgotten the teaching of Christ. Nearly 2,000 years ago Christ said:

I was hungered and ye gave me meat,
I was thirsty and ye gave me drink,
I was a stranger and ye took me in,
Naked, and ye clothed me,
I was sick and ye visited me,
I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and I ask Members of this House, can we as citizens of this country truly say that we even try to live by that statement? I will not try to answer that question. Every person must answer that for himself or herself.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Burns in his epistle to a young friend said it might turn out a song or it might turn out a sermon. I guess this speech has turned out a sermon. For which I make no apologies. I was talking to myself as I was to the rest of the House.

Many years ago my father told us as boys that we should try to leave this world a better place than we found it. I am afraid we haven't been too successful. Yet we must continue to try. It has been a rare privilege to try as an NDP Member in this House, representing the constituency of Touchwood.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, Wes Robbins who introduced this Budget has been a friend of mine for almost 30 years. During that time I have known him as a conscientious, competent citizen who has a genius for mathematics.

Mr. Gardner: — Mr. Speaker, on Point of Order. I believe the Member referred to another by his name instead of by his position and this afternoon in our leader's radio time you interrupted and made a point of this. I wonder if he is in order at this time?

Mr. Speaker: — Members while addressing other Members should use their official capacity and I hope it is obeyed by both sides.

Mr. Whelan: — Mr. Speaker, I promise that I shall adhere to the rules because I have been apprehended by the Hon. Member for Moosomin.

During this time I have known the Minister of Finance I have found him to be a conscientious, competent citizen with a genius for mathematics. His ability, his convictions, his philosophy are all evidenced as the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, he has earned warm congratulations by his performance last Friday when he introduced this Budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — This Budget, Mr. Speaker, which we are considering represents a practical application of the funds at hand, designed to benefit the greatest number of Saskatchewan citizens.

In conformity with the philosophy of this Government, it will benefit the sick, the low income people, those seeking an education, senior citizens and those prepared to invest their knowledge and their personal resources in the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, specifically I want to discuss the Budget under a number of headings:

1. Why I think the constituency of Regina North West endorses these expenditures;
2. Why our record of expenditures over this four year period, if compared with the previous seven years, merits the support of the people of this province;
3. How the Federal Government has ignored commitments to this province and why this province needs a strong voice when dealing with the Federal Government;
4. And finally, Mr. Speaker, prospects for the future under a New Democratic Government.

Although the previous administration had issued bulletins — I have copies of them on hand — promising capital funds, capital expenditures, unconditional grants and numerous conditional grants, programs to assist urban governments such as Regina and while their strongest spokesmen made continuous speeches along these lines, it took a New Democratic Government to introduce for the citizens of Regina a \$10 yearly per capita unconditional grant, \$75 per capita capital grant, larger police grants, transit grants and tremendous increases in services for education and health programs.

In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, there is a new hockey rink about to be opened. This came about as a result of money channelled through the Community Capital Fund. This New Democratic Government will pay the total of \$11.5 million to Regina Board of Education this year; in their last year in office the other people paid \$5.7 million. More than 100 per cent increase in four years. The Regina Separate School Board receives in this Budget \$7.1 million this year; compared with \$3.5 million in 1971 — also more than 100 per cent increase. Over the whole of Saskatchewan this Government is covering more than 75 per cent of school costs; the previous government paid a miserable 47 per cent. The need for money to assist transit in the city of Regina is recognized. This Budget contains money for new buses and a subsidy to assist in operation costs. Mr. Speaker, this Budget contains the initial expenditures for the complete renovation and rebuilding of Regina General and Regina Pasqua Hospitals.

My constituency is particularly interested in an item of \$900,000 to be used for studies into expansion of the steel industry at IPSCO. This industry, which began under the CCF, is to be expanded as a result of money in this Budget which will be jointly with the Federal Government, a program of expansion which will provide, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of job opportunities.

This Budget also sets aside funds to build a huge new office complex in downtown Regina to stimulate renewal of the city's business core.

Expansion of the continuing education facilities and extension services will now be consolidated in a practical way in a Community College program. Mr. Speaker, who is making this speech, the new candidate for Rosthern and the defeated Member for Athabasca or am I making a speech?

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. Whelan: — The Community College program is providing any sort of education for which there is a demand for people out of the regular school system. In questionnaire after questionnaire, the graduates of the three collegiates in the constituency I represent have indicated there is a need for training on a contractual basis and on a continuing basis, and in an organized way, using the facilities at hand so that they may earn a living and in some instances increase their earning power. The Community College is an answer to a request that has been made year after year, Mr. Speaker.

This Budget also contains money to increase grants to assist in the purchase of homes, homes that are sorely needed, homes that may be built by individuals co-operatively, a program that was never enthusiastically taken up or given financial encouragement by the previous administration.

The constituency I represent needs certain service; expansion of parks and recreation facilities, so that young people will have adequate accommodation for hockey, baseball, bicycling, jogging, barbecuing.

The northwest part of the constituency is the fastest growing area in Saskatchewan. The north half is cut off by a railway track, fire fighting facilities are denied them in an emergency if a train happens to be across the main arteries. Several times during the day there is no access to the area for an ambulance. There is a need to build an accommodation which, eventually, when the railway tracks are removed, would become part of an overhead highway system. But the need is now and the need is urgent.

In the constituency there is also need for a crossing on Wascana Creek. Mr. Speaker, this Government provides financial assistance for such projects within urban areas.

While the increase in library grants is most helpful, there is a need for new libraries, new facilities, built so that this education tool is more completely available to all of the students in the city of Regina. While the Agridome is necessary and will make Regina an agricultural centre of the world, there is a need to develop, in local communities, centres in which there is a covered gymnasium, swimming pool, hockey rink, library, a meeting place. Too many times we plan cities with only houses in mind, without considering the necessity for pleasant, happy, social living in the developing communities of our cities. This Budget, in its recreational expenditures and for parks, holds out the prospect of this kind of development.

Why should the people of Saskatchewan approve this Budget? There is money in it to develop the North; there is money to expand the educational facilities at the universities; there is money to expand the Family Income Plan, which pioneers and puts into practice our philosophy for those less fortunate people

seeking help from society.

This Budget will help pay for hearing aids for senior citizens across this province, will provide meals-on-wheels, it will provide funds so that young people can begin farming, it contains huge sums of money for loans to small industry and business.

It keeps faith with the people, Mr. Speaker, by returning seven cents of the gasoline tax to fight the cost of living, by paying for medicare premiums, by providing funds for the senior citizens' Home Repair program. Mr. Speaker, it contains money out of the gasoline tax to subsidize automobile insurance rates, particularly on older vehicles. In many ways, it returns to the people sums of money that are acquired from our resources, returns them in a way that recognizes needs and reduces the cost of living.

What is the criticism of Members opposite regarding this Budget? Well, their inconsistency is something to behold. They wring their hands and speak of farmers leaving the rural communities, but when Land Bank and FarmStart operations are undertaken, they criticize them. It does not in any way influence them, although the average age of farmers has dropped, and a large number of young people are going back to the farm. This doesn't influence them. All they can say, Mr. Speaker, is 'state control'. These are the same people, Mr. Speaker, who fought Government Insurance; these are the same people who with the assistance of the most reactionary forces on the North American continent, fought hospitalization and, in a more vicious fashion, medical care. These are the same people, Mr. Speaker, who have opposed these programs that are now acceptable to people in other parts of Canada. While the rest of Canada looks at the Land Bank as a possible solution to the acquisition of land problem, and while farmers line up by the hundreds to sell their land to the Land Bank, and while hundreds of young farmers without capital seeking the opportunity to go farming, line up and sign up applications to leave land, they, the people opposite, say that we are going to buy all the land in Saskatchewan. And they run ads attempting to scare people.

What are the facts, Mr. Speaker? In three years the Land Bank has bought approximately 250,000 acres. At that rate it will take 12 years to buy a million acres. Three years to buy 250,000 acres, four times as long to buy a million acres. There are 65 million acres of farm land in Saskatchewan. They say we are going to buy it all, that is their theme song, they say over and over again that we are going to buy all the land in Saskatchewan. At this rate of purchase it will take us 780 years. Now they say we are going to buy all the land, at the present rate of purchase we would own it all, that's right, we would own it all by the year 2750 A.D. Now that is a pretty fine example, in my estimation, of 'creeping socialism'. It is quite obvious, and it must be obvious to them, that we are going to be in power a long, long time but I doubt whether this Government will be in power for 780 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — So their charge that we are going to buy up all the land, if they would stop and think and do the simplest mathematics, it would tell them that their charges are ridiculous and

are nothing but political scare tactics.

Let me go into another example of their criticism. They criticized us for purchasing a portion of Intercontinental Packers. True, there are many farmers, farmers who market livestock, who blessed us when the other packing plants were locked, and true, there is a good argument for keeping the industry in the province, but they condemned it, Mr. Speaker, until something happened. With the impending closure of the packing plant at Prince Albert, in the constituency of one of the Hon. Members opposite, without consistency they advocated that this Government not rent, not lease, not partially invest, but purchase the Burns plant.

Mr. Speaker, there is constant criticism from Members opposite about the salaries we pay the people in Government. They even send around a phony list full of inaccuracies in this respect. They didn't need any people to run the government when they were in charge, they just ran it by the seat of their pants — no technicians, no advisors, nobody at the helm, no people to help set the course — they just ran the Government by the seat of their pants and the province landed on its backside.

What happened to the technicians we employed? They went to work for the Federal Government; many of these people now hold key positions in the Government; the most noteworthy is the new deputy minister of Finance at Ottawa. Let's not suggest that they are paying him the same salary, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Lumsden (Mr. Lane) received as executive assistant to the Attorney General. Without technicians, with a philosophy that those on welfare were "drunks, deadbeats, people too lazy to work", and screaming that we need more American capital, what happened, Mr. Speaker?

Under the direction of these people opposite, Mr. Speaker, the economy of this province collapsed: 135 bankruptcies took place in the city of Regina in a very short period. Eleventh Avenue looked like part of a ghost town; hundreds and hundreds of people were unemployed. In the 1967 election and again in 1971 in every constituency in Regina where there were apartment blocks, one third of all of these blocks were empty. The population fled to other parts of Canada for the 80,000 jobs these people had promised them.

In order to balance the books, these people — and their pamphlets are all around — promised a reduction in taxes, particularly to the citizens of Regina, they were going to return it to us. But they levied taxes and charges in every respect until they set a record of 1,477 charges and new taxes, including a tax on a bowl of soup and crackers. Mr. Speaker, their list of bad decisions, political indiscretions, when combined with the all-out effort of the Federal Government of the day, who attempted to stop farmers from growing grain, made the people of this province rise up in wrath against them. And in spite of the most undemocratic, irresponsible, highhanded gerrymander, which twisted democracy completely out of shape, the people of this province said, we can't take any more of these policies that result in unemployment, bankruptcies, vacancies, and the drop in population and high taxes.

Mr. Speaker, they didn't ask them to move on, they didn't

nudge them gently, they didn't ask them to leave, Mr. Speaker, they threw them out. What's left of them and who is leading them? Well, Mr. Speaker, the financial expert who manoeuvred this collapse is their leader, he is their leader. He was the architect of economic chaos in this province and he is asking the people of this province to please let him have another try. Give him another try with his 19th century judgment and his outdated economic philosophy.

Then as recently — this is the other picture — as recently as July, last year, their counterparts at Ottawa promised to fight inflation and the people of Canada made the mistake, made the fatal mistake, the terrible mistake of taking them at their word. Up went the price of meat; up went the price of milk — they took off the subsidy; up went the price of bread — they thought that was a good idea; and up went the price of sugar from 10 cents a pound to 70 cents a pound. These courageous fighters of inflation were right in there, right in there punching the people of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Then they promised to divulge the financial statement of the CPR before they increased freight rates, but they increased the rates anyway. And they promised that the Crow's Nest Pass rates would stay. Mr. Speaker, their federal spokesman runs up and down the province trying to pry them loose and promotes inland terminals and makes excuses for the CPR and, now in all innocence, he wonders why the people of western Canada are worrying about what may happen to the Crow's Nest rates.

Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to dredge up some of the weaknesses that the Federal Government is harboring, but it must be obvious to all of us who sit by and watch their efforts to steal from us the natural resources that were given to the provinces that the people, Mr. Speaker, are not quite dedicated to the rank and file citizen of Saskatchewan. Whether it is the cost of living, freight rates, Crow's Nest rates, or outright removal of our control over natural resources, the Federal Government's performance must not and cannot be endorsed. And let's not make any mistake about the result, or suffer any illusions if by some freak accident the people of this province were to elect a Liberal government, it would be interpreted as a go-ahead signal to set CPR freight rates, remove the Crow's Nest rates, take taxation off potash and oil companies completely out of the hands of the province, and signal the multinationals to raise the prices of foodstuffs once more. A vote for the provincial Liberals is a vote for endorsement of these federal policies and it will be interpreted that way.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — Let's for a moment look at the provincial policy in respect to potash. In the last year these people opposite were in power the total value of potash production was \$33 million. The people opposite taxed these resources, which belong to us and which are part of the heritage of the people of Saskatchewan, a miserable \$2.46 million. True, potash was \$37.50 a ton. True, the production was down a little. But, Mr. Speaker, in this Budget and in the tax year July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975, in which I will admit the price has jumped to \$62.25 a ton, and production has almost doubled, the total revenue the companies receive for potash is \$398 million. Mr. Speaker, where the former government picked up \$2.46 million for the people of the

province, this Government, this Minister of Finance, picked up \$120 million in tax revenue.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is a new man in the picture; there are some new people on the horizon. The Federal Government has come in and in addition, beginning from nowhere, although they gave us the resources, Mr. Speaker, they will collect in this tax year a total of \$57 million from the potash companies.

I wonder if we could compare our record of employment — jobs in this province at the present time are looking for people. The unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada. Compare 1,700 homes built by the people opposite in their last year in office with 7,700 built under this Government last year; no apartment vacancies; very few bankruptcies; the population beginning to increase; new programs in health and social assistance; the North opening up; a feeling of confidence and exuberance in this province, while in 1971 there existed frustration and despair.

There is a constant effort on the part of Members opposite to parade as champions of senior citizens. Yet the very basic idea of a pension for senior citizens was forced on the Federal Liberal Party by a ginger group of CCFers, led by James Shaver Woodsworth.

When the Liberals were in government in this province, when they were faced with an election in 1971, they voted a total of \$4.5 million for senior citizens' programs. That was just before the 1971 election. This was the extent of their generosity, Mr. Speaker, in writing. This is what they voted; this is what they did while they were in office, while voting \$4.5 million for one service or another, they charged medical care premiums and deterrent fees to those over 65, to the tune of \$5 million!

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — They taxed these people to the tune of \$500,000, the senior citizens; you add it all up, they socked them \$500,000; that is essentially what they did. That's their record. Now they are talking about giving the senior citizens great consideration.

This Government in this Budget with its increase to those on supplemental allowance, increase to the meals-on-wheels program, with its construction grants, with payment of medicare premiums, with payments for hearing aids, the new program for chiropody, the program for medical care in the home and the maintenance grants for the nursing homes, I suggest a modest figure for the total expenditure for senior citizens in this Budget would be \$36 million, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — The Members opposite will tell you how good they were and they will tell you how generous they can be if we will just elect them. But their track record, their performance in office compared to the record of this Government makes their performance look pathetic, makes their promises look indifferent and, I suggest, their sincerity is temporary.

While their friends in Ottawa give handouts in huge sums as tax concessions to mining companies, oil companies, one sort of business or another, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, then federal counterparts at Ottawa deny a justifiable payment to senior citizens. After all this is a federal pension. The familiar theme that Members opposite used in at least one election was that those on welfare, Mr. Speaker, were “drunks, deadbeats, people too lazy to work,” and it is now being continued by our opponents. There are always some people who are not willing to listen and some people who ignore the handouts to the corporations while they ridicule those who have to seek public assistance. Sometimes it is a good election gimmick. It was used successfully in a by-election in the city of Regina. When Members opposite were the Government, they had no programs to remove people from social assistance, to give them an opportunity to work, to provide training, to encourage them to become a necessary part of society.

This Government by its planned efforts has succeeded in reducing the number of those on welfare and social assistance. In 1974 there were 6,000 fewer people receiving social assistance than the previous year, Mr. Speaker. Those able to work receiving such assistance decreased from 9 per cent to 3.4 per cent. And in northern Saskatchewan there were 450 employables receiving assistance the year before, in 1974, Mr. Speaker, there were only 150.

Mr. Speaker, the Family Income Plan, the Employment Support Program and counselling services organized by the Minister of Social Services have paid off.

While Members opposite were in government the number on social assistance increased and the expenditure for that item increased. Their only answer was to ridicule unfortunate citizens who, because of necessity, sought assistance from the provincial government.

Let's look at one other thing — the need for representation, Mr. Speaker, for this province. Whether it is the Premier or the Attorney General or the Minister of Mineral Resources or the Minister of Social Services, whoever we send, the people from this province have their facts, their policies and their arguments ready when they meet the Federal Government.

The Civil Service in this province has been rebuilt and it now can supply them with information. Other provinces may buckle under to the forces at Ottawa, but in any argument and particularly regarding natural resources, Mr. Speaker, the Province of Saskatchewan as long as a New Democratic Government is in power will stand up and fight for the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — What is the position of the Members opposite? Apologize for the people at Ottawa, apologize for the oil companies, accuse us of ripping off the potash companies, who this year plan to increase their production from 3.5 million tons in 1971 to 7.2 million tons, worth \$558 million. They accuse us of ripping them off. Every fight we have had with Ottawa their position has been pussy-foot, jelly-fish performance when there has been confrontation with the companies. It is always the case of them standing with organizations like Parsons and Whittemore; with Syncrude and the international potash companies. Rather

than assist us, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people, they have backed our opponents at Ottawa by hindering and harpooning our representatives who are fighting on behalf of the people of this province.

Let me sum up, Mr. Speaker. First, the people of the city of Regina and particularly my constituency and the people of this province, I predict, will endorse this Budget. Second, the record of this Government in every area has been effective, constant and dedicated to the philosophy of democratic representation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no other choice. By their record in any economic area and by their inconsistencies it is clear that the same people who ran the province into economic chaos are still at the helm of the party opposite. The Federal Government by its actions since July 8, 1974, shows clearly that this province is in dire need of a strong government that will continue to stand up and fight with everything at its command on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

The record shows that in administration, in representation, in dedication, this Budget deserves and, I predict, if there is an election held, it will receive the endorsement of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — Mr. Speaker, during the course of my remarks I have talked about why my constituency endorses this Budget. I have compared our record with the record of the previous Government. I have made the argument for strong representation because of the position taken by the Federal Government.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, what are the prospects for the future because of this Budget? The Homecare program for the people of this province, a strong voice that will do everything in its power to see that the resources of our province are used to promote the best interest of our citizens; further development of our north land; capital expenditures in our cities to provide regional community centres, recreational projects; bridges, overpasses; education at elementary, secondary, university and community levels; expansion of industry such as IPSCO; improved health services such as hearing aids, dental care and a drug program. Mr. Speaker, these programs are in this Budget. It represents the philosophy of the New Democratic Party; it represents programs people have asked for over and over again. It represents the progressive citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.L. Cowley (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Mr. Speaker, as I rise to take part in this Debate
...

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — I always like to have some recognition from the side opposite.

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to take part in this Debate I would like once again to congratulate our Minister of Finance for presenting an outstanding Budget that marks the completion of the New Deal for People.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — This Budget is evidence to the people of Saskatchewan that electing an NDP Government is placing confidence in a government which will carry out its promises, a government that has spent four years implementing a program to make this province once again a North American leader in the field of progressive social legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as I sat in this House this afternoon and listened to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, I was reminded of a story. It is a story about a fellow who went to see the doctor and he was . . .

An Hon. Member: — Did he have to pay deterrent fees?

Mr. Cowley: — No, it was after 1971; he didn't have to pay deterrent fees. I even had hope, Mr. Speaker, that he might be under a drug program with an NDP Government, not a promise, not a plebiscite but an actual program.

Mr. Speaker, this fellow saw the doctor, the doctor looked at him and he said, "Fellow, you have got something very serious wrong with you." The fellow was kind of worried and he said, "What is it doctor?" The doctor said, "You have a very serious brain disease." The fellow said, "That is terrible, doctor. How long have I got?" The doctor said, "It is nothing to worry about. This is the age of heart transplants, kidney transplants and brain transplants. All I have to do is give you another brain. We have several in stock. I will take you out and you can have a look at them." So they went into the store room and there were three brains sitting on the shelf. "This is model A and it is worth \$550. This is model B and it is worth \$1,000. This one here is sort of a special one, it's worth \$50,000." The fellow said, "Gee, I like them all, they all sort of look the same. How come that one there is worth so much more, \$50,000?" "Well," the doctor said, "It is this way — that is a Liberal brain and it has never been used."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that they have ever been used across the way, but I am sure that for the next week we shall have to listen to the Members opposite scrounging around to find something in this Budget to criticize. Once again they will have to resort to the same tired old arguments that they have been obliged to repeat each year. Nothing new. Same old Leader of the Opposition speech. You have to give them credit for their persistence, if not for the content of their remarks.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the real test of this Budget is not going to be inside this House. The answer will come from the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I am going to be proud to take this Budget to the constituency I represented in the last election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — I am going to be proud to take it to them for their approval. Mr. Speaker, I don't anticipate moving 200 or 300 miles south to look for a new and safer constituency.

Mr. Guy: — Move north.

Mr. Cowley: — I wouldn't mind moving north across the river, and the Member for Athabasca cum Rosthern is quite welcome to move south across the river if he wants to.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk to them about it they are going to remember what has been happening in the Biggar constituency in the past four years, since the election of an NDP Government. Since I represent a predominantly rural constituency, the agriculture scene is the first one that will come to mind. In 1971 . . .

Mr. Malone: — You have no oil.

Mr. Cowley: — We do have some potash, Mr. Member for Regina Lakeview, and I am quite proud to take our record to the potash workers in my constituency.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — In 1971 rural Saskatchewan was in a crisis situation, still reeling from the disastrous effects of the LIFT program brought in by the Federal Member for Saskatoon-Humboldt, and I might remind this House he is a Member of the Liberal Party. It was when the low prices and the quotas which he had introduced and which were continuing along with a declining population brought about by the Members opposite when they were on the Treasury Benches.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP promised action and delivered results. Since October 1973, in my constituency, 73 young farmers have received over \$2 million in loans and capital grants from FarmStart. That means 73 families are living in the Biggar constituency now who otherwise might have, under a Liberal government, had to move to a larger town or city, probably in some other province, to find employment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, a revised and expanded crop insurance plan has not gone unnoticed either. In the past three years the premiums paid by farmers in my constituency have risen from \$21,000 in 1972 to a total of over \$668,000 last year, and increase, Mr. Speaker, in coverage of over 3,000 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, 399 hog producers received \$335,698 under the interim Hog Stabilization fund. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind you that it was the farmers who got this money, not the hogs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — As you can see this would average out to about \$840 a farmer, which points out that the large majority in my constituency were small producers who would have been faced with going out of hog production had it not been for this fund. This is a good indication of how the stabilization fund helped to maintain a hog industry in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I also am going to be talking to local government officials about the performance of this Government in my constituency. They will recall how the grants for grid roads have gone up by 25 per cent. Direct municipal grants have also shown a substantial increase. For example, a revised equalization system has accounted for an increase from \$94,000 in 1970-71 to over \$190,000 last year. Mr. Speaker, a 94 per cent rise. Such increases, coupled with increased Property Improvement Grants, have effectively stabilized the rural municipal mill rates and have still allowed them to proceed with more programs than ever before. I know that several municipalities in my constituency have begun paved grid programs, which up until now had been too expensive to consider. In fact, the great improvements in the municipal road system is one of the more practical benefits of our first four-year term in office.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the increased revenue for rural municipalities the urban communities in my constituency have received over \$50,000 in unconditional \$10 per capita grants and almost \$400,000 from the Community Capital Fund to be spent over a five-year period. Municipal jurisdictions can now use that money for projects of their choice, projects that will serve the needs of their community. Needs determined, Mr. Speaker, by the community itself. In addition, six small communities, one of them my home town of Kinley, have taken advantage of \$78,000 from Operation Open Roads and Operation Main Street. They have hard surfaced the main streets and the accesses to each town. Two others implemented a similar program in conjunction with MRAA. The town of Biggar, Mr. Speaker, will receive \$150,000 under a two-year street improvement agreement. Mr. Speaker, that is over a quarter of a million dollars for improved streets in the towns and villages in one constituency.

In the past four years the highway system has consistently improved. I am pleased to inform the Members here tonight that the addition of Highway 376 from Asquith to Maymont will be the first highway to service some municipalities in that area. For those who had to drive up to 35 miles to reach a paved road that highway is a great accomplishment. Drivers on Highway 376 will soon be able to cross the North Saskatchewan River on the Maymont Bridge.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all Members will want to come

and drive across the Maymont Bridge. It has been a dream of people in that area for over 50 years. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the Members for the Battlefords (Mr. Kramer) and Redberry (Mr. Michayluk) will agree with me that this is a facility that has been long needed.

Mr. Speaker, Biggar constituency can also boast of having the most carefully planned 20 mile stretch of highway in the province. I think about that road every time one of the Members opposite rises to criticize any of the planning departments of this Government. You see, Mr. Speaker, Highway 14 from Biggar to Perdue is a lasting monument to the able planners of the previous administration. Mr. Speaker, I believe it was surveyed not once, but seven times. Seven years in a row. For seven years one of the first signs of spring was the appearance of the survey stakes. Mr. Speaker, I said in my election campaign in 1971 that if those stakes had sprouted and grown trees we could have had a pulp mill in Biggar.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I said in that election, and it was the only local commitment I made, that the next time we surveyed that highway we would build it and I am pleased to say that that highway has now been completed at a cost of \$1.5 million.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I invite the Members opposite to come to the Biggar constituency and travel on it.

In the last four years, Mr. Speaker, this Government has also introduced measures aimed at widening the economic base of this province. And I want to say that in my constituency alone, the grants and loans by SEDCO have provided over \$187,000 in capital funds for industrial development and have created 44 jobs. That's another 40 families who have been able to choose to live in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The people in Biggar will also note the continuance of programs such as the Youth Employment Service which has a double benefit of providing summer employment for young people and services to the community. During the two years that this program has been operating it has employed 61 students to provide recreational programs in our towns and regional parks, assistance in setting up the historical museum in Biggar and many other worthwhile projects. For the remainder of the year the Winter Works Incentive program has injected over \$50,000 for another 141 jobs on such projects as the excellent new rink in Delisle, a fire hall in Perdue, street improvements, installation of sewage systems, senior citizens' activity centres and many other projects.

The effort to create wider employment opportunities have been reflected in other areas as well, Mr. Speaker. Just to give an example for the Members opposite, the number of housing starts in the two largest communities in my constituency have tripled since 1971. The expansion of industrial and commercial structures has shown an even more dramatic increase. In 1971 the value of industrial building permits was a mere \$395,000. Last year, Mr. Speaker, the total came to over \$2.5 million, more than six times as much as four years ago. Many smaller villages have also enjoyed similar increases on a reduced scale.

In addition to four years work to strengthen and diversify our economy this Government has taken the lead in providing social legislation. The people in my constituency recall seven years of deterrent fees, hospital closures, rising welfare caseloads, arbitrary teacher-pupil ratios and seven dark, dreary years of Liberal rule and they compare that with the present situation. They remember those seven years when they now see our children's dental program beginning in operation in the schools. They remember it when they go to Saskatoon to get fitted for a hearing aid at substantially reduced costs. They remember those seven years when they pass the site of the new hospital in Biggar which will have 32 beds in operation in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, across the street they also see a brand new \$230,000 expansion to the Diamond Lodge Nursing Home, which will increase its capacity to 49 beds for the first three levels of care. In addition, the Provincial Government provided a direct grant of about \$60,000 for the construction of a 24-suite senior citizens' housing project and participated in a cost sharing agreement with the federal and local governments for its construction. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are three more applications from three communities in my constituency now for similar projects.

The latest step towards a guaranteed income for our senior citizens will be welcomed. In my riding senior citizens have been active in setting up programs and services to provide educational and recreational facilities and to look after some of the more special needs facing their age group. Five communities have started activity centres, assisted by \$17.5 thousand in various grants from the Provincial Government. The expansion of home care programs and the \$1.2 million increase for community programs will be welcome news to many of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan were indeed pleased to learn of the increase in property improvement grants and the grants to school units. Together these increases will lower the effective mill rate for educational purposes to an average of 22 mills. Another promise kept, Mr. Speaker.

Funding for education has increased substantially since we took office. In my constituency alone the operating grants for school units have gone up 75 per cent, which was enough to meet rising costs without raising local mill rates substantially. At the same time increased capital grants have resulted in the construction of a new St. Gabriel's School in Biggar, a gymnasium in Asquith, additions and renovations to the Biggar Composite School, the Asquith School, the Harris School and now I am told, Mr. Speaker, a new school in Landis.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very pleased to say a few words about one other development in my constituency and in constituencies surrounding me and that is the establishment of Biggar-Kindersley Community College, with its offices in Biggar. Mr. Speaker, it employs a developer, an assistant developer, several part-time employees and instructors. I understand it has a budget of over \$150,000. It's a most welcomed addition to living in rural Saskatchewan.

I wanted to say a few words also, Mr. Speaker, about the highways program. I have already mentioned the new Highway No. 376 from Asquith to Maymont; I have mentioned the new bridge

at Maymont; I have mentioned the long-awaited construction of Highway No. 14 from Biggar to Perdue. I want to say that this Government, unlike the Government before us, actually continued on with a rational highways program and continued and completed the Highway No. 14 from Biggar to Landis, even though it led into the Wilkie constituency. Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out that Highway 4 from Biggar to North Battleford and from Biggar to Rosetown is currently in the process of being rebuilt and that in our next term of office I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that we shall be able to complete it.

Mr. Speaker, I dealt at some length with my constituency. I would like to spend a few moments in discussing the Department of Mineral Resources, which I have had for the past 15 months. I want to assure you and even the Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that it has been a challenging period of time, not only for myself, but for the departmental staff whom I want to compliment as they had many extra burdens placed upon them during that time and they have done an excellent job. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the Members opposite continue to downplay the value of Saskatchewan mineral production. It is not surprising when one looks at the record of the years during which the Liberals occupied the government benches, the remains of which lie opposite. I trust that no one will misinterpret what I mean as I refer to some of the statistics, or what I mean when I refer to those who 'lie' opposite.

Mr. Speaker, during the calendar years '65 to '70 the value of mineral production in Saskatchewan increased from a 1965 level, \$331 million, to a whole \$396 million in 1970 after five years of Liberal Government. Not only was 1970 the last year for the Liberals, but the people of Saskatchewan obviously had their fill of Liberal Government. But, Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Members opposite that the value of mineral production from 1965 to 1970 increased a modest 20 per cent. I want you to compare that with the increase from the 1971 figure of \$426 million to the estimate of \$810 million for 1974. The 1974 estimate is an impressive 100 per cent increase over the last full year of Liberal Government. I am not at all surprised that Members opposite are trying to discredit the Government of Saskatchewan by attempting to scare away investors. The rapid increase is understandably an embarrassment to the Members opposite and I can assure the people of Saskatchewan that no amount of Liberal propaganda will thwart the efforts of this Government to expand our mineral production and at the same time obtain a fair return for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, there is one area in which I will concede the Liberals did have a very high success ratio. I submit that the Liberals are best known for their success at giving away resources that belong to the people. It is no doubt true, Mr. Speaker, that a significant portion of our increased mineral production is due to higher prices, in addition to higher mineral production. The important question to keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, is that when a non-renewable resource is being sold on the world market what should the return be to the owners of that resource? I think it is imperative that the duly elected government accept the full responsibility for managing the non-renewable resources in the best interests of the people. Mr. Speaker, I submit that's what we have done, what we are doing and what we will

continue to do in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer briefly to what has happened in the potash industry. For a number of years a depressed market existed for potash producers. In late 1973 it became obvious that world demand for potash was on the increase. In early 1974 we began discussions with the industry with regard to a new reserves tax. Mr. Speaker, I didn't expect that the industry would react favorably to it, or any new tax. But, Mr. Speaker, what did surprise me and, I am sure, surprised and shocked the people of Saskatchewan was the reaction of the Liberal Opposition. It is important for the people of Saskatchewan to recognize the Saskatchewan Liberal Party for what it really is. The Liberal Leader, in a press conference in October of 1974, said that a Liberal Government would 'sweeten the financial pot for both Canadian and foreign investors'. The people of Saskatchewan have not forgotten the seven years of Liberal rule, that whenever they sweetened the pot for investors it ended up on a sour note as far as the taxpayers of Saskatchewan were concerned.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, the position of this Government is that we will continue to allow private investors a reasonable rate of return for the development of our non-renewable resources and that we will not hesitate to develop our own expertise in the mining industry. Neither will we hesitate to require mining companies to continue reporting to the Government on their operations so that we are constantly up-to-date, much more so than the Members opposite were when they were the government.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the people of Saskatchewan realize that the reserve tax alone for the period July 1, 1974 to March 31, 1975 is expected to return to the people of Saskatchewan \$39 million in three-quarters of a year, or three times the \$13 million collected during a seven year period by the Members opposite.

So far in my speech I have dealt with some developments that have taken place in my constituency, the constituency of Biggar that I have had the honor of representing over the past four years and look forward, Mr. Speaker, to representing on this side of the House in the next four years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — I have dealt with some of the developments which have taken place in the Department of Mineral Resources. I would now like to deal with some of the programs instituted and the actions undertaken by the New Democratic Party Government in this province over the past four years.

The record of this Government is an impressive one, and I feel it is important to examine that record. It's important because in a short time the Leader of the Opposition will go before the people of this province to express his willingness to offer himself on the altar of public sacrifice by serving as Premier. I am sure that the people of this province will not take up that noble offer. They won't take up that offer because they will compare the record of this Government to the

record of the seven dark, dreary years of Liberal Government previous to 1971.

Mr. Speaker, we are offered as an alternative the Steuart-Thatcher government, rather than the Thatcher-Steuart government. The NDP Government, since its election in June of 1971, has brought forth progressive legislation in agriculture, education, resource development, health care, labor, human rights, electoral reform and in every sector of the Saskatchewan economy in social services. In agriculture we introduced the FarmStart program to enable smaller farmers to expand and develop economic units. The program has helped over 2,000 farmers in this province with grants and loans totalling over \$50 million. The average age of farmers receiving these grants has been an encouraging 27 years. Crop insurance benefits have improved and coverage has expanded. At the same time we have been able to reduce premiums. The Government passed The Family Farm Protection Act to provide for Government aid in emergency situations. The Hog Marketing commission was established and a subsidy program introduced to stabilize prices, to help keep producers in business during the difficult times that periodically hit this industry. And, Mr. Speaker, may I say that in my constituency the Hog Marketing Commission has been a resounding success.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, an Agricultural Implements Act was passed to protect farmers from problems they may encounter in dealing with machinery manufacturers. As well, an implement testing centre, the Agriculture Machinery Institute, has been established in my seatmate's largest town in his constituency — Humboldt. This Government passed a Farm Ownership Bill which established qualifications for existing and future land ownership by non-resident owners and non-agricultural corporations. The most publicized program in agriculture was the establishment of the Land Bank Commission, the program both most publicized and the program most subject to Liberal misrepresentation and misinformation. I will not go into the details of the success of the program, Mr. Speaker, other than to point out that governments of such wide ranging ideologies as Quebec, North Dakota, Manitoba, Minnesota and others have studied Saskatchewan's Land Bank system and indicated their intentions to establish similar land transfer programs. As the old adage states, Mr. Speaker, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

In the field of education the New Democratic Government moved quickly to abolish the oppressive pupil-teacher ratio implemented by the Liberals. This Government has established Community Colleges throughout the province, passed a workable Teacher Collective Bargaining Act, expanded the student loan and bursary programs and increased the rate of government financing. These are only a few of the programs that have been introduced to help bring the quality of education in this province back to the level that it enjoyed before the Liberals took office and began to butcher every piece of progressive legislation they could lay their destructive hands upon.

All through the 1940s, the 1950s and the early '60s the Province of Saskatchewan pioneered in the field of health services. Since the election of an NDP Government in 1971 this province has again moved to the front. Of all the many dark memories that this province has of the Liberal years surely

the darkest is that of the Liberal deterrent fees. It is a memory that will not go down quickly and the man who was Provincial Treasurer at that time, the man who introduced them and who now sits as the Leader of the Opposition will, I am sure, be reminded of this insensitive action many times in the future. The NDP opposed deterrent fees at the time of their introduction, opposed them during the last election and abolished them at the first sitting of this elected Assembly. After we corrected the negative and regressive errors of the Liberal regime we were able to deal with health services in this province in a progressive manner.

A Hearing Aid Plan was established to provide hearing aids used primarily by elderly citizens at greatly reduced costs. Chiropractic care was brought under the Medicare program. A dental care program that by 1979 will cover all children between 3 and 12 has been initiated. Mr. Speaker, I just want to pause for a moment and say that I think this program, in the long run, will prove to be one of the most important, and one of the most popular, and one of the most copied programs in North America that this Government has introduced in this term of office.

Mr. Speaker, the necessary legislation has been passed to provide a prescription drug program. Saskatchewan has once again moved to its rightful place as a leader in health and medical service. Over 600 communities have benefited from the improved quality of highways and local roads in this province, financed through Operation Open Roads and Operation Main Street. I have mentioned those who have benefited from this in my constituency. The Urban Assistance Program provided for an unconditional per capita grant for every urban municipal government. In addition, a Community Capital Fund will provide \$75 per capita for a five year period for capital projects. The Winter Works Incentive Program provided grants to many communities and local organizations for needed facilities. Sizeable grants have been made to urban transportation systems to help them keep down their costs and improve their systems.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party in this province has for years perpetuated the myth that they are the friends of the small businessman. A comparison of the services and the financial situation of small businesses under an NDP Government and under the Liberals shows that having the Liberals as self-proclaimed friends is as worthless as a Liberal election promise. The establishment of the Business Assistance Branch by this Government to promote the interests of small businesses, improved and expanded credit for small businesses, the splitting up of the small businesses regional offices and the inclusion of small businesses on a list of those eligible to receive Property Improvement Grants, will all combine to show the business community in this province the benefits of an NDP Government, which will far outweigh the questionable friendship of the Liberal Party and their promises.

In the field of labor we have again had to clean up the mess left for us by the Leader of the Opposition. Bill 2 was repealed, a new Labour Standards Act and a new Trade Union Act were passed. The question of minimum wage was set before a commission for study and recommendation. Mr. Speaker, I understand that we now have the highest minimum wage in Canada and I, as a rural Member, am proud to stand here and say that is true in this Province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, Workmen's Compensation had been left to deteriorate in this province during the black days of Liberal rule and repression. A new Workers' Compensation legislation was introduced by our Government to provide, I believe, the benefits and pension of any province in Canada.

In recognition of the injustices often caused under the existing legal system, Mr. Speaker, a Legal Aid Plan was implemented to provide free legal services to the underprivileged. An Ombudsman was appointed to investigate complaints arising from private citizens in their dealing with government.

In the election campaign of 1971 the NDP promised that property taxes in this province would be reduced to a level of 25 mills. The Hon. Members across the floor criss-crossed the province and their ridings saying it couldn't be done. Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP Government not only lived up to that commitment, we surpassed it. Through the Property Improvement Grant the effective mill rate in this province is now 22 mills. When the truth of this matter is known, it was not a question of the Liberals feeling that it couldn't be done, they just meant that they wouldn't do it. They would rather give the tax money of the working men and women of this province to their corporate friends through grants and tax concessions than to place it in the hands of Saskatchewan property owners.

The 1971 election saw the Liberal Party make the most vicious attack on democracy in Saskatchewan in the history of this province. Hungry to remain in power and to keep its fingers on the throat of Saskatchewan people, they carved up the constituency boundaries with a complete disregard to the principle of representation by population. Neighboring seats differed in population by as much as 400 per cent. The recently vacated Member for Albert Park might well have resigned from boredom there were so few people in his postage stamp Liberal borough.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — To end the manipulation of constituency boundaries the NDP Government established an Independent Boundaries Commission to establish an electoral map for this province based on population and on socio-economic links. An Hon. Member opposite with either a short memory or a limited vision called the Commission's report a gerrymander. I believe that the Members of this Commission, recognized as competent and honorable by all other sources, will not take kindly to the malicious and unfounded attack on their integrity.

Other memories of the Liberal regime that will not leave the minds of Saskatchewan voters as quickly as Members opposite might hope, are the Liberal election promises of 80,000 new jobs and a growing population. This province never saw those 80,000 new jobs during the Liberal years. What it did see was thousands and thousands of residents driven out of the province by massive increases in taxation, poor public services, Liberal inertia and Liberal sell outs. It was a stated and written belief of the Liberal Party that two out of every three farmers in this province should be forced off the land. The provincial Liberal

Government did all it could to try and make that belief a reality.

During 1974, under an NDP Government, the province showed its first increase in population in over a decade. The trend of declining population has been stopped. In 1974, as in 1973, there were 8,000 new jobs created in this province. That 8,000 figure compares to a long term average of just over 3,500 jobs a year. I feel the people of this province will compare the documented NDP performance of 8,000 jobs a year and a stable and increasing population to the unfulfilled Liberal promise of 80,000 new jobs. When it comes to the decision on the Leader of the Opposition's offer of himself, that I referred to earlier, it is an offer that they can certainly easily refuse.

The Liberals have in their recent propaganda spoken a great deal about freedom. I think it is important to determine what one of the Members opposite means when he talks about freedom. A Liberal will say he believes in free enterprise; what he really means is free-loader enterprise. They seem to feel that government should stay out of the economic sector when in power and when one of their corporate friends run into trouble they believe in plenty of government intervention. They run to their side with tax concessions, loans and grants and incentives, maybe even a dredging contract . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — . . . financed from the sweat of the taxpayers of this province. When they say freedom, they mean freedom for a Liberal Government to raise every tax in the province as they did in their seven year reign of despair. They mean freedom for a Liberal Government to sell out to foreign corporations our resources and our heritage. When they say freedom, they mean freedom for a Liberal Government to reintroduce deterrent fees and tax the sick and the elderly \$1.50 every time they have the misfortune to need a medical practitioner. Freedom to charge the dying \$2.50 a day for a bed to die in.

When I glance over the record of this Government and when I compare it to the dismal record of the Liberal Government previously, when I look at the weak-kneed and ineffective opposition provided by the Liberal Party, when I compare the quality of our candidates to the quality of their candidates, when I look at the desertions from the Liberal ranks by the Liberal members, I almost feel pity for the Leader of the Opposition. You know they don't do very well, they have a 40 per cent drop out rate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — One fellow dropped out to Ottawa. Now at least he dropped out with the consent of the people. One other fellow dropped up or down, depending on your point of view, into a court. One other fellow is retiring, presumably to Saskatchewan. One other fellow lost his gerrymandered seat and he dropped out presumably not willing to face the election. Another fellow retired, making way for one of his colleagues from the North who felt somewhat unsure after he saw the activities and the reaction of the people of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Another fellow, I understand, is retiring, possibly retiring to

get away from succession duties, I am sure we will be told. But it is interesting to note and rumor has it, and I agree it is only a rumor, that he is moving to socialist British Columbia.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the Leader of the Opposition must know better than any man alive what it felt like to be the captain of the Titanic.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that when the voters of Saskatchewan examine the situation, they will come to the same decision. They will reject the regressive attitudes, the previous storage policies, the limpid leadership of the Liberal Party. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that they will return the New Democratic Party under the leadership of Allan Blakeney with a program for progress and prosperity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I have several additional comments that I want to offer, particularly some comments that I should like to make about the speech which the Leader of the Opposition made this afternoon in this Legislature and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

SECOND READINGS

Hon. J.R. Messer (Minister of Agriculture) moved second reading of Bill No. 27 — An Act respecting The Stabilization of Returns from the Production of Agricultural Commodities.

He said: Mr. Speaker, if we may turn now to not quite so political a speech in order to introduce . . .

An Hon. Member: — . . . the truth.

Mr. Messer: — I agree with the Member that it is indeed the truth and we will be looking forward to his remarks tomorrow afternoon so that we will also be able to convey to the people of Saskatchewan the truth in relation to the activities of the Members who sit to your left and their colleagues in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to introduce this evening the Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act. This Act I believe, Mr. Speaker, represents a most important milestone in the ongoing events of the New Democratic Government in Saskatchewan to develop meaningful, long term stabilization programs for the farmers of Saskatchewan. This legislation will provide for the completion of the third of three programs developed by this Government to attack head-on the most serious

problems facing the farmers in the province. These programs are of direct relationship to the need and serious shortcomings of the present stabilization to the need and serious shortcomings of the present stabilization legislation, both provincial and federal. These programs — the first two that have been moved into place — in the minds of Saskatchewan people have been imaginative and bold. They are programs that represent significant new steps towards a brighter future for farm families in Saskatchewan.

The first program, the Land Bank introduced in 1972, attacked the problems of land transfer. We recognized that it was becoming increasingly impractical, in many instances even impossible, for each succeeding generation of farmers in Saskatchewan to purchase and to pay for their farms. It is only necessary to look back over the history of this province to observe the hardship created for farm families as they too often struggled to pay off farm mortgages. Those who succeeded faced more problems when they reached their retirement age. They had to gear their retirement to a period of buoyant land prices in order to realize adequate returns from the sale of their farms to assure or contribute to what was hopefully to be a comfortable retirement. Anyone unfortunate enough to face retirement in a period of low farm returns and a depressed land market had difficulty in selling his farm and perhaps saw an attempt at achieving reasonable and comfortable retirement lost for his lifetime. We recognized the land transfer problem was becoming increasingly more serious. At the end of the second war, a farmer if he was fortunate could expect to produce a gross value from two years' production equal to the cost of purchasing the land to grow those crops. Twenty years later, the mid '60s, it took four years to produce gross receipts equal to the cost of the land purchase on an average. The Land Bank has attacked this problem. The program does provide an option to young farmers by allowing them to secure part or all of their land holdings as long term leases. Valuable capital can then be used where it is most needed during the first years of the young farmers' careers to purchase improvements, machinery, livestock and more input, such as fertilizer, to improve that farm's productivity.

Capital used for these purposes rather than to finance land purchases will assure a better and an easier life for those beginning farmers. The Land Bank program has provided another option for the farmers of the province in acquiring a land base. To date 1,085 farmers have been helped to retire by the program and 1,055 young farmers were assisted in establishing farming operations through receiving leases taken out in the years 1972 and 1973. Approximately 300 more will receive leases on land purchased in 1974.

People from across North America, as has been stated earlier this evening, have recognized the value of the Land Bank program and have come to Saskatchewan to study and to indeed draft legislation similar to it.

Another step, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has taken was to assure that our agricultural land resources would be retained for Saskatchewan farmers and we subsequently in recognizing the need to do that introduced The Saskatchewan Farm Ownership Act in 1974. We recognized that non-resident ownership of land posed a threat to our farm families. In only one year the wisdom of that action has become increasingly apparent. The farmers of this province, because of The Farm Ownership Act,

face the future with the assurance that their most important resource, land, won't be bid away from them by large corporation or foreign interests while their neighbors in Alberta and Manitoba watch with increasing concern as land prices escalate to levels which simply cannot be justified on the basis of its agricultural productivity, because of this competition from outside of the province and indeed from outside of the country and outside of the continent.

In this area, too, Saskatchewan has led the way and I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that other provinces will follow.

The second problem facing our farmers lay in the area of farm credit. Again, I think we took a bold and imaginative approach with the introduction of the FarmStart program. I said when I introduced The Agricultural Incentive Act in 1973 that this program would create new opportunities for the young people of this province to be gainfully employed in an occupation of their choice. Today, as I look around rural Saskatchewan and talk to the many sons and daughters of farm families who have been assisted to enter their chosen occupation, farming, I see this occurring. There is a new optimism in rural Saskatchewan, brought to it by these young people who have returned to farming and those who have stayed to continue farming operations. The FarmStart program has assisted many, if not most of these people. To date some \$51 million has been loaned to farmers to develop livestock enterprises. Further assistance in the amount of \$5.3 million have been made available in the form of grants. The FarmStart program with its emphasis on livestock production is intensifying the agriculture base of this province. FarmStart has proven to be among the most popular programs ever introduced by any government in the history of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Messer: — The third serious problem, Mr. Speaker, facing the farmers of this province when this government took office was price instability for agricultural products. Again, this Government clearly recognized this problem and again bold new programs were developed to attack this problem. We developed marketing commissions to strengthen the producers' position in the market place. When the Saskatchewan Hog Marketing Commission was implemented there were a number, including, Mr. Speaker, the Members who sit to your left in this House who were vocal in their criticism of the step that we took. Today I say, and I believe hog producers will agree with me, they recognize the benefits of a unified approach to marketing. They recognize that they have a stronger position in the market place and that they are receiving a better deal from processors. They recognize that all producers, whether they are large or small or whether they are near a packing plant or miles from one, are getting a fairer deal. They recognize that the opportunities for securing long-term contracts to supply foreign markets are much greater because of the unified approach provided by their Saskatchewan Hog Marketing Commission.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, also recognized the importance of price stability when hog producers were faced with a crisis in hog returns brought about by one of the most dramatic increases in production costs that the hog industry has ever witnessed. We led the way with the Price Stabilization program, because the program provided by the Federal Government was

totally inadequate. We assured hog producers that their costs of production would be covered and we provided the funds necessary to carry out the program. Some \$14.5 million has been provided to date to carry out the interim supplemental hog price program. The results of these programs have been gratifying to me. First, our hog producers were not forced out of production in the way that has been done when previous unfavorable prices were evident because of the cyclical pricing problems. Hog production in Saskatchewan dropped only modestly in 1974. Experience of earlier years where similar unfavorable periods of return existed suggests that a much greater drop in production would have occurred in the absence of a stabilization program.

For example, Mr. Speaker, in mid-1964 under the former Liberal government there were 556,000 hogs in the province. The weighted average price for hogs in that year was \$25.25 compared to \$26.15 the previous year and \$27 in 1962. By mid-1965, hog population had dropped to 454,000, a decrease of excess of 18 per cent in one year. We are experiencing a downtrend in hog production in Saskatchewan in 1975, but I am confident the decrease would have been much more severe had our interim and supplemental hog price program not been in place. I am also confident that these producers of the province committed to hog production have been assisted, assisted to stay in production by this program. Today I find renewed confidence in the hog industry, confidence brought about to a degree by the stabilization program of this Government. Producers of breeding stock tell me their orders have increased substantially in the last several months. The prices of weanling pigs are up and the problem is one of locating adequate supplies.

Secondly, I'm gratified that the program has resulted in recognition by the Federal Liberal Government that stabilization programs which are tied only to historic price levels are completely unacceptable and inadequate to producers.

The farmers of this country have lived since 1958, a period of 17 years with the Agricultural Stabilization Act as their only protection from price instability. That Act, while proclaiming to have the objective of stabilizing prices of agricultural commodities and to ensure producers a fair return for their labor and investment, has proven, unfortunately, totally inadequate. While the deficiencies of the Agricultural Stabilization Act have been glaringly apparent for a long time, it took the Federal Government until 1975 to do something about it. How much longer would they have waited? How much longer would they have delayed, had Saskatchewan not shown initiative in developing adequate stabilization programs, is anyone's guess.

I am not satisfied that the changes that are now being contemplated in the Agricultural Stabilization Act are adequate, but at least the principle of relating the stabilization price to a formula reflecting changes in the cost of production, have been adopted in the proposed amendments. It is for these reasons that we introduce The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act.

In effect the boom-bust cycles in agriculture on all of the people of this province are well known. We cannot forget at this time of general prosperity in the province brought about in the main by three years in a row of good grain sales on a buoyant world market. We should at this time ask ourselves

what happened to the economy of this province and the people of this province when farm cash receipts fell consecutively in the years of 1968, 1969 and 1970. Not only do boom-bust cycles occur in agriculture in this province, major cycles also occur in many of the individual commodities produced by our farmers. Hogs are one example. In 1969 the weighted average price for hogs sold in all public stockyards in Canada was \$35.20 per hundred pounds, dressed weight; in 1970 it fell to \$30.10; in 1971, or at least the early portions of 1971 to \$23.55.

These price gyrations, Mr. Speaker, for agricultural commodities are responsible for many of the problems facing our producers today. Continuous production shifts from one commodity to another in reaction to fluctuating prices wastes the resources of our agricultural industry. Farmers are often forced to drop new production enterprises just as they have become well established. Buildings are unfortunately left empty and idle. Costly breeding herds are sold at fire sale prices. Often farmers are forced to give up farming and to move away from the rural communities and to seek out other employment. Beginning farmers without financial reserves are generally the hardest hit. Further decay of our rural communities is inevitably the result of this kind of activity.

Stability of a farm commodity and of farm commodity returns is also important if consumers are to be assured adequate food supplies at reasonable prices. Unless farmers are protected to some degree from immediate market pressures, they are forced to react to periods of low prices by making short-term production changes. They cannot maintain production patterns which fit longer term market trends and legitimate consumer needs. This can only result in higher prices for consumers because periods of overproduction and low prices for producers are always followed by shortages and by consumer price increases.

The indications are clear, Mr. Speaker, long-term stabilization programs for our agricultural commodities are needed. The beneficiaries will be farmers, our producers, as well as consumers, in fact all people in the province and to some extent Canada. The development of adequate stabilization programs cannot be a provincial responsibility alone. To develop permanent stabilization programs for producers in Saskatchewan without input from the Federal Government would result in a host of problems, problems which would offset the benefits of those very programs.

Firstly, the benefits of stabilization of agricultural production which accrue to the consumers of Saskatchewan agricultural products largely accrue to consumers outside of the province since we are the largest exporter of food of any of the provinces in the Dominion of Canada. As a Government we cannot justify the expenditures which permanent provincial programs may require without the participation of the Federal Government.

Secondly, the problems of administering provincial stabilization programs in isolation from the rest of Canada would offset many of the benefits such programs could provide. Prices the farmers of this province receive must bear a direct relationship to prices paid farmers in other provinces. We recognize clearly that effective permanent agricultural stabilization programs require the participation not only of the province but also of all producers and the Federal Government. The legislation before you is drafted with this consideration in mind.

Further I must point out that every effort is being made to co-operate with the Federal Government to develop federal-provincial programs to stabilize agriculture returns. I have arranged to meet Mr. Whelan to consult about the development of a permanent program to stabilize returns for hog producers and have urged early action in order that a permanent program might be developed to replace the provincial program that is now in effect. While the actions of the Federal Government to date have been slower than we wished, we will continue to pursue a co-operative approach to agricultural stabilization with the Federal Government. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that I have a meeting with Mr. Whelan on Wednesday of this week to discuss the establishment of that very stabilization program.

Let me for a moment review the important points of the legislation before us. The Saskatchewan Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act will enable the Provincial Government to enter into agreements with the Federal Government and other provinces to establish stabilization programs for agricultural commodities or classes of commodities. This section is consistent, consistent with our intention to participate in joint stabilization programs for agricultural commodities. I think that this is most important, Mr. Speaker, and I want to make it perfectly clear that at no time since 1971 has this Government promoted our regional programs of stabilization in isolation from a federal framework, programs which would, in effect, introduce false economies in the establishment or expansion of a particular agricultural commodity for a particular region.

We do not agree that there should be stabilization programs which are in an unrealistic way funded by a provincial treasury in order to establish another commodity production for our particular province. We don't agree that some provinces which have larger treasuries than other provinces should have the flexibility or the jurisdiction to put into place stabilization programs which are falsely subsidized by the province and which will be detrimental to another province or another region of Canada which should have by its natural advantages that production capability.

So it is essential that we have federal legislation providing a federal framework for the provinces and for regional stabilization programs. But they will be limited only to take advantage of their regional advantages.

Now provisions are already before the House of Commons to provide for such joint programs contemplated in our legislation.

Bill C50, An Act to amend the Federal Agricultural Stabilization Act, provides that provinces or producers or both can participate in stabilization programs to provide greater benefits than the amended Agricultural Stabilization Act alone will provide.

With the Saskatchewan Agricultural Stabilization Act in place, Saskatchewan will be ready to participate in such programs. Our Act also provides for establishment by regulation of a fund to be used to carry out stabilization programs. Contribution by the Saskatchewan Government, the Federal Government and producers collected for stabilization programs will form part of this fund. Such a fund is required to accumulate money during periods of favorable returns and to meet payments to producers when required in periods of not so favorable a return.

The Act provides for assessment of charges on producers by regulation for the purpose of carrying out the stabilization program or programs. Producers who will benefit directly from permanent stabilization programs must therefore contribute to such programs during periods of favorable returns.

Also authorized by the Act are payments either directly or through other agents including agencies established by the Federal Government. The Act provides for the establishment of a corporation, a branch, or agency to administer the stabilization programs. Where it is thought feasible, existing marketing agencies may collect and disperse funds for stabilization programs for a commodity or classes of commodities. The legislation provides authority for marketing boards and commissions to deduct such assessments for monies payable to producers.

Payments from the province and provisions for loans from the consolidated funds are also provided in this legislation. Such payments must be approved by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. In the case of loans the aggregate amount shall not be more, at least initially, than \$100 million.

In view of the benefits of the agricultural stabilization to people in the province, it is not unlikely that the province will at least match contributions by producers to a stabilization fund. Short-term loans may also be required by the fund to provide for the establishment of programs or to cover temporarily unexpected payments out of the fund. Longer term loans on the credit of the province are also provided for in accordance with The Saskatchewan Loans Act. Stabilization programs may incur substantial deficits at any point in time but be sound over the long period or the long haul. Loans rather than grants are the logical way to cover such deficits when and if they reoccur.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal now with the matter which causes great concern to the critics of stabilization programs. There are those who, to this day, still believe that the market for agricultural commodities can somehow be linked with the perfect free market system where many sellers and buyers meet on equal ground to determine what they say is a fair price. Such a belief in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, defies reason when we consider the facts of the situation.

The purchase of virtually all livestock commodities is dominated by a few well organized processing firms in Canada today, and to suggest that a farmer can meet these buyers on equal ground is simply ridiculous. But the suggestion is made far too frequently. The unfortunate thing is that some producers still believe that this suggestion is, in fact, a workable way of establishing stabilized prices.

The same proponents of the so-called free market system say price is the only criterion which can be used to establish production levels. Farmers have watched this free market system work and I say rejected it as a mechanism for marketing many of their produced commodities. Primarily, they have rejected the system for two basic reasons.

The first, as I have already pointed out, is that buyers and sellers don't have equal power in the market place.

The second reason is that the demand for food and food commodities is not elastic. Once the consumer has satisfied his

food requirements he will buy relatively little additional food because of a price decrease. On the other hand a consumer will go to great lengths to secure additional food supplies should he not have enough to satisfy his requirements.

This simply is the cause of instability of agricultural prices. Now I recognize clearly that price cannot work independent of supply but I reject totally the concept put forward by proponents of the free market system for agriculture commodities that meaningful stabilization programs which have the stabilization price related to the cost of production cannot, in fact, work.

They say meaningful stabilization programs will destroy the only mechanism for relating supply to demand. They say that production will run away, creating untold surpluses which will eventually break the stabilization program as well as all of the producers of the commodity.

I disagree, Mr. Speaker. There are better ways of adjusting production to demand than the free market system. Supply can be adjusted without dependence on the vicious price circles that now dominate our major livestock commodities. Producers of many agricultural commodities have proven that collective supply management through marketing boards is one effective way of adjusting supply to demand.

There are other mechanisms as well which can be utilized. Instead, programs to attract new producers into a particular type of commodity production can be expanded or contracted within response to long term market requirements for a given product. If necessary, incentives to encourage producers to switch commodity production or to encourage early retirement can also be utilized if it is determined that an adjustment in production is warranted or needed. If necessary, stabilization programs can be applied only to a portion of the production of any given agriculture commodity. Producers may be protected on, say, 90 per cent of their production, for any increase would then be produced at their own risk.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we must recognize that those commodities which are traded on international markets, the stable return and therefore the stable production from Saskatchewan or Canada will not significantly affect the supply and demand relationships existing in the world.

It is on this basic issue that I take exception to the minimum levels of stabilization legislated by Bill C 50 into the Agricultural Stabilization Act of Canada. The basic minimum level of stabilization provided is 90 per cent of the five year average price adjusted for increase in costs of production by a set formula.

The Federal Government says that to provide better stabilization is to run the risk of overproduction. Even the Federal Government admits that their program is only a stop-loss program. The reason is clear. For livestock commodities the return to labor often represents 10 per cent or less of the total cost of production.

To stabilize prices at 90 per cent of what might be a fair average of returns is to leave producers' labor incomes completely exposed to the market place.

I submit that this is not good enough. Farmers must have stabilization programs, particularly in the livestock sector which are capable of protecting their labor return. The legislation before us this evening will provide the framework for those programs for Saskatchewan livestock producers. And this Government is committed to developing those kinds of programs if the Federal Government will provide adequate federal legislation for us to work with.

I wish to deal now with the reasons for introducing The Saskatchewan Agriculture Stabilization Act. It's clear from our remarks that the federal participation will be required to initiate programs under this legislation. This legislation which is broad in scope will provide for participation in meaningful stabilization programs, particularly for livestock commodities, should such programs be forthcoming from the Federal Government. The purpose of this Act is to enable Saskatchewan to participate in such programs with a minimum of delay.

Now to briefly summarize. The stabilization of farm income is of top priority in the program to develop more viable farm units and more prosperous rural economies.

Consumers and all people of the province stand to benefit from programs to stabilize farm income. The purpose of this Act is to enable Saskatchewan to administer or take part in any stabilization program with agriculture producers and the Federal Government. While the Act cannot be used if Ottawa does not participate in such programs, an Act enabling Saskatchewan to participate must be in place to prevent delay in implementing the programs.

Meaningful stabilization programs for our agriculture producers combined with other programs in the agricultural area instituted by this government assure a bright future for the agricultural industry of those provinces.

It is therefore, Mr. Speaker, with great pleasure that I move second reading of Bill No. 27.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E.F. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, we were waiting for the Minister to give his explanation of this particular Bill and we weren't completely reassured by his statements. He went on to talk about the Land Bank, as he usually does. I don't see where that comes into this particular Bill, but he seems to be on the defensive as far as the Land Bank is concerned and he takes every opportunity to continue his argument that it is better for a young farmer to be indebted to the state than to be owner of his own land. He realizes the problem he has in convincing the farmers of this and I doubt that he's going to be able to convince them.

The Bill, to me, looks as if it is giving further control over producers. He went on also to talk about the hog program in the province and he said, you know, there was a modest reduction in the production in 1974. I believe it was something like 28 per cent. I would hate to see any immodest reduction if the Minister feels that it was modestly down when it's 28 per cent. The Bill, when we first looked at it, our idea was that it was simply enabling legislation to allow the province to work with the Federal Government. In listening to the Minister's

remarks and looking at the Bill, I'm not sure that this is so. He didn't, for example, indicate any place whether the Bill was voluntary or not, whether farmers had any choice as to whether they should go into it. He didn't mention any connection with the Federal Grain Stabilization Plan which farmers have been waiting 30 – 40 years for and which has been rather severely criticised in the past by the Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture and I think this is rather unfortunate because it is a good Bill. It basically means that in these times of high grain prices we are going to get a substantial fund set up to benefit farmers if the economic situation changes, but the one thing that we happen to know about the Federal Grain Stabilization Plan is that it is voluntary, and this makes the Minister's criticism of the Bill all the more important. I'm afraid that because of the remarks of our own Minister of Agriculture in the province, some farmers will be inclined or encouraged by the Minister to stay out of the Grain Stabilization Plan which would be very unfortunate because at this particular time every farmer should be in the Federal Grain Stabilization Plan. With the criticism that's been in the press the last couple of months by the Minister of Agriculture, it would be very unfortunate if some of them decided the plan wasn't suitable and decide to stay out.

I should like the Minister to make his feelings very clear in this regard and I should like to know if he is really telling farmers that the federal plan is no good and they should stay out or if he is telling them that in spite of his criticism they should go in.

Obviously his criticisms are politically motivated and I think he owes the farmers of this province an explanation. What does he really think about the Federal Grain Stabilization Plan?

Mr. Messer: — It is no good.

Mr. Gardner: — Well, I hope the Minister will then tell us later on whether he is recommending that the farmers of Saskatchewan not participate in the plan because it is perfectly voluntary. They can stay in or they can stay out. So I'll be looking forward to a very clear cut statement by the Minister in this regard.

As far as this Bill is concerned, we still have our doubts about it because section 4 says that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may for the purposes of carrying out any program, classify producers into classes or producers and I would hope that we would only have first class producers in Saskatchewan. But apparently he's going to classify them, and he's going to establish, with respect to commodities, charges or assessments to be collected from the producers.

Now, I'm suggesting by this that the Minister is going to say that if a person has 20 cows, he's in one class and we'll charge him so much a head, if he has 30 or 40 or 50, he would be in a different class. The Minister didn't make this clear. It says that he can classify producers into classes of producers. And obviously this is for the purpose, as it goes on to say in section 4, for setting charges on the producer, and the charges could be anything as far as this is concerned.

You look at section 7. It says the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may, from time to time, authorize the Minister of Finance to pay contributions into the fund. And this is unlike the Federal Grain Stabilization Plan where the Federal Government says the farmer puts in two per cent of his sales, the Federal Government will put in four per cent of his sales. There is no 'may' as far as the Federal Grain Stabilization Plan is concerned. This looks pretty ambiguous to me, the province may contribute, there's no guarantee and no amount. So in view of the Minister's remarks and the fact that a great number of the suggestions in the Bill could be done by regulation, again section 16 is rather frightening. You can see what the Minister can do by regulation and again it lists prescribing the basis and amount of any charges and assessment required. In other words he needs no legislation. The Minister can simply say you pay \$10 or you pay \$20 a head and this can be all done, a great list of things in section 16 by regulations.

So in view of this, Mr. Speaker, I should like to take a further look at this and I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. G.T. Snyder (Minister of Labour) moved second reading of Bill No. 32 — An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act, 1969.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Bill before you, an amendment to The Labour Standards Act, contains two amendments.

The first is another step in this Government's determination to improve the working conditions in this province while the second amendment is merely a housekeeping item. I'll deal with the latter first, if I may.

During the last sitting of the Legislature, this House passed an amendment to The Labour Standards Act which provided for three weeks annual vacation after one year of service with the same employer. The passage of that amendment, as I said at the time, fulfilled our pledge to the people of this province in the area of vacation legislation as outlined in the New Deal for People. Moreover, last year's amendment brought Saskatchewan's legislation forthrightly into the 1970s at a time in our history when we're becoming more and more aware of the need to get away from the stress and strain of the work place and take time out to enjoy life a little more before it takes its toll upon us.

When drafting the legislation and when choosing an implementation date we were concerned about three things. Providing the benefit to all working people as quickly as possible, providing employers with sufficient notice of our intentions and finally doing so in a manner that did not interfere in any way with employment anniversary dates. The approach taken was to phase in the improved vacation benefits by providing that employees would begin earning their entitlement to three weeks annual vacation after their next employment anniversary date following the proclamation of the Act on May 1, 1974.

New employees starting work after May 1, 1974 were to begin earning entitlement upon commencement of their employment. Now, while this approach did meet the stated objectives, it also created an unintended inequality. The phase in approach can

mean that in some instances the new employees would begin to earn entitlement and indeed become entitled to three weeks annual vacation before more senior employees whose anniversary date happened to fall at a time prior to May 1, 1974.

This inequity was an oversight on our part. It was certainly not intended and arose mainly as a result of our being concerned with providing advance notice to employers.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before you will rectify this inequity and at the same time be in keeping with our intended objectives. The amendment will simply move the effective date back in time from May 1, 1974 to January 1, 1974. That change will mean that all employees began earning entitlement on their 1974 anniversary date and will become entitled to three weeks annual vacation on their 1975 anniversary date. All persons who commenced their employment subsequent to January 1st, 1974 will be deemed to have begun earning their entitlement on that date and shall be entitled to three weeks annual vacation on that same date in 1975. In short, all employees with one or more years of employment with the same employer shall become entitled to a minimum of three weeks annual vacation during the 1975 calendar year.

Mr. Speaker, the second improvement included in the Bill before you is an additional statutory holiday, the first Monday in August which shall be known as Saskatchewan Day. Our prairie winters are usually harsh and long; our summers, while lovely and warm, are unfortunately quite short. Some Saskatchewan people have tackled this head on by increasing their recreational time through the adoption of another long weekend in addition to the July 1st holiday. More and more employers in recent years recognized the value of this additional long weekend during the summer both for their employees and for themselves, but there are still many persons who are not as fortunate. The trend towards this second summer long weekend has been facilitated by urban governments, proclaiming a certain day as a civic holiday. However, as such it does not provide employees with a paid holiday but just a day off. Nor does it apply to all places of business. So again, some employees are missing out.

Mr. Speaker, the civic holiday approach has in itself raised considerable problems as Saskatchewan communities have not been able to agree on a common date. So various communities use various dates. If the date is other than the first Monday in August you will find half the communities' business is shut down on the declared date and the other half on the first Monday in August. This causes considerable confusion not only for the employees and employers but for other businesses for customers and clients. The establishment of a regular statutory holiday will make it uniform across the province thus clarifying the situation and ensuring that all Saskatchewan people will be able to enjoy the full benefits of a long weekend during the summer months.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that no one will question the holiday's name, Saskatchewan Day. 1975 marks this province's 70th anniversary. For 70 years the people who populate this part of the world have worked together to build and continue building a way of life of which we can all be proud. I can think of no more fitting recognition or no better tribute to the pioneers of this land than to set aside one warm sunny August day each year in recognition of their hard work and devotion. No special celebrations are planned nor need there be. Saskatchewan Day

instead will be another occasion on which Saskatchewan families can gather together to enjoy our great outdoors. Hopefully it will also inspire us to pause, Mr. Speaker, and reflect upon our own good fortune to share in that peaceful prosperous land that we call Saskatchewan. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.F. MacDonald (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, it must have been rather embarrassing for the Minister of Labour to have to stand up and eat crow and admit that the Bill previously brought into the House was very inadequate and caused some consternation, and some injustices as it was written. It seems rather an odd situation with the Minister having the greatly expanded Department of Labour and all the planners and researchers, it seems rather odd that the Bill would have been presented to the House in such a manner. However, the Minister has explained why he found it necessary to do it at this time and certainly I am not going to argue with the provisions in the Bill we have before us today. I think that this is a good example. I don't know where the origin of the name 'bill' comes from. We are dealing with Acts and Statutes and the things that come before us are called bills. Now I am not a great student of government. I don't know where the name bill comes from but I think this particular piece of legislation may indicate why it is a bill because it is a bill. It involves money being spent, maybe that is why it is called a bill. When we look at it very closely it is a very nice thing, we just kind of have a day off and I think as legislators that we often forget that there is a bill to be paid by somebody for this so-called 'giving' of a holiday. Certainly I don't know anyone who won't enjoy another day off in Saskatchewan's beautiful summer. I will certainly enjoy it and I won't know of a single person who won't enjoy it. But I don't think that anyone should feel that they are being given a day because they are going to pay for it more than others. So-called giving one day off is likely to add at least one per cent to the cost of goods and services that are produced in this province and of course those who are receiving the holiday will end up paying for it. There are some people on fixed incomes, of course, who are going to have to pay for it and they are not going to get any of the benefits of the day off. They are going to find it difficult and this is always one of the problems of this type of legislation that it increases the cost in inflation and the cost of goods and services to those people who are on fixed incomes and can't do much about the situation.

I think we should remember as legislators that this is going to cost somebody some money. Those who enjoy the holiday are going to pay their share for it too. Large companies are not going to absorb this one day holiday, they are still going to pass it along in goods and services. There are a few very small employers, possibly those people running a small café and a service station, or as far as that goes the service station itself is maybe going to have to pick up some of these costs, but none of the large companies and corporations are going to find this a hardship, they are just going to pass it along in the cost of goods and services. We must remember that it is going to cost somebody and cost somebody very dearly, because this is one of the causes of inflation and we have to be prepared for that kind of thing when we pass this legislation.

There certainly is with this particular holiday a great deal of mix-up in this province. Various cities have civic holidays. I know Regina does, Moose Jaw doesn't. Moose Jaw has never had a holiday in August as a civic holiday. Even in the city of Moose Jaw it becomes very confusing because government workers have that day off and a good many people working in the private sector have that day off because it was included in the collective agreement. So that that particular Monday in Saskatchewan has been a foul-up for a number of years and I think that provincial legislation was the only way to straighten it out and get it on an even keel. Certainly I am going to enjoy that particular Monday as a holiday and I am certain a lot of other people will and it will clear up the confusion that has existed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Education) moved second reading of Bill No. 35 — An Act to amend The School Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill 35 proposes a number of amendments to The School Act, two or three of which I want to comment on.

Section 2 of Bill 35 contains additions to Section 3 of The School Act which is a section stating the Minister may do different things under regulations of the Department. All the clauses in this section are of a housekeeping nature in the sense that the powers they describe have been exercised under other sections, most of them for years. This clause really draws the powers together under one particular section.

Section 3 is another housekeeping section that requires applications for changes in school unit boundaries must be sent to the secretaries of each unit affected.

Sections 5 and 6 are housekeeping amendments deleting clauses in Section 105 that are being written into Section 3 by this particular Bill.

Section 7, Mr. Speaker, is a new clause in The School Act, a clause reflecting the policy we have adopted of promoting more use of school facilities by the communities at large. It is often said in many towns that the mainstays of existence are the Pool elevator, the co-op, the credit union, the local businessman, the implement dealer, the post office and the school. We are attempting as a deliberate policy of the Government to develop and use schools not just for specific educational purposes but also to upgrade the level of services available and thus strengthen the small community life. Many of our smaller towns have been seriously affected by the end of the post war baby boom. Enrolments from grades one to eight are in many cases 10 to 20 per cent lower than 10 years ago at the peak of enrolments. Many of these towns, Mr. Speaker, were overlooked by Members opposite when they sat in the Government benches, in their practice of holding educational spending to a bare minimum. Consequently they were unable to build gymnasiums and other facilities when their enrolments were high. Really today, Mr. Speaker, if the numbers of pupils alone were the only consideration these communities would find it very difficult to receive the benefits of new facilities. Section 7 is an effort

to give these smaller communities an opportunity to develop by permitting school boards, municipalities, towns and other incorporated bodies to enter into partnership and build jointly owned and operated auditoriums, gymnasiums, swimming pools or other structures that they may agree upon. So in effect Section 7 of this Bill says that this Government, through the Department of Education, is willing to invest grant money in smaller towns, in our villages if the people in them, through their council and school boards, are prepared to work out a joint sharing arrangement.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this new provision could be a life line for towns the Members opposite wrote off even at their peak. It can be more than that, Mr. Speaker, because by establishing joint facilities from the beginning the school and the community are drawn together into the sort of relationship that is beneficial in educational terms as well. Section 7 is a reflection of our strategy of encouraging new links between the school and the community, a strategy that is behind the Community College program, the new physical education program and the kindergarten program. I believe it will be very favorably received by the public in this province.

Mr. Speaker, Section 9 proposes a shift, to shift the spring vacation back to the week after Easter where it was in 1969 when legislative change was introduced by the former Liberal Government. I believe that the Members opposite amended this section once; we tried our hand at it too, as Members will recall. But it would seem that every adjustment that we made, made the problem worse. At first these were introduced in order to tie the break to the mid point of the second semester. However, with spring break up the way it has been the last few years in the province, with other provinces retaining the Easter vacation, with people wanting to use the time to travel not only in the province but outside of the province, we found the change necessary. The present amendment reverting to the original Easter break has been discussed with the School Trustees' Federation and both organizations have agreed that it is the best alternative. I commend it to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 35.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. G.B. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park): — Mr. Speaker, I am not doubting the Minister's sincerity when he says that this is a housekeeping Bill but on several occasions he referred to the actions of 'the Members opposite', in other words the Opposition Members when they were in the Government, and just to make sure that all who wish to have an opportunity to make observations on this Bill and to clarify whether it is a housekeeping or house cleaning, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. E. Tchorzewski (Minister of Culture and Youth) moved second reading of Bill No. 36 — An Act to amend The Municipal Hail Insurance Act, 1968.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is well known

that in agriculture this Government has a very distinguished record in the last three years and there are many programs that we can talk about and will be no doubt spoken about at great length during this Session of the Legislature.

The Bill before us today involves a number of amendments that are again of importance to those farmers who wish to obtain insurance coverage from the Municipal Hail Association. The first amendment permits the inclusion of faba bean crops under the scope of the Act. In recent years there has been a growing demand on the Association for insurance coverage on faba bean crops. The insuring of various crops, field peas and corn is permitted in the Act, and this expansion of coverage is now being extended to faba beans as well.

Mr. Speaker, another amendment deals with farmers who raise crops on Crown land. As the Act presently stands farmers who grow crops on rented land are unable to insure their crops under the Municipal Hail Insurance Plan. This is because the cost of Municipal Hail insurance is levied against the land and only the owner of the land can authorize the land to be taxed for hail purposes. Where the owner of the land is the Crown a different situation exists, the occupant or lessee is personally liable for payment of the taxes on the land he occupies or leases. This Bill recognizes this difference and makes provision for the Association to extend coverage to such lessees. The Bill specifically provides that the Crown is not liable for these taxes if they are left unpaid. This amendment will benefit tenants of Crown land by making available to them insurance coverage not now available to them under the municipal tax plan.

Another amendment for filing annual crop reports will extend the deadline from June 10th to June 15th. This will be of particular benefit, Mr. Speaker, in those cases where seeding has not been able to be completed by June 10th and where additional time becomes a necessity to insure coverage.

The amendments were requested by and have the approval of the Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance Association. In the last few years the insurance benefits obtainable under the Municipal Hail Insurance Act have been greatly expanded. In 1973, for example, the Act was amended to lower the minimum loss payable to 5 per cent. Previously farmers were not entitled to indemnity unless the loss was at least 10 per cent. The Act was also amended to increase the maximum indemnity per acre to \$24 up from \$15. These changes among others have given the Association a wider scope within which to operate and provide additional services to meet the ever diversifying and expanding activities of Saskatchewan agriculture.

The Municipal Hail Insurance Association continues to enjoy a strong and healthy financial position. Its surpluses and reserves at the current year end exceeded \$15 million. These reserves provided the Association with investment earnings of over \$1 million last year and the income from these reserves tends to stabilize premium rates while the reserve itself is a useful cushion in the event of a year of heavy losses and claims.

With these few words, Mr. Speaker, in explanation of the amendments that are before us in this Bill, I move second reading of this Bill.

March 17, 1975

Mr. G.B. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister would clarify (I don't know whether I heard clearly or not) but I think he made reference to the fact that reserves total some \$50 million which enabled them to earn some million dollars last year on these reserves which doesn't seem to be related, considering current interests rates.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I am not sure of the exact tabulation of it, Mr. Speaker, but the information that was given to me was the fact that there are reserves and surpluses at the current year end which amounted to \$15 million. I thought the Member had said \$50 million but it's \$15 million and that's maybe why there is some misunderstanding.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:28 p.m.