

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Seventeenth Legislature
21st Day

Wednesday, March 19, 1975

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. E.L. Tchorzewski (Humboldt): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the House a group of 33 Grade Eleven and Twelve students who are seated in the Speakers Gallery from Annaheim. They are accompanied by their teachers and their wives, Mr. and Mrs. Lizée and Mr. and Mrs. Doepker. They have toured a number of places in the city of Regina and will be here through the question period. I will be able to meet them for a little while after that. So I would ask the Members of the House to join with me in welcoming the Grade Eleven and Twelve students from Annaheim to the Legislature at this time.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. P.P. Mostoway (Hanley): — Mr. Speaker, in light of the absence of one of the Members opposite I should like to take this opportunity to welcome a group of 40 Grade Eight students from Cardinal Leger School in Saskatoon, who are accompanied by their two teachers, Mr. Wandzura and Mr. Bertsch. I know they will find this afternoon's proceedings interesting. May I say I hope you have had a good time in Regina, and may you have a good journey on your way back home. Somebody will certainly be out to meet you when you leave the gallery.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E.C. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Assembly 25 Grade Twelve students from O'Neill High School in Regina North West. They are seated in the west gallery with their teacher, Mr. Berezny. This school bears the name of Archbishop O'Neill, the very popular head of the Archdiocese of Regina for many years. All of my children attended school at O'Neill High. Although this education institution does not have a long history, it has a fighting team spirit. That spirit won them the High School Football Championship of Saskatchewan last fall. I am sure all Members join me in congratulating them and welcoming them here today and expressing the wish that their stay with us will be educational and pleasant.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. D.W. Cody (Watrous): — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to you and the Members of this Assembly today 16 Grade Twelve students seated in the Speaker's Gallery from Cudworth High School. Cudworth was on the north end of the Watrous constituency, now it is in the constituency of Kinistino. They are here today with their teacher, Jim Bridgeman, and later on this afternoon I hope to meet with them and have a drink

with them as well. However, that will be a different kind of drink than one may normally want to have, however, I will meet them later on this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Leave Of Absence - Mr. B. Coulter

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I would like to direct a question to the Premier. I wonder if the Premier had the opportunity last night of watching national television because a very well-known friend of this Assembly was riding around on the plane with the NDP Leader in the Province of Alberta. He was a former assistant clerk, despite the fact that he had dark glasses, (I wonder if the Premier provided that disguise) Mr. Brian Coulter, and special assistant to the Premier. I should like to ask the Premier if Mr. Coulter is now on leave of absence, when did he request the leave of absence and for how long is the leave of absence for?

Hon. A.E. Blakeney (Premier): — Yes. The answer is yes, he is on leave of absence. I do not recall now the precise date but it would be sometime in February and he will be on leave of absence until approximately the end of this month.

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Premier, I would like to follow that up with a supplementary. This is getting ridiculous. Every time there is an election in the Dominion of Canada . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Ask the question.

Mr. MacDonald: — I'll ask the question, Mr. Speaker. Every time there is an election in the Dominion of Canada, in any province in Canada, the Saskatchewan civil servants are given a leave of absence to travel and organize for the NDP across this country. I would like to ask the Premier, how many other political hacks and political organizers, hired by the NDP and buried within the civil service have been given a leave of absence to campaign in the Province of Alberta on behalf of the NDP?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — Number two, how many civil servants in the Province of Saskatchewan will be given a leave of absence when the Premier decides to call a Saskatchewan election? How many of these civil servants will be out after being paid by the taxpayers' money and will they be campaigning in every constituency in the province on behalf of NDP candidates? Will this count as election expenses on behalf of the NDP because I think it is the most sinful political organizing that has ever gone on in the Dominion of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, to answer the questions which the Hon. Member properly characterized as ridiculous, I will say as follows: First with respect to the question as to whether any other political hacks are campaigning in Alberta, I am aware of no political hacks who are campaigning in Alberta, none whatever.

With respect to which members of the public service will be granted leave of absence, I obviously, cannot state now which members of the public service may be granted leave of absence. I have no idea which ones may apply. I can see that an employee of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office may apply. A person by the name of Ryan, who, I understand, could be a candidate for the Liberal Party, I am unable to state whether he will be campaigning in every constituency of this province. But he will be entitled to leave of absence as other people will be entitled to leave of absence. And I may say that the fact that they are taking leave of absence will be a sharp departure from the practice of the previous Government where their Executive Assistants and other persons campaigned during the campaign but did not take leave of absence.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Regina City Hall

Mr. E.C. Malone (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Wood). In view of the fact that the construction has now commenced on the new Regina City Hall my question to the Minister is: Have you, as yet, received a request from the city for a grant pursuant to the Community Capital Fund and if so, how much was requested and has the grant been approved? I am bearing in mind the Minister's letter to me which he kindly sent, it was dated February 11th, 1975 (a copy) and at that time no application had been made. I am wondering if the application has now been made?

Hon. E.I. Wood (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I have to say that in regard to figures if you wish to get the quotations on this you will have to put the question on the Order Paper because I don't carry those figures in my mind. I'm sorry. I do think that an application has been made and it is before the Committee at the present time. We have a Committee set up of civil servants of our different departments who deal with this - this is where it is as I recall at the present time. I can't give you any figures because I don't have them.

Mr. Malone: — A supplementary question then. Could you tell me whether or not the application has been approved and when it was received by the Committee and perhaps you could tell me who is on that Committee as well?

Mr. Wood: — I think that's a clear indication that if you wish an explicit answer on these questions they should be made on the normal route of the Order Paper. I can't give you the names of the people on the Committee and I can't tell you when

this application was received. I don't believe it has been approved, as I said earlier. I said it was before the Committee. It has not come to my knowledge that it has been approved.

Leaves of Absence

Mr. T.M. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Premier on the subject regarding leaves of absence.

Mr. Ryan, as everyone knows, is a candidate for the Liberal Party in the election. Does the Premier see no difference between a candidate applying for a leave of absence in the election and a civil servant who is not a candidate applying for a leave of absence in the election?

Mr. Blakeney: — The answer is Yes, I do see a difference. I think that there is a clear distinction to be drawn between persons who offer their names as candidates, but I don't think the distinction is so clear that persons who are not candidates should be able to apply for leave of absence, vacation leave or the like. They will then have to be dealt with as the applications are made. I think that it is not in any way improper for persons to seek leaves of absence to pursue things which they wish to pursue on a personal basis and one of those may indeed be campaigning in an election.

Reduction in Provincial Resource Taxation

Mr. J.G. Richards (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, will the House permit a fourth question?

Mr. Speaker, I should like to address the question to the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow). In speaking to the Ukrainian Business and Professional Men's Club in Saskatoon, the Attorney General made the following quotation:

The windfall profits of the last several years have given them (meaning the oil companies) more than a reasonable rate of return on their investments.

I would entirely agree with the Attorney General's analysis.

The quite obvious question is: How does the Attorney General rationalize that piece of astute analysis with the recent announcements of incentives to the oil industry which involve a reduction in provincial resource taxation?

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I rationalize that very simply because to the best of my understanding, those reductions are designed basically for exploration, and exploration activity. We have always maintained the position that with respect to Bill 42 the return to the oil companies is a reasonable return plus the exploration incentives and with Bill 42 the return to the province is equally reasonable. I see no inconsistency in that statement.

Mr. Richards: — It is fair to conclude from your statement that you believe that the windfall increases in revenue in the last

several years do mean that at this moment the oil companies are earning more than they should, that you would disagree with the statement made by the Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Cowley) that the oil companies are earning in 'the right ball park,' to use his expression. And that you do believe that much more needs to be done before the people of Canada, and Saskatchewan in particular, can say that they are getting fair returns from their resources. We cannot rest content and satisfied to the fact . . .

Mr. Speaker: — We cannot have debate on the question.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I would simply answer this, that the quote I think is taken somewhat out of context inasmuch as I said that when Bill 42 was implemented in December of 1973, what it did was to capture that very dramatic increase of approximately \$4 a barrel, which is now about \$11 or \$12 a barrel, we thought basically to the owners of the resource, the people of the Province of Saskatchewan. I support that policy of Bill 42 because I think that was a windfall and I think those profits should come to the people of the Province of Saskatchewan. Unlike my friends opposite who would do away with Bill, 42 and give the millions of dollars to the oil companies, I don't support that, it is within that context that I made those comments with respect to the windfall profits.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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, and the proposed amendment thereto by Mr. Malone (Regina Lakeview).

Mr. J.A. Pepper (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to have the opportunity to participate in this Budget Debate.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Hon. Minister of Finance for bringing in this budget of fulfilment. I congratulate this Government, Mr. Speaker, for again showing leadership and foresight in proposing a budget which recognizes the potential of this great province and its people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — This budget, Mr. Speaker, climaxes the completion of a four-year term of office by this New Democratic Government which is committed to the growth and development of Saskatchewan. We have fulfilled our commitment, we have honoured our pledge to bring forward a New Deal for People and I have every confidence that the people of Saskatchewan will wholeheartedly endorse the budgetary proposals contained in this latest 'blueprint for progress'.

Saskatchewan's economy is experiencing unparalleled buoyancy. By any economic yardstick, gains are being recorded and growth is taking place. This is not coincidence, we are not riding

the coattails of any national or international trend, rather, quite the contrary. At a time when the national economy fights with recession and unparalleled inflation, Saskatchewan stands out as an oasis in the desert of national economic uncertainty.

Our population is increasing, our unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada, our farm cash receipts stand at a record \$2 billion, net farm income is up over 50 per cent, personal incomes are up by 19 per cent, manufacturing is up by 74 per cent, housing starts are up by 20 per cent, retail trade is up and construction increased by 14 per cent as well. Saskatchewan's growth and development has been remarkable in the past four years but I am sure not even the Liberals will claim that it has all been coincidental.

Mr. Speaker, the economic and social growth of Saskatchewan which has been recorded in the past four years is directly the result of positive policies and programs of this New Democratic Government. My colleague says this budget is one of fulfilment. I agree with that assessment, Mr. Speaker, however, I take it a step further by noting the fact that this Government is not content to stand pat. We are not content to rest on our accomplishments but rather we choose to continue working towards those goals which bring us closer to the type of society in which each man, woman and child will be able to experience a true fulfilment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — I fully support this budget and am confident that its provisions will enable us, Mr. Speaker, to close the gap of economic and social disparity which is being experienced in some quarters today.

A moment ago I noted the fact that Saskatchewan's economy is working in an opposite direction to most other economies which are, and have been engulfed by that wave of recession and uncertainty which asserted itself in recent months.

We have heard many federal politicians tell us that there is nothing that can be done as inflation is an international problem and must be dealt with on that level. We have been told to accept inflation and hope for the best. I am glad, Mr. Speaker, this New Democratic Government has not accepted this narrow argument. I am pleased that our Government has recognized the role it can play and is prepared to do something about it.

For the fourth year in a row we have brought in a balanced budget, which reflects the commitment we have for this great province and its people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — I was rather disappointed in the reaction of the Leader of the Opposition . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — . . . when he accused us of not doing enough. I recognize

his role to object and oppose. However, one would think that there would come a time when even he, Mr. Speaker, would end his preoccupation with criticism and condemnation. We never hear what they would do if they were the Government. We're never told in the specifics what is wrong with our programs and policies but rather we continually hear the same tired arguments, Mr. Speaker, from the same tired old party.

This is a very responsible budget and will have a very positive and dynamic impact on our economy. For our farmers, our senior citizens, for our northern residents and for the young, there is something appealing in this budget for all of them.

I commend the Government for establishing a Provincial Senior Citizens Council and a Senior Citizens Branch within the Department of Social Services. I congratulate this Government for recognizing the unique and demanding financial position our senior citizens are in by increasing their monthly guaranteed income. Community Social Service Grants, \$1.2 million more for the elderly and the commitment to work towards a chiropody program, again reflects our concern and commitment to the senior citizens of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — In Health, Mr. Speaker, we continue to 'show the way.'

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — And have restored this province to the position of leadership it held prior to 1964.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — The establishment of the continent's first Prescription Drug program, an expanded and improved Denticare program for our children, more money for alcohol education and the institution of the SAIL program indicates and shows clearly, Mr. Speaker, that we are the leaders in health care and will continue to work towards other new programs and policies for our people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — I also wish, Mr. Speaker, to comment briefly on Education. If there was one area which needed immediate and direct assistance when we assumed office, it was in this field. The former administration had failed miserably to build a positive education system in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — And we inherited a system fraught with uncertainty and despair. Costs were rising, teachers and trustees were at odds and our taxpayers were being increasingly burdened with runaway taxation for school purposes. We have come a long way in lessening these problems and we have in four short years

adjusted the course and now are heading into the future with confidence and enthusiasm.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — I congratulate this Government for increasing operating grants by \$26.2 million. We are also proposing a \$2.9 million increase in capital grants. Operating grants for our universities are up over 25 per cent and our Student Bursary and Loans program has been extended greater funding as well.

Our Community College program will be fully operational in the current year. Library Assistance has been expanded greatly.

I wish to comment with respect to Housing and Economic Development. At a time when every other province in Canada is going through a construction recession with varying degrees of decline in house building being recorded, it is encouraging, Mr. Speaker, to note the progress recorded in Saskatchewan as a sharp contrast to the national trend.

I am pleased to note an increased budget for our Housing Corporation along with our expanded involvement in the Senior Citizens Home Repair program and the House-Building Assistance grants as well.

Mr. Speaker, in general economic development terms, Saskatchewan is continuing to show growth and confidence. Since assuming office our work force has increased by over 23,000 people. In the past two years we have created 16,000 new jobs. Now, that might not stand up with the 80,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals promised for four years, but I am confident that the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, would rather have 16,000 real jobs than 80,000 empty promises.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — Another example of leadership by this Government is found when we examine our record of achievement in agriculture, our number one industry. I congratulate our Government for continuing to extend a very high priority to this fundamentally important industry and I congratulate our very able Minister of Agriculture for continuing to show the type of leadership which is enabling our family farmers to enjoy unparalleled security and optimism.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — FarmStart is an example of this leadership, Mr. Speaker. Since its inception this program has assisted over 2,000 farmers and over half of these are new farmers under the age of 24 years. This year another 1,000 will participate in this program which again is receiving additional funding.

The Land Bank as well continues to be the envy of other provinces and states. Over 1,200 parcels of land have been purchased since 1972 and this program has enabled over 200 new farmers, Mr. Speaker, to take up this way of life. And, despite the expensive propaganda campaigns by the Liberal Party opposite, Mr. Speaker, to discredit and to distort this program the Land Bank is working, it is accepted and it is doing its job to

stabilize the farming population base of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — Mr. Speaker, the 42 per cent increase in funds for agriculture as reflected in this budget will also enable us to expand and improve any other important agricultural initiatives such as Crop Insurance and the Prairie Farm Machinery Institute.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to commend this Government for its positive response to assisting local governments. We are proposing for the current fiscal year \$12.8 million to be allocated to urban assistance programs in addition to the \$47 million already set aside in the Community Capital Fund. By extending per capita grants to organized hamlets, providing \$3.1 million for Police Service Grants and increasing our municipal assistance for sewer and water by over 300 per cent, I say, Mr. Speaker, we most certainly can not be discredited for not showing on the local government level.

Obviously these expanded programs could not have been proposed had we not been able to take better advantage of the situation relating to resource development. One of the major commitments of our party in 1971, Mr. Speaker, was to end the resource giveaway and to ensure that the Saskatchewan public got the fullest benefit possible as a result of the development of our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — One only has to study our oil and potash taxation positions to reflect on the gains we have recorded.

We have done much with that added revenue and have succeeded in attacking many of the social and economic problems which in the past had restricted our growth and development. There are still issues which must be resolved; however, I would hope that in the near future the Federal Government will recognize our constitutional rights, Mr. Speaker, with respect to natural resources. Because only then will we be able to enjoy the fullest benefit of our resource development. In three short years, resource revenues in Saskatchewan have been increased by over \$34 million and this has enabled us to more fully develop many of the programs and policies which this Government has developed since assuming office.

An Hon. Member: — — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — The future of Saskatchewan is filled with confidence. We recognize the fact that today's buoyancy is subject to change. We recognize the fact that when agriculture is healthy, so are other segments of the economy; however, this Government is not prepared to stand by to wait for any downward trend to occur.

We believe that the future of Saskatchewan rests with a healthy rural sector. We are alarmed by the tremendous urbanization which is taking place. We do not buy the argument that this trend is inevitable. The retention of a viable and vibrant rural sector is the cornerstone of our initiative.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is indeed one of fulfilment. I ask you to compare our achievement alongside the New Deal for People

and I say it is clear that this Government can be trusted to get the job well done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepper: — The past four years have been busy years. New directions have been developed, now programs have been launched and new policies have been articulated.

This Government has clearly recognized the uniqueness of this province and has been able fully to capitalize on its strengths while successfully coping with its weaknesses.

So, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate this Government for the job it has done. I congratulate the Minister of Finance for bringing in our Government's fourth balanced budget and on behalf of the Weyburn constituency, Mr. Speaker, I say "Thank you" for showing leadership and determination to improve the standard of living and quality of life for all our people.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the motion and oppose the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. A. Oliver (Shaunavon): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak in support of the budget and to congratulate my good friend, Wes Robbins, the Minister of Finance. We are very fortunate to have such a capable and experienced man handling our finances. I know how diligently he has worked for the people of this province spending endless hours making sure that the taxpayer gets the most for his tax dollar.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out some of the highlights of the budget and the effect they will have on the people in the Shaunavon constituency.

In the field of agriculture, we've helped through FarmStart loans. In the Swift Current area loans were made to 272 farmers whose average age was less than 24 years. These loans are welcomed by these young farmers and they appreciate getting them at low interest rates and appreciate the fact that part of the loan is forgivable. Another program in agriculture is the very successful Land Bank program. It has established many young farmers who would never have been able to get started otherwise. Another program that has helped our farmers is the Crop Insurance program. We have extended crop insurance and even at that we have had an increase in the coverage. In 1971 only 8,000 farmers were covered by crop insurance and it is estimated that 38,000 will be covered this year. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's 30,000 more farmers covered than there were under the Liberals.

Nearly one third of a million dollars in hog stabilization payments were made to farmers in my constituency. Cash advances were taken out by many farmers under the Cow-Calf Cash Advance program where the province pays the interest rate until the farmer sells the calves.

This budget provides an increase to the Department of Agriculture of 263 per cent over the last Liberal budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Mr. Speaker, we have assisted the taxpayer by increasing the Property Improvement Grants to \$330 for farmers, \$220 for businessmen and \$200 for the householder. We have cut \$100 off the provincial income tax. If you don't pay any federal tax, you won't pay any provincial tax. Mr. Speaker, we have provided an increase of 212 per cent in direct relief to taxpayers since we came into office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Capital Grants will be extended to hamlets this year and the Urban Assistance Grants are increased by nearly \$13 million. We have provided an increase in grants to cities, towns and villages of 1,600 per cent since 1971 and that included only one-fifth of the Community Capital Fund. And the Liberals say we're doing nothing!

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — This budget provides increased grants to school boards of \$26 million. It provided a guaranteed income for senior citizens of \$224 for singles and \$425 per month for married couples plus increases in the Senior Citizens Home Repair Grants and Community Social Services Grants such as Meals-on-Wheels.

Mr. Speaker, by careful management of taxpayers' money we have been able to do some important things in all Saskatchewan. In my own riding we have assisted practically every community by giving them thousands of dollars in winter works programs and through Operation Open Roads and Operation MainStreet. We have rebuilt parts of Highways 21 and 46 and have taken into the highway system the Robsart grid road and the Val Marie-Mankota grid. A new hospital is to be built in Climax as well as a new store and cafe in Cypress Hills Provincial Park.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about our very successful Land Bank. Everybody knows that the Land Bank program is very successful in the south west. Now many of these young men would never have gotten a start in farming if the Land Bank program had not been in place. And especially so at a time when land and machinery prices are at an all-time high. There's no way these fellows would have been able to establish themselves on a farm if this program had not been put in place by the New Democrats. They have no qualms about renting. They know they could not purchase land and machinery without going so deeply into debt that it would be many years, if ever, before they would be the owners.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that there is pride in ownership. But, Mr. Speaker, the price tag on that pride is very costly. An example of the high cost of ownership is the case of a young farmer who came to me to find out the procedure by which a farmer could sell his land to the Land Bank Commission.

This involved a half section owned by an elderly farmer who wanted to retire. The young farmer had gone to both the bank and the Farm Credit Corporation to borrow the \$32,000 to buy the land.

When this young fellow was told that the interest rate over the lifetime of the loan, which is 28 years, would amount to over \$60,000, he rejected the idea of buying. I couldn't believe that a loan of \$32,000 would mean paying back \$92,000. I contacted the Farm Credit Corporation and found that my young friend was right. At the present, the Farm Credit Corporation interest rate of 9 1/4 per cent with a repayment rate of \$101 per \$1,000 borrowed for the standard term of 28 years, one would pay back almost three times what he had borrowed. A very high price, Mr. Speaker, for the pride of ownership.

If Liberals really believed that ownership is so vital to the very existence of human life, then why are so many of their friends in the business of renting out houses, construction equipment and even large sleek station wagons to veterinarians? They went so far as to run an ad concerning ownership of land which, Mr. Speaker, was an absolute insult to our pioneers. You never really own land until you have clear title. Most of the homesteads were mortgaged to loan companies to buy machinery, lumber, or seed. Often there were several mortgages, such as a first mortgage to a loan company for machinery and a second mortgage to lumber yards for building materials. Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a rip-off it was by the free enterprising loan companies who took advantage of our homesteaders who couldn't shop around from bank to bank to see where they could borrow money cheaper or on better terms.

The loan companies had our settlers by the throat, for they were the only sources of finance. If the settlers were late in making their payments, the loan company threatened them with foreclosure. The settlers were bullied or coerced into refinancing at higher rates and were required to put up more security. How many settlers ever got clear title before they sold to someone else? It took some 40 years before they got clear title to their land. Each time they expanded, either their land base or livestock herd, machinery or buildings, the land was used as security.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan according to the statistics available, that in 1961 25,227 farms or 26.9 per cent of all Saskatchewan farms were mortgaged. Mr. Speaker, in 1971 which is the latest date for which figures are available, this rose to 31,103 or 40.4 per cent of all the farms in Saskatchewan were mortgaged. In my own area according to the 1961 figures there were 711 farms mortgaged or 23.9 per cent. In 1971 this jumped to 1,018 farms or 43 per cent of total farms in the area south of No. 1 and west of No. 4 were mortgaged.

Since this 10-year period from 1961 to 1971 was a time of poor crops, especially so in the southwest and the last third was a time of economic depression clear across the province, there weren't as many land transactions as there have been since 1971. The price of land has increased in the past three years which would require more security. Therefore it is quite feasible that this percentage could rise now to 50 per cent. In other words, about half the farmers of Saskatchewan do not now own their farms even though they have this wonderful pride of ownership. When you buy land on credit, you have what may be termed 'security of tenure', at least that is true until you can't make the payment, then you lose that tenure through foreclosure.

It is obvious that those 1,000 farmers now renting from the Land Bank were not hung up over the technicality of ownership. Many young farmers saw the advantage in renting and were in stiff competition with each other for the lease. These fellows aren't going to be stampeded by the Liberal scare tactics of state farms. They won't be stampeded into buying the land when their five-year lease is up. Liberals have used the scare tactics of calling such programs as the medicare program, state medicine a form of communism. They say the Matador Co-op Farm which was purchased by the Land Bank is a state farm. This farm is leased back to a co-operative which provides a way of life for 10 families which is in direct contrast, Mr. Speaker, to the purpose of the Beechy farm which was bought by three individuals and providing a home for only one of them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Mr. Speaker, what is the difference between the Matador farm, which Liberals call a state farm because the province owns the land and a private corporation like the Cypress Cattle Company which is a family corporation leasing all but a few quarters of land from the province? Are the Liberals calling those ranches of which Crown lease comprises about 90 per cent of the holdings, state ranches and communistic in nature? If they are, they have a war on with the ranchers, and rightly so.

The important thing to remember is that farmers are not forced to sell the land to the Land Bank nor are they forced into applying for the lease. It is totally voluntary. The Land Bank program is a success in accomplishing its designed purpose to get more young farmers back on the farms and slow down the trend to ever larger and larger farms. The Liberals have pledged to destroy the Land Bank. They say they would buy land from older farmers and sell to younger farmers. It would be interesting to see how the allocations would be made. It would be interesting to see the criteria the Liberals would use. Mr. Speaker, the only criterion they have ever used is one of political patronage. A young farmer would never stand a chance against the local Liberal Association president's son or the nephew of that large land baron. He who pays the piper calls the tune.

Mr. Speaker, never before in the history of this province has so much wealth filtered down through our economic or financial system to the fellow at the bottom. This is the philosophy of New Democrats, that all the people, not just a few, but all, have an equal right to share in the wealth of this province. Never before have our rural communities had such pressures exerted on them. They face rail line abandonment, inland terminals, and freight rate inequities to name a few. These will have drastic effects on the life styles of rural Saskatchewan.

The next election will be a crucial one for the people of Saskatchewan. They must decide whether they want to continue to enjoy the steady improvement of their way of life as they have in the last four years, or to gamble on one roll of the dice on the off chance that they may catch a few crumbs that fall from the corporate banquet table hosted by the operators of that great ominous green machine and at the expense of the common people.

March 19, 1975

The people must decide if they want to preserve our oil, our potash and our forests for future generations or return them to the jackals of the corporate jingle of the late 1960s.

Mr. Speaker, this green machine which I referred to earlier is not green because of any team colours, it is green because it is money-owned and money-operated. This ominous machine has set a course of destruction and in its path are small farms, small towns, such things as the Agriculture Machinery Board, and the Machinery Testing Institute. Mr. Speaker, they destroyed it once and they will do it again because they respond only to money and are deaf to the pleas of the common people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the people of the Shaunavon constituency in this Government. I can only pledge that I will continue to represent them in a just and fair manner, as is humanly possible. I will support the motion of the Minister of Finance and oppose the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. A. Taylor (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, let me say at the very outset that I will be, with enthusiasm, supporting the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance. This budget is a clear indication of our government's commitment to the fulfilment of its promises. More than this, it is a demonstration of our emphasis on the needs of people. We promised the people of Saskatchewan a new deal and we have provided a New Deal for People. We have in this budget gone beyond those things promised in 1971.

What a difference, Mr. Speaker, between the New Deal and the raw deal given to the people of Saskatchewan in Liberal years of 1964-71.

During the Throne Speech Debate I had the opportunity of reporting fairly extensively on the activities of my department in the past year. At this time I should like to speak on just two or three of the areas of our departmental work.

The major financial program administered by Social Services is, of course, the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. I am pleased to point out, Mr. Speaker, that expenditures under this plan will decrease in the coming year. We have been able to do this, not by operating a punitive system which penalizes the needy, but by the introduction of programs and policies that have provided an alternative to public assistance. We have expanded training on the job, we have introduced an employment support program, work preparation centres, and a work activity program.

We have also been able to involve some of our clients under the Winter Works program. The Liberal answer to poverty has been to attack the poor and the needy. Our policy has been to attack poverty itself. Instead of talking of welfare bums and attempting to reinforce prejudices which might exist in society against those who are disadvantaged, and setting one segment of society against the other, we have chosen to speak out on behalf of the poor and the disadvantaged. I want to say very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that this Government will continue to do so.

We will not be deterred by an Opposition that attempts to make profit for itself out of the sufferings of the unfortunate. Unlike the Members opposite we will not use the poor as a whipping boy to protect the failure of an economic system that continues to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that we had been able to reduce expenditures under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan without attacking the dignity and well-being of those in financial difficulty. Let me give some examples of what I mean.

In just over three years, we have increased payments to individual families by over 72 per cent, not including increased payments for rent and utilities. Now by Liberal theory this should have swelled the public assistance rolls, but instead, look at what has actually happened. In January of 1972, there were 61,888 persons receiving public assistance in Saskatchewan. In September of 1973 the number had dropped to 51,298, in September of 1974 the number dropped again to 43,758. By January of this year the latest month for which I have statistics, the number of people receiving public assistance had dropped again to 40,727. This means a reduction from January of 1972 to January 1975, three years, of 21,161 persons.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — Added to this, Mr. Speaker, should be the figure of 1,065, the number of mentally retarded persons transferred from health to social services, which gives us in fact a total reduction of 22,226. Mr. Speaker, the Opposition sometimes prefers us to talk about the individuals and sometimes about the cases. If they want to speak about the cases, there has been a reduction since January 1972 to January of 1975 of 3,829 cases, plus those who were transferred that I mentioned earlier for a total reduction in case load of 4,894 in just three years.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, that in every year of this New Democratic Government, the number of people dependent on public assistance has decreased. It is interesting to note the contrast.

During the Liberal years since the introduction of the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan in 1966-67, the number of people on assistance increased from 40,546 to 52,833. The difference, Mr. Speaker, could only be attributed to one of attitude. While the Liberals attacked the poor, provided meagre allowances, and provided no alternatives, creating dependency, we greatly increased the level of assistance, provided alternatives and opportunities, and reduced dependency by assisting people back into the work force. I leave it to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the people of Saskatchewan to decide which is the better way to go.

I should like now to turn to the question of assistance to senior citizens. I sat here listening with amazement to some of the Members of the Opposition speak on this issue. If the topic and needs of senior citizens were not so serious, the comments from the opposite benches would be laughable. How can anyone to your left, Mr. Speaker, keep a straight face in such a debate? Do they not recognize that senior citizens do indeed have long memories. Our senior citizens will not forget the treatment they received from the Liberal Party during Saskatchewan's seven years of pestilence.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there is a saying that Samson defeated his opponent with the jawbone of an ass - it seems to me there are Opposition Members who still believe this works.

If I were to choose a text, Mr. Speaker, for the Opposition on this issue, I would really have to choose two texts. The first for the senior members of their caucus. I'll refer them to Mathew Chapter 23 and verse 25. They can read it for themselves, I think they can manage that. The second for the new Members opposite, and I won't give the reference here, I'll quote it because the Member for Lumsden (Mr. Lane), the ex-Member probably, in particular has trouble with references and figures. It would be, "Forgive them for they know not what they do."

Mr. Speaker, this Government is proud of its record in working with senior citizens. I might say that we will be providing more assistance to senior citizens in one year than the Liberal Party provided in seven years in office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — The Leader of the Opposition has again, probably deliberately, attempted to mislead or misinform the public of Saskatchewan. He speaks of a \$14 increase. The Budget Speech very specifically says \$20 for single pensioners and \$36 for couples above the Federal Guaranteed Income Supplement level. These specific figures are mentioned because we could not be aware at the time of printing and preparing the speech of what the Federal Guaranteed Income Supplement would be. Indeed, in my office, I received notification only on March 17.

What our budget means is that if escalation continues at its present rate and GIS continues to escalate as it should, our guarantee will be in July of this year \$235 for single people and \$446 for couples. If the escalation continues to October at the present rate, the guarantee will be \$241 for single people and \$457 for couples.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — I might point out also, Mr. Speaker, that the figures in the Budget Speech even at the present time, will exceed the guarantee levels of Manitoba, Alberta, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It is within a very few dollars of the amounts in British Columbia and Ontario.

We might ask, Mr. Speaker, where was the Liberal action of 1964-71, to match their words of today. In April 1971 the Federal Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement was \$135 for a single person and \$255 for a couple. If Liberals really have this burning concern, where were they in April 1971 when they presented their last budget. And it was, Mr. Speaker, their last.

Let's compare the record, although in fact there is really very little comparison. In the last full year of the Liberal misadministration from 1970-71, they provided \$4 million for senior citizens under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. They provided \$453,000 for construction grants to Special Care Homes. They provided about \$1 million through the Homeowner Grant.

This produced a figure of about \$5.5 million. Not bad! But in return for this generosity, they charged senior citizens about \$2 million in deterrent fees if they were foolish enough to get sick and enter a hospital or call on a doctor. They also collected from senior citizens about \$3 million in medical and hospital premiums, so I suppose they could afford to pay the deterrent fees. This means that senior citizens in 1970-71 under the Liberal Administration, just four years ago, received from the largesse of the Liberals a net amount of about half a million dollars.

Now let's look at this budget. No deterrent fees or medical premiums . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — Not \$5 million; Saskatchewan Assistance Plan for senior citizens \$10 million; grants to patients in nursing homes \$8.1 million . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — . . . Construction grants for nursing homes \$1.8 million; Community Services \$4 million; Senior Citizens Home Repair \$4.6 million . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — Low rental housing for senior citizens \$1.2 million; the pension supplement \$3.2 million — on a full year, incidentally, when everyone is enrolled that would amount to \$7 million; Property Improvement Grant \$4 million. Without including such programs as SAIL, hearing aids, the drug program, home care and any others, this totals \$41.9 million.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I think this is a New Deal for the senior citizens of Saskatchewan. Half a million dollars in assistance from a Liberal Government, compared to \$41.9 million from the New Democratic Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — You might also want to note, Mr. Speaker, that during our period of office, 1,095 new special-care beds have been approved with more under construction. We have virtually doubled the number of Level IV beds in the last three and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to choose senior citizen's care as an election issue, I will gladly go to the people on our record.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — The people of Saskatchewan, and in particular our senior citizens, will find it difficult to place much faith in

Liberal promises when they remember the record. In 1964 - and the Liberals are great promisers - they promised a drug plan; and they delivered deterrent fees. They promised a program to assist young men get into farming; and they provided support for the infamous LIFT program and a stabilization program that would have stabilized our farmers' income at the poverty level.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — I should like to say, Mr. Speaker, that as a government, we have been alarmed at the rising costs to residents in nursing homes. As you will know, each nursing home establishes its own rates. The board of the home decides what services it will offer, beyond the minimum requirement established by the Department of Social Services. Our financial inspection ensures that the home operates as a non-profit organization. We have attempted to ensure, through a system of grants to patients, that the nursing component of the care is provided for. I am pleased to announce that, for the coming year, the Provincial Government will provide a subsidy to residents of special-care homes of \$3.50 per day for residents in Level II and \$10.50 per day for Level III.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — In some homes this may well mean a reduction in cost to the resident; in some it will maintain the present cost, and in others it may permit the cost to increase.

Mr. Speaker, when you remember that in 1970-71 the Liberal Government provided no subsidy to residents in special-care homes, I am sure that you will agree that these people have, indeed, received a New Deal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words also about Core Services Administration. I had the opportunity during the Throne Speech Debate to report fully on the work of this agency. Its work has been well received by both handicapped groups themselves and groups working with the handicapped.

I am happy to announce, at this time, some further advances and new programs. \$67,000 will be provided for a program emphasizing prevention of mental retardation. Dr. Zaleski, at the Alvin Buckwold Centre in Saskatoon, has been doing important work in this area. This money will assist in putting his operation on a more consistent funding basis, as well as beginning to develop ways of bringing about practical application of the work that he is doing.

Additional funding will also be made available for workshops for handicapped people. This should assist with increasing staffing costs and should provide additional incentives for clients. \$60,000 is also provided in the budget for a telecommunication program for the handicapped. This program will provide specialized telephone equipment to handicapped people at the price of a standard telephone. Over half a million dollars has been made available in the budget of the Department of Highways, for transportation assistance for the handicapped.

The Department of Health has introduced a program called SAIL - Saskatchewan Aid to Independent Living, to provide for prosthetic appliances, wheelchairs, etc. to these same citizens.

In order to upgrade our own staff and provide a better quality of service to our handicapped people, \$92,000 will be provided as training bursaries for care staff at Valley View Centre.

Funds are also available, Mr. Speaker, to assist with the training of volunteer workers and workers in sheltered workshops and developmental centres.

Mr. Speaker, the handicapped citizens of Saskatchewan have received a New Deal from this Government. We intend to continue this New Deal and to work to assist our handicapped citizens to feel and be a part of the mainstream of society.

Mr. Speaker, I should also like to say a few words about Corrections. The fine option program which was just recently introduced is one of the most important advances in the field of corrections in the whole country. It is a program which will attempt to provide an alternative to incarceration for those unable to pay their fines. For too long the Criminal Justice System has treated the rich and the poor in a different manner. I suggest the words democracy and freedom are devoid of meaning unless equality of justice is available to all.

In the past, two men might be arrested, tried and convicted of the same crime; both might be assessed the same financial penalty in the form of a fine. Up until this point both might have been treated fully equally before the law but here the similarity ends. One man was earning a reasonable income, paid the fine, went home; the other was in a low-income group and could not afford the fine and because he could not afford it he went to jail. As a short-term prisoner, probably 30 or 60 days, he could gain no advantage from trades training. Instead he may well end up losing his job and going on public assistance. The fine option program is the first attempt in Canada to overcome this travesty of justice.

Approximately 2,000 individuals have been incarcerated in Saskatchewan each year for non-payment of fines. Through the fine option program these people will now have the opportunity of working off their fine. All Members have already been supplied with information on this program so I shall not go into greater detail at this time.

I am happy to announce, however, that the program is now operating in the cities of Regina, Prince Albert and 15 Indian Reserves and 10 towns. The response has been most encouraging. We anticipate its operation on all Indian Reserves, all cities and each town where court sittings are held, for a possible total of nearly 200 agencies. This program is most beneficial to young people, low-income wage earners and single parents. Young people will not have their education jeopardized by incarceration for inability to pay a fine. The low wage earner will be able to continue with employment; the single parents will not have to leave a family to the care of the community. The social benefits of the program are immeasurable, and in the long run, are perhaps more important than the money saved by this alternative to incarceration.

March 19, 1975

We are also moving forward in other fields. In the field of probation we have concluded an agreement with the Federal Government and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians to establish native probation officer projects for Indian Reserves throughout Saskatchewan. Also in the field of probation we will establish within one region of the department a program of volunteer probation officers.

Mr. Speaker, in a number of jurisdictions of this world, volunteer probation officers are used extensively. We look forward to this concept and this experiment in Saskatchewan.

A farm life experience program was established in the fall of 1974 as a pilot project and this will be continued.

In recognition of the particular difficulties faced by our native people regarding the Correctional System, funds will be provided to the Native Project Society in Regina to assist them in their work.

During this coming summer we will also establish a Challenge Program in an attempt to divert 16 and 17-year old offenders from Correctional Centres into a wilderness camp setting. The program will last for four months following which evaluation will decide whether or not it should become a year-round program.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I speak on behalf of my whole constituency when I say that we are indeed proud of the budget that has been presented by the Minister of Finance. If the Opposition is, indeed, going to oppose this budget I want the people of Kindersley to know that they are opposing increased school grants; increased Property Improvement Grants, the expansion and the extension of the dental care program for children, the per capita grants and the community capital fund, highway hard-surfacing program that has extended hard-surfaced roads into small communities. I want the people of my constituency to know that the choice is simple - a return to the inactivity of seven years of Liberal misadministration, or a continuation of the dynamic program and New Deal that was promised and delivered to the people of Saskatchewan by the New Democratic Party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the budget presented by my colleague will indicate to all the people of Saskatchewan that we intend to continue the course set in 1971, a course which places the well-being of people over the welfare of corporations. I will be proud to support the budget and oppose the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. T.M. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, it is my opportunity today to participate in this debate and first, I should like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition in his dissertation on Monday afternoon . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — . . . where he very eloquently put forward to the people of Saskatchewan why this is a budget of missed opportunities. I say missed opportunities, Mr. Speaker, because regardless of what the Members opposite say, Saskatchewan today is missing many, many opportunities in the field of resource development and in the field of economics, where jobs could be created for the people of Saskatchewan.

Before that, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few short comments on the speech just made by the Member for Kindersley (Mr. Taylor). The Member for Kindersley by his own statistics shows that the party opposite is still the party of welfare in this country.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — In 1971 the Minister said 51,000 people were on welfare, that was the first year of NDP Government. In 1972 he said 60,000 were on welfare in the Province of Saskatchewan, an increase of 9,000 people.

It is interesting to note that the budget for the Department of Social Services - and I admit, Mr. Speaker, that there are some new programs included - but in any event it has gone from \$50.4 million in 1971 to \$137 million in 1975.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, it is also more than coincidence that the first year that the Minister of Social Services is able to show any decrease in the number of people on the welfare program is the year the Family Income Plan came into operation. There is in the family income program, \$24 million appropriated for people who will receive these payments. And it should also be noted that once people have received the payments to the Family Income Plan they will no longer qualify for social welfare. This is a fast way, Mr. Speaker, of taking people off social welfare, you switch it to the Family Income Plan so that you have another program and really in fact we have taken money out of one pocket and put it into the other.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the reason why he is able to give statistics to show that he is reducing the welfare case load in the Province of Saskatchewan is the creation of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. That took all of the cases that existed in northern Saskatchewan out of the Department of Social Services and transferred them to a department of their own. Between the Family Income Plan and the Department of Northern Saskatchewan just about anybody in Saskatchewan could decrease the number of people on the social welfare roll.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, I now want to speak about promises because I have heard a lot about promises in the last few days. I have looked over a number of promises made by my friends opposite and they are very interesting. I want to read just

a few because a party which claims to keep their promises obviously isn't quite acquainted with all of their promises.

I take these quotes from the Leader-Post. First of all, Mr. Speaker, they are documented here and they will be found in the Leader-Post and they will also be found in the NDP program of the New Deal for People, presented in 1971. The first and all-time great one, right on the front page of the New Deal for People, is a provincial producer-controlled marketing board will be put into operation. Well, that one was dispensed with very rapidly.

Then we come to the Premier. The Premier's first promise was on June 1, 1971, that the Government was going to come out with the grants for homeowners being paid directly to the municipalities. We used to hear a lot about that one in the sessions here. Of course the Premier hasn't kept that promise.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we come to a lending agency promised by the Premier on June 1, 1971. "The NDP will establish a Lending Agency to provide long-term capital for small businesses who are not manufacturers or primary producers." Another promise made, another promise broken.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Now, Mr. Speaker, we have quite a few more. We have one from the retiring Member for Touchwood (Mr. Meakes). He said, "We will eliminate waste and mismanagement and partisan political propaganda." Now, that one was a dandy for anyone watching television these days.

And then we have the one from the Premier again, at Melville on June 12, 1971:

Mr. Blakeney said that the only way to fight inflation was to introduce price controls and if elected he would set up a Prices Review Board to protect all consumers from unwarranted price hikes.

Apparently an 11 per cent inflation didn't convince the Premier that it was a bad thing.

We have one from the Mayor - I'm glad to see the Mayor is here. Henry Baker, June 19, 1971, "I will build a bridge to connect the east section of Regina with the University." Now, I haven't run over that bridge as of yet and I don't think anyone else has.

And then we have the Member for Regina North East, on June 22nd, he promised a high school for northeast Regina.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to see who was going to be in the Cabinet because they made most of the promises. John Brockelbank in the Wolseley News, June 17, 1971, at a meeting said, "We will remove all the sales tax from children's clothing." Not only that but he also said that we reduced the automobile insurance rate by 25 per cent.

Well, Mr. Speaker, even the Minister of Finance got into the act because he says and I have the quote, "We are going to take off the tax regarding children's clothing." That was Mr. Robbins the Member for Saskatoon!

We have the one last promise that I should like to bring attention to, it is by the Premier at Assiniboia. He said, "We would include the costs of Level III nursing care under medicare." The Member for Kindersley (Mr. Taylor) today told us what great fellows they were for giving grants for nursing home care, Level III. Well, Mr. Speaker, the cost of that care has gone from about \$350 a month to over \$600 in the past three years. We scarcely need to suggest as to who is better off now that they receive some sort of a grant or whether they were better off previously to that.

I have read only a few of the promises not kept by the Party opposite. Promises made, promises not kept. I can hand you a copy of the New Deal for People, if you would like to read it over or the photostatic copies of press clippings taken from the newspapers at that particular time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a few moments about the budget, because this is a budget of missed opportunities. It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that virtually all of the increased revenue that's coming to the Government in this budget, comes about due to three things. (Inflation has been rampant for the past four years in the Province of Saskatchewan, running this year at something like 11 per cent.)

(1) The high rise in the price of oil throughout the world (it has gone up to \$11 now) is largely due to the Arabs, not due to anything the NDP here did in Saskatchewan; (2) The price of wheat in the last three years has increased due to world wide demand, and (3) Probably the most important one, because the Government received a large amount of revenue from it, was the substantial increase in the world price for potash. Other grains and products in agriculture have shown similar increases. So when the NDP spokesmen say that it is their policy, it is really largely due to a substantial world-wide increase in demand for our natural resources in the Province of Saskatchewan.

I want to talk for a few moments about the population statistics given for the Province of Saskatchewan. Regardless of what the Premier says we have less people today in the Province of Saskatchewan than we did four years ago when he took office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Statistics obtained since the 1971 Census show rural residents of Saskatchewan are still leaving this province. The population of Saskatchewan's rural municipalities in 1971 was at 272,125 according to the last report of the Department of Municipal Affairs. By 1973 this report shows the population of the rural municipalities had dropped to 255,300 or a decrease of 16,825 people or 8 per cent in that three-year period of NDP rule. The NDP have talked about how many more jobs they have created in Saskatchewan. I suspect that they have created more jobs and they have lost a lot of jobs that they don't count.

March 19, 1975

I think that in all likelihood the 300 job loss at Burns has not been taken off the 400 they created somewhere else. If the Government opposite had really created jobs like they say, our population would be substantially larger than it is and it hasn't gone up.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: —I rather suspect that the jobs being cited as being created are an illusion of the Department of Labour in their statistical branch because our population increase doesn't indicate any increase in jobs whatsoever.

I want to talk for a few moments, Mr. Speaker, about the mismanagement that this Government has brought about. I want to quote to the people of Saskatchewan a number of the items regarding mismanagement insofar as the Auditor's Report is concerned. Last year many of the Members here will recall that the Department of Northern Saskatchewan was accused and found severely lacking in any kind of management or overall policy regarding the administration of Northern Saskatchewan. In the Auditor's Report last year when it was discussed here we were assured by the Minister in charge, Mr. Bowerman, that everything was going to be all right. This year we hoped the situation would have improved. I want to quote from the new Auditor's Report received here by the Members approximately two weeks ago.

Members of my staff (this is the Auditor speaking) visited the Buffalo Narrows sub-office at the time the special audit was being conducted and they reviewed the audit program and examined social assistance files on a test basis. The main reason for the overpayments appears to be the failure on the part of the department staff to adhere strictly to the provisions of The Saskatchewan Assistance Act and the regulations thereunder. Preliminary results indicate the total overpayment of benefits at approximately \$580,000 over the period covered by the audit.

I want to talk about what the Auditor said about the hearing aid plan, Mr. Speaker.

On May 3, 1974, a preliminary audit examination revealed that hearing aids valued at \$13,335 were missing and unaccounted for. In my opinion (the Auditor said) the rules and procedures were not adequate to safeguard and control this public property.

Mr. Speaker, the auditor then went on to say this about the Hog Marketing Commission:

In my opinion insufficient preliminary work was done in establishing an adequate accounting system and providing necessary administrative procedures for the Hog Marketing Plan. I recommend that prior to start-up more consideration be given to the accounting requirements for new programs.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that this is a comment by the Auditor on a program the Government refuses to let farmers themselves operate.

These are only a few comments from the Auditor's Report indicating the misuse and mismanagement and incompetence of the Government opposite. This is a Government that thinks, Mr. Speaker, despite this type of incompetence, they are capable of running multimillion dollar businesses such as potash and oil and that they are capable of running the forest industries of this province. It is obvious they are incapable of running the things that they are now trying to run, as has been indicated by the Auditor's Report.

I want to dwell for a very brief time on the uncertainty that exists in the oil industry in our province. I take this article recently carried in the Financial Post of last week. I wish to read what it says, it sums up the present situation in a few words:

This year's meeting of the Canadian Petroleum Association, Saskatchewan Division, was not a festive occasion. A subdued industry sent fewer members than in previous years. Only the Provincial Cabinet turned out with a strong delegation, including the Premier.

I will leave out the next section, Mr. Speaker, for brevity.

Uncertainty is the key word for Saskatchewan's battered oil industry but also for the Government which through its new increases in royalty and its Bill 42 levying a surcharge on oil revenues above a basic wellhead price initiated a new era for the industry. Drilling activity in Saskatchewan this year was down 56 per cent to a total of only 286 well completions, the lowest number of wells drilled in the Province of Saskatchewan in the last 22 years. Land sales dropped from more than \$5 million in 1973 to less than \$4 million in 1974 with \$2.7 million of this having been paid by the Saskatchewan Crown Corporation, SaskOil.

In conclusion the article says:

The damage which has been done in a few months in retrospect appears incredible.

Mr. Speaker, I think that that article itself summarizes the situation that the oil industry is in in Saskatchewan under the NDP.

I want to turn to the Land Bank. There appears to be some dispute between Members on this side and Members on the other side as to what the actual standing of the Land Bank regarding selling land is concerned. Mr. Speaker, I was amazed yesterday to hear two Members on the NDP side say that the farmer has the legal right to buy the land. The word in the lease quoted by both those Members was that the Land Bank Commission may sell the land. The word is 'may'. Now I say to every farmer in the Province of Saskatchewan the word 'may' means that you have no legal binding contract if you went to court to enforce that law.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: —None whatsoever. The word 'may' if the Government opposite changed their mind at any time in the future, or if new people are running that Government, if they change their mind

the farmer has no legal means of being able to say he will be able to buy that land. I looked up the word 'may,' Mr. Speaker, in The Interpretations Act in the Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1965, the word 'may' is defined this way: "as permissive and empowering." It would not stand up in court for one single moment if a farmer went to court to be able to obtain that land.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — This was the word used yesterday by NDP spokesmen, so I accept it and it is the word that is in the lease. So I say to any farmer in the Province of Saskatchewan feeling he has a legal binding contract to be able to buy that land that such does not exist.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say also that there are two other factors in the Land Bank lease that farmers should keep in mind. First the Land Bank Commission determines the price at which it will be sold. I think this in itself is an indication that there is no firm legal reason that a farmer may be able to buy. The farmer has no set price in his contract and the farmer has no legal recourse within a court if he wanted to enforce that contract. All he has is a word of mouth statement by the Government opposite that may be worth nothing in a number of years.

I want to say a few words about the way the Land Bank is being financed. According to information presented to this Assembly the Provincial Government borrowed \$43.8 million from the Canada Pension Plan at an approximate rate of interest of about 7 1/2 per cent. This money of \$43.8 million has in turn been used to buy land for the Saskatchewan Land Bank. The Land Bank in turn receives about 5 3/4 per cent on the investment of land, meaning that the Saskatchewan taxpayer today and I mean taxpayers in all walks of life, all working people, in forests, oil, potash, they are subsidizing land purchases made by the Government for the Land Bank at about 1 3/4 per cent for a period which in all likelihood will be in perpetuity. I say in perpetuity because it is highly unlikely under the present Land Bank system that farmers will be paying back the principal to the Government. This means, Mr. Speaker, and it should, be noted that the Saskatchewan Government is using Canada Pension Plan money which is lent to them at a cheap rate of about 7 1/2 per cent to subsidize the Land Bank. It is to be noted that at the same time other Crown corporations of the Government were paying something in the amount of 9 to 10 per cent for borrowed money. If this money had not been used for the purchase of Land Bank land, it would have been available for other government programs and could have been used to hold down prices to consumers.

I should like to comment on the Crow's Nest Pass rates. The Crow's Nest rates problem outlined by Mr. Lang requires that in regard to Crow's Nest rates the farmers of western Canada are entitled to a discussion and that this discussion should take place. These discussions have been taking place across the Province of Saskatchewan and it is obvious that all farmers of Saskatchewan and indeed, we, of the Liberal Party support the preservation and the keeping of the Crow's Nest rates as presently constituted.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — I think that it is obvious the Crow's Nest rates is a corner stone of economic development for western Canada and therefore should be maintained.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, it is my opinion that farmers of all political persuasions and that local organizations, both municipal and farm organizations desire no change in this statutory rate and I feel that everyone in western Canada should support this position.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, I want to now turn to the last subject I wish to deal with in this debate. The subject of rail line abandonment. The NDP have taken a position of political manoeuvring regarding rail line abandonment in the province. They haven't got a policy and they won't have a policy because they are afraid to have a policy that makes sense in our province. They are more interested in political gain. I therefore want to put forward to the people of Saskatchewan the policy that the Liberal Party will stand for and will continue to stand for, not only now but into the immediate future. It is our pledge, Mr. Speaker, that every farmer should be a maximum of about 25 miles from an elevator with an average of about 15 miles. This is similar to the position taken by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and I believe it is a realistic one. A Liberal Government in the Province of Saskatchewan would make every effort to assist all rural municipalities, towns and cities in presenting the best possible case at public hearings that will be held within the next year to put us in the position of maintaining the most rail line possible and having them put into the permanent network that would be protected to the year 2000. It is unfortunate that the NDP have not taken a realistic position nor wanted to take a realistic position in regard to rail line abandonment, in fact, unwilling to even discuss the situation.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the budget of missed opportunities. As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, it is a budget of missed opportunities because despite the economic progress that we are making in Saskatchewan it is nothing like what we should be making when we have the opportunities we have in the development of resources field. How, with an investment policy that the NDP have of government ownership in virtually every field, can we possibly expect to be able to take advantage of the opportunities in potash, oil, mining and agriculture that are open to us in the Province of Saskatchewan today.

The Government opposite has ridden on an increase in prices and ridden on the crest of inflation for four years. It has been able to do this because of a fantastic boost in the price of oil and because of the increase in the price of potash. Despite this they can show little if any evidence that any of the long-term benefits that should be maintained through increased manufacturing and jobs will be continued for the future after these prices possibly moderate or decline severely. This is why, Mr. Speaker, that I think many people agree that despite the inflated budget that the NDP have been able to present,

despite the fact that they are able to give everybody a little bit more money, despite these things that they claim in their speeches to their credit that we have missed many opportunities in the Province of Saskatchewan that we will never again have. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will be wholeheartedly voting against this budget because I believe it is a budget that has missed the opportunities that may not come to Saskatchewan for many, many more years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, it is with considerable pride that I extend my congratulations along with my colleagues to the Minister of Finance on the budget he brought down last Friday.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — It is with considerable pride also that I enter the debate in 1975 on this budget representing as it does, despite the efforts of the Member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald), the fulfilment of the New Deal election program of just four years ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — This is the province's first billion dollar budget. It reflects the buoyant state of the provincial economy. It reflects the prosperity of our people. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it stands in sharp contrast to the deep recession of four and five years ago and it stands in sharp contrast to the depressed economy elsewhere in Canada today. I say to the Member for Cannington that's management, management of the affairs of this province by the NDP Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — The Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's economy is in good shape - the best it's ever been. Everybody will attest to that. We're prosperous. Why? Because we're in a world of shortages. Our products, the products of the province are needed. We can sell our grain, we can sell our potash, we can sell our oil, we can sell our lumber, we can sell our steel and we sell them today at good prices, Mr. Speaker.

But the point I want to make today in this speech is that a province can have economic prosperity, as we have it today, it can be doing a terrific business but that doesn't necessarily guarantee that the people receive the benefits unless the Government is concerned, yes, about economic prosperity but yes, about social prosperity.

Then, Mr. Speaker, that's the major difference between the NDP Government, this NDP Government and the Liberals opposite. The Liberals are satisfied and when you listen to them that's all they talk about. They are satisfied about economic prosperity alone. The Liberal Party is opposed to taxation on the resources that produce prosperity for Saskatchewan people, and they oppose public spending of the tax revenue on programs for people.

We've all listened to the Leader of the Opposition, and the other Members of the Opposition who have commented on the budget. And when you listen to them, basically they say that the tax cuts are so small and spending is too high. But what kind of taxes do they want to cut? I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals want to cut the taxes on our potash and on our oil, take this money out of the public treasury and leave it in the hands of the companies that exploit the resources. Mr. Speaker, they want to reduce public expenditure on social programs and I say that this means an end to the social prosperity that spreads the benefits to all of our people.

The New Democrats stand for taxation on the basis of ability to pay. The Liberals stand for taxation on the basis of so-called incentives to the private sector.

New Democrats believe the profits from economic development should be taxed to pay for services to the people who own the resources. The Liberals believe profits from development should be maximized in the pious hope that some of the wealth will trickle down to the people.

Well let's look at the record. Consider the record of the four years of Liberal government, compared to the last four years of NDP government, keeping in mind economic prosperity and social prosperity. The record shows how Liberals added new taxes on the ordinary people to pay for the giveaways to the private sector. The New Democrats have reduced taxes on people and paid for social programs by taxing the development of our resources.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals sold out the province to the extent of \$50 million by guaranteeing bargain-basement royalties to the potash industry until 1981. Mr. Speaker, they sold out our northern forest reserves to the Parsons and Whittemore for a pulp mill, and then they gave that New York corporation grants and loans totalling over \$50 million to build the mill. These were Liberal incentives to the private sector. And I ask, Mr. Speaker, the Members of this legislature, who paid for them? Mr. Speaker, you and I paid for them through taxes levied on the ordinary people.

By 1968, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Government had used up all the reserves left behind for them by the former CCF Government and they had to ante up for their so-called incentives. And how did they raise the money? Well, in 1968 they raised the money by adding two cents to the gasoline tax, by adding surcharges to the drivers' licences, by putting the sales tax on meals, by raising the medicare premium, by cutting school grants and forcing up property taxes and finally by placing deterrent fees on the sick. And all of this money went to help to pay the costs of incentives to private development. And I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, did it produce any kind of prosperity, or any compensation for the people who put up the dollars?

Well, we know the answer. We know the answer. Our Liberal Government, with a little help from their Liberal colleagues in Ottawa, produced a severe recession from 1968 to 1971. High unemployment and massive loss of population. The benefits did not trickle down, the benefits of those giveaways. They literally poured out of Saskatchewan along with the people who could no longer make a living right here in this fine province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's consider the NDP record. We took over a province in a state of deep recession. Poor public services, tax burdens on the people greater than any time previously. But, Mr. Speaker, in four years the NDP has completely reversed the regressive tax policies of the Liberals. We have taken off deterrent fees, dropped the licence surcharges, removed the sales tax on meals and on books, abolished the medicare premium, doubled the school grants and rebated school taxes, rebated the seven cent gas price increase, cut income tax by direct rebate, and given pensioners an income guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party has repaired the damage done by the Liberals, and we have introduced a broad range of new services to help all our people to enjoy the social prosperity that our resources can provide. All of these new services have been financed by taxing the resources and by taxing those who exploit them.

In all the seven years of the Liberal Government the Provincial Treasury received only \$13 million in taxes on the potash industry. Seven years. Mr. Speaker, \$13 million.

With the new reserves tax or potash, our NDP Government took more than \$13 million into the Provincial Treasury in the last three months of 1974 alone.

And in 1975, with NDP taxes on this valuable resource, the people of Saskatchewan will receive the benefit of \$119 million in revenues from potash.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, how has this revenue from our resources been transferred into social prosperity for our Saskatchewan people? Let me, this afternoon, just look in particular at the impact this has had in our schools, on our libraries, on our universities, on our institutes and community colleges.

Let me make it clear in the beginning our NDP Government takes the view that the money we set aside for education is an investment. It's not an expense or a frill as the Liberals treated it.

We promised to greatly increase the funds for education. We promised to raise the money from taxes on income and taxes on resources instead of mill rates on property. Mr. Speaker, in 1975, over \$138 million will be paid to school boards in unconditional operating grants. That is an increase of more than \$26 million over 1974, the largest rise in school grants ever made, totaling 23 per cent more in a single year.

When grants to private schools, special grants for free driver education, band equipment, innovative projects and the Department of Northern Saskatchewan area are totaled up, over \$145 million is being invested in education by the NDP Government in 1975.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the largest amount ever paid by the party opposite in 1971 came to \$77 million. The Liberals - \$77 million, the New Democrats - \$145 million. In other words, the

provincial investment in education is almost double what it was four years ago.

In 1974, provincial school grants paid, on the average, approximately 56 per cent of basic school costs. This year the grant input is estimated at 58 per cent. Over and above this 58 per cent we are also providing for rebates through the Property Improvement Grant equal to a further 16-17 per cent of costs. That brings the total provincial share of basic school costs to 75 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this 75 per cent provincial contribution compares to the 47 per cent paid by the Liberals when they held office in 1971. It indicates a massive shift of costs off property tax and onto the fairer tax base provided by provincial revenues.

It is expected this increased provincial assistance will enable school tax rates to be stabilized at roughly last year's average. Given a Property Improvement Grant equal to 22 mills, the net school tax in Saskatchewan for 1975 will have been reduced, not to 25 mills but to 22 mills, more than meeting our New Deal pledge of four years ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — And had it not been, Mr. Speaker, for this action by this Government, if we had continued under the Liberal policies, school taxes on our people would have been 50 per cent to 100 per cent higher than they were in 1971.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be very happy to list for this legislature the unconditional grants in just a few days. But before I do, let me review how this \$26 million in new money is being allocated.

As you know, in 1972, this Government abolished the pupil-teacher ratio grant formula and replaced it with a new equalization formula based on allowances per pupil, for debt charges, for transportation and so on. Provincial grants are now paid with no strings attached and no penalties, to be spent by the school board, as it sees fit with its own priorities.

There are three categories which account for the bulk of the \$26 million.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we introduced a special allowance for areas with sparse populations where enrolments were declining. About \$1.2 million was provided in this way to help keep small schools open serving our rural communities. For 1975 the sparsity factor and the enrolment allowance is being raised by \$5.3 million - \$5.3 million in special assistance, nearly all of it, Mr. Speaker, for rural schools to offset the expense of operating small schools and to cushion the effect of the declining birth rate.

The second major increase is in the allowance for school buses and for transportation, and this will rise by more than 20 per cent over last year.

The transportation allowance is made up of grants per pupil being transported and grants per mile of bus route. The per

pupil grant is going up to \$75.25, about \$4 more than the present level. However, the grant per mile of bus route will be raised from \$51 to \$65.75, or about one-third more than in 1974. We hope that this boost will help to improve the standard of school bus service for our students.

Third, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps most important, significant increases are provided in the allowances based on enrolment. These allowances are tailored to the type of pupil and the type of school, and larger allowances are provided for rural units in recognition of their higher costs.

The basic allowance for Division I and II will rise 16 per cent over last year.

Kindergarten students are being recognized at 60 per cent of Division I and II, which amounts to a 28 per cent increase.

For Division III students, the allowances are up 16 per cent from 1974 and for Division IV and comprehensive students, a 16.5 per cent increase is provided.

In the case of handicapped students, we will continue to recognize a basic 2 per cent of Division I, II, and III. The allowance this year has been increased to 16 per cent, the largest rise by far, in what I believe to be one of the most important areas in the school system. Special allowance for high-cost handicapped students will rise even more than the 41 per cent, the exact figure to be set later.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this budget provides a 23 per cent increase in provincial aid to schools, almost double the 1971 expenditure. It will pay 58 per cent of basic costs directly out of provincial revenues, and 75 per cent when rebates are included. There are large increases for school bus costs, several millions of dollars in special allowances for small schools and low enrolments, and 41 per cent more in the allowance for the handicapped.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to announce today that for the first time this year, payments of the grants to school boards will be made on a monthly basis. We are introducing this change at the request of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, in the hope it will reduce school board borrowings and interest charges.

To phase the monthly system in, one-twelfth of the grant will be paid in April, followed by five-twelfths in May. In effect, this means school boards will receive one month's payment in advance up to the end of June. Effective at the end of July and for each month from then on, one-twelfth of the grant will be mailed each month. Letters to school boards to advise of the 1975 grants will be mailed shortly.

Let me turn to the university sector in the Department of Continuing Education.

Operating grants for Saskatchewan's university system for 1975-76 will be \$56 million. This may be compared to the current year's grant of \$44.75 million, over 25 per cent increase in one year. I say that this percentage increase will be found to compare favourably with that in any other Canadian province. I'm prepared to compare it with our rich province to the west.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the last Liberal budget provided \$32 million for university operation. The increase, then, is exactly 75 per cent in the four years of this Government's mandate. I would point out that this 75 per cent increase for the university has occurred at a time when enrolments, in terms of full-time students, has shown practically no change.

Mr. Speaker, university costs, like all other costs, are escalating rapidly. A major portion of this year's substantial grant increase will undoubtedly be allocated to faculty and staff salaries in order to keep them competitive. But we are confident that this level of increase will also permit attention to be paid to program quality and that modest expansion or enrichment in the most sensitive areas will be possible.

Speaking in broader terms, rationalization, including the funding of new programs, is, of course, the concern of the Saskatchewan Universities Commission. The Commission is still in its first year of operation and it is not yet fully staffed, therefore, its analysis of university operations is simply not yet fully geared up. But already I'm greatly impressed by the effectiveness of the Commission's work. As the Members will know, under the new legislation the Department of Continuing Education and the Government now deal with the Commission and not directly with the universities. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Commission is doing its homework. Its case to us is always well documented, it is always well argued.

May I digress for a moment here to voice publicly my congratulations to Dr. Robert Begg on his recent appointment as President of the University of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — Under his experienced leadership that great institution, along with the newer University of Regina under Dr. John Archer, can and will ensure that Saskatchewan continues to be well-served by its university system.

It takes time for new roles and functions to be fully established and developed, but all that we have seen to date of the relationship developing between the Government and the Commission on the one hand and the Commission and the universities on the other, indicate we now have a system which can ensure excellence in our universities with maximum benefit from every tax dollar. The \$56 million operational grant level for 1975-76 will manifest itself in top-quality university education for Saskatchewan people.

The University capital grant figure is being held at \$6 million for 1975-76 - only a small increase over the figure for the year just ending. There is a very good reason for this. The Government is convinced that the construction industry requires time to adjust to current high levels of demand being placed upon it. The Government can assist in this adjustment through its own building program and that of institutions like the universities which receive direct government grants for construction. At the same time this Government has indicated to the Universities Commission that the universities might be encouraged to proceed with development of plans for future building projects that may be necessary. This will provide the flexibility required to bring construction projects on stream

at a rate in the total best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

The other principal components of our post-school educational structure are, of course, the technical institutes and the community colleges. Operating expenditures for the institutes will increase from approximately \$12.6 million to \$15.9 million or about 25 per cent. The institutes are well established. They have diverse technical and vocational programs designed to satisfy this province's needs for trained manpower and to provide alternative educational opportunities for our young people. Provision is made in the budget for expansion of heavy duty equipment operators' training and for truck driver training at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, Moose Jaw; for the instituting of a dental assistant upgrading program at Kelsey Institute at Saskatoon and for development of a Core Services Training program at Wascana here in Regina.

Since 1971, Mr. Speaker, over 1,000 new spaces have been opened in our technical institutes and that does not include expansion in the vocational centres. The new institute here in Regina is offering North America's first and only dental nurse program, which, regardless of what the Opposition has said, is attracting attention right across this country.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — I strengthen that statement by saying that we are now considering requests from Quebec and the Maritimes to send observers and we are considering requests from Manitoba to enrol students in the dental nurse program. I believe this speaks well for the dental care service and I predict, like Medicare, it will be initiated in several other provinces in the next few years.

This NDP budget allows for the first year of operation of our province-wide community college system. Nowhere are the results of this Government's commitment to education as an investment more striking than in the community college developments of the last three years. Nowhere are the results of our commitments to shore up and strengthen rural Saskatchewan than is identified through education in the community college program.

In education, as in any other field, results only come if the investment is sound. The Liberals say community colleges are their idea. It is true that the Liberals had a plan for community colleges. We inherited it when we came to office in 1971. Looking at the program I don't think they would have ever implemented it because it was too expensive, it was a frill. Mr. Speaker, community colleges Liberal style would have bankrupted this province. What the Liberal plan was, was to build junior colleges, impressive buildings on impressive campuses, staffed with full-time faculty.

I am not sure where the students were to come from for these Liberal community colleges - the last few years have shown no increases in university enrolments. I am not sure where the money would have come from to build these expensive campuses, or the money to pay another large staff of full-time post-secondary professors, or how these would have better served the adults of Saskatchewan. But the Liberals, it seems, had no particular answers for these difficult questions; they were more concerned

about catching up to Alberta and Ontario in building campus community colleges. But, Mr. Speaker, things are not so rosy in Alberta and Ontario with respect to community colleges. As a matter of fact we have an agreement at Lloydminster, for the Lloydminster-Vermilion College with Alberta adopting the Saskatchewan plan.

I have here a clipping from the February 8th, 1975 issue of the Toronto Globe and Mail. The headline reads: "College Faces Cutback over Budget Problems." The article goes on to read

Citing weak provincial financing, Algonquin College has proposed laying off 140 employees and closing its doors to 2,400 new students next fall. The consensus was reached to overcome a projected budget deficit of \$2.8 million for 1975-76.

The capital to construct campus buildings, as you know, in these times, Mr. Speaker, is staggering. But with capital costs the bills have only just begun, as our friends in Ontario are now finding out.

In addition to the financial problem, how could one possibly justify further concentration of adult learning opportunities in this province? In the last year of Liberal Government, \$53 million of the \$55 million allotted to post-secondary education in Saskatchewan went to the university and technical institutes. The institutes and universities are located in the large urban centres and are geared to the 18 to 25 age bracket. Virtually nothing was available to the half million adults scattered throughout Saskatchewan earning a living and raising families.

With that, Mr. Speaker, in 1972 we went to the people to discuss the Liberal model. We heard overwhelming rejection of the campus model in favour of a decentralized community model. The people asked us: Why not make use of existing facilities, there are plenty of community halls and church basements in our small towns, make use of local adults with knowledge worth sharing, contract programs from the university and technical institutes, and let every community decide what courses it wants in any given year?

In 1972 we began three pilot projects on this rural Saskatchewan concept. Developers talked to people in the areas about the program, fiscally autonomous boards were appointed, programs were started and since then there has been no looking back. The response to Saskatchewan's new community college is almost overwhelming. No educational innovation of recent years has brought forth such a strong positive reaction from the people of Saskatchewan.

In the 18 months that the three pilot community colleges have been in operation, 18,682 adults have participated in programs. There have been 1,998 courses and these courses have taken place in 312 communities.

Local businessmen will tell you what a difference community colleges have made - courses sell welders and typewriters and lumber. Local organizations will tell you what a difference the college has made, courses put new dollars in communities through rental fees on buildings and halls. Local people will tell you what a difference community colleges have made, an

opportunity to develop new skills, revive heritages, participate in classes for credit or for enjoyment, in their own community.

Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal campus model, only two or three centres would have benefited. Under the rural Saskatchewan model, 312 communities can be part of the social, educational and economic benefits of community colleges.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — The educational foundation for Saskatchewan Community Colleges, Mr. Speaker, is excellent. Adults and communities themselves examine their own situation, their own interests and their own needs and translate these into requests for program. The small size of the college staff ensures much flexibility and responsiveness.

Mr. Speaker, much remains to be done. Many relationships are just beginning to be realized. Administrative systems require refining. But already it is clear that for the first time the province has a post-school educational system which has the potential to provide meaningful lifelong learning opportunities to all of its people. All this was accomplished, Mr. Speaker, at a cost of \$1.7 million last year.

This budget allots \$3.6 million to Saskatchewan Community Colleges. This will permit the expansion of the college program to 12 regions covering the whole area of the province south of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan line. All Saskatchewan adults will have access to learning opportunities in their own communities. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to place the expansion of Saskatchewan Community Colleges before this Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — Saskatchewan's seven regional libraries and our two major and several smaller municipal libraries will benefit from the second large increase in provincial grants in two years.

Last year library grants were based on a per capita grant of \$2.50 for regions and \$1 for municipal libraries. This year, Mr. Speaker, a new formula based on component costs is being introduced, to help distribute funds equitably and guaranteeing that each library will have enough to meet its basic costs.

For each of the seven regional libraries, a basic \$160,000 is provided to buy books and materials and pay for staff; \$6,000 is provided for cars and trucks; \$5,000 for each bookmobile and \$1 per square mile to assist with costs of distribution. In addition to these amounts, the new formula contains an equalization factor ranging from \$1 to \$2 per person over 40,000, depending on total assessment in the region.

For each of our municipal libraries, \$190,000 is available toward the costs of materials, staff and program development. These provincial grants are to be paid unconditionally and they may be spent as each library sees fit.

Mr. Speaker, the new formula brings with it an increase of \$550,000 or roughly 40 per cent.

In 1975 provincial grants total \$1.9 million or four times as much as the highest level provided by the party opposite. As in the case of school grants, letters will be mailed advising each board of its grant and I hope to be able to table the grants to libraries within the next few days.

Mr. Speaker, doubling the level of aid to schools, adding 75 per cent to university grants, increasing library assistance, four times, the new investment in community colleges entails a large outlay of money. Despite this outlay for services, our NDP Government has not only held the line on taxes but has actually introduced several reductions.

Many of these reductions have been possible because of our commitment to tax on ability to pay, on income, and in particular on resources. Many of the resource tax dollars are being invested in programs designed by the NDP to strengthen our rural communities.

In education, community colleges are a direct and tangible benefit to small centres, bringing new educational opportunities to people where they live.

The \$5 million plus in grants for sparsity and low enrolment are another direct attempt to channel resource revenues into the rural areas through an equalization formula for schools.

The program of school community facilities, such as gymnasiums and swimming pools should enable towns that did not get these things before, an opportunity to build and operate them on a joint basis. Here is an example of how we are recognizing the school as more than an educational service, but also a mainstay of many towns and villages.

Mr. Speaker, in many centres the life of the community is maintained by the Pool elevator, a Co-op store, the local merchant, the implement dealer, the Credit Union, the Post Office and a school. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the co-operative movement and the small businessman, despite the efforts of this budget, most of these towns will disappear if the Liberal Party succeeds in replacing the Crow's Nest rates and are able to bring on massive rail line abandonment.

And despite what the Member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) said, don't think that members of the Wheat Pool, members of the National Farmers Union, members of SUMA and members of SARM are wrong when they are concerned about the Liberal policy.

If the Crow's Nest rates are dropped as the Liberals propose, the railways are free to charge any freight rate they wish on any branch lines. Well, let's keep in mind the pressure that comes on the Liberal Party from the Canadian Pacific Railway to drop thousands of miles of line. The result is certain to be unbearably high costs on some lines and low incentive rates on others. Such differentials would force farmers to give up hauling to the high rate lines and the Liberals could claim the farmers themselves had chosen to abandon them. If the inland terminal is to work and it will only work if we had the Crow's Nest rates removed.

Mr. Speaker, in short, if the Liberal Party is permitted to get away with its plans, no amount of aid for small schools, grants to regional libraries or community colleges or any other

device can prevent the destruction of large parts of our great province.

Here in Saskatchewan we cannot defeat, we cannot elect a Federal Government, so long as Quebec and Ontario vote Liberal, we will have them in Ottawa. This leaves our provincial elections or the only effective way Saskatchewan people have to express their view. And, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Liberal Party, the Members opposite, no longer make any pretence of defending western rights, that party is clearly and obviously under the control of the Member for Humboldt. Because of this, Mr. Speaker, a Liberal vote in Saskatchewan is a vote for the Member of Parliament for Humboldt and the policies of the Liberal Government.

The central issue in the election that is coming up must be whether Saskatchewan's farmers, Saskatchewan's town and city dwellers are forced to bow to the wishes of the railways and of the private grain trade or whether we will have some voice in the direction that this province will take and develop.

I invite, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan to review the record of the NDP Government, under the leadership and the premiership of Allan Blakeney and make a careful decision as to who can best speak for the proper interests of this province.

Mr. Speaker, this Government's achievements represented in this budget speak for themselves. I will not be supporting the amendment but will support the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.F. MacDonald (Moose Jaw North): — First of all I should like to start out by congratulating Dave Steuart for the speech that he made in this Budget Debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — It is very obvious that he has made his mark; his criticisms and his alternatives have been well received. This is very obvious from the reaction his remarks are getting from Members opposite. Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite are running scared, I didn't think they were, but in this debate it is very obvious that they are running scared.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — It amazed me how speaker, after speaker is out to defend the Land Bank. When a government which has brought in their favourite program, the Land Bank, and has to defend it and defend it, they are obviously running scared. Then, today, we have heard speakers, the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Taylor), the Minister of Education who has just taken his seat, bringing every kind of issue, extraneous issues, ridiculous issues, they've got to be running scared when you get to that level of debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset of my speech that I will be opposing the budget without the slightest twinge of conscience. In fact I think that I would be neglecting my duty if I did not oppose it. This budget should be an embarrassment to the NDP Government. With this budget the Blakeney Government is admitting defeat. The Provincial Treasurer called this a budget of fulfilment and I suppose I would agree with the Treasurer, this budget will represent a kind of fulfilment but more accurately it could be called a termination of their reign of power. I oppose this budget because I think it is a disgrace.

Our province has a quarter billion dollars in new revenue, this represents nearly a 30 per cent increase over revenues that we budgeted for a year ago. This comes about as a result of world demand for products being produced in Saskatchewan. This comes about as a result of high, unprecedented world prices for the products we produce in Saskatchewan. As a result of good demand and buoyant prices, the Blakeney Government is going to extract an extra \$30 million in Education and Health tax from the Saskatchewan people. It is going to extract \$30 million in personal income tax from the Saskatchewan people. He is going to extract an extra \$13 million in corporate income tax from the small businessmen. And as a result of high demand and unprecedented price levels our province is going to obtain \$30 million more from our petroleum industry and an extra \$100 million from potash. Of course, as a result of increased taxation by Premier Blakeney we shall even get an extra \$13 million from liquor profits. As I said, Mr. Speaker, our province will have new revenue to the extent of a quarter billion dollars. With this kind of revenue the people of Saskatchewan have a right to expect great things of the Government. Under present conditions the people of Saskatchewan have a right to expect some imaginative new programs; or else they have a right to expect some reduction in the tax burdens that they are suffering.

The people of Saskatchewan have a right to great expectations from a quarter of a billion new dollars. In this budget they are not getting their money's worth, that is why it is a disgrace.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — We might have expected a decrease in taxation like our friends in Alberta. Instead, we got a slight reduction in income tax to the level it was three years ago. This can hardly be called a reduction, put it on one year and take it off the next year and then call it a reduction. It is now on a level still twice that of Alberta.

We might have expected a reduction in our property taxes, which is a very unfair method of taxation. We see Saskatoon and Regina faced with 13 mill increases, we see the city of Moose Jaw faced with a 16 per cent increase or an 11 mill increase. That is the kind of reduction in property taxes that we can expect.

We might have expected a decrease in our Education and Health tax, instead we got a reduction in health tax for those who are dining out and those who are buying books.

Surely with a quarter of a billion dollars new revenue Saskatchewan people have a right to expect some of these things. However, if tax relief was not to be had, then we could have expected some meaningful new services, new programs for our people. But what programs did we get in this new budget? We got a program of \$20 per month for our senior citizens, a program that will cost somewhat less than \$7 million. This program is an insult to our senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — It is an absolute pittance when compared to the genuine need of our pioneers. Our senior citizens are rightfully outraged with the provisions of this budget. They don't understand a budget of \$1.4 million, an increase of \$250 million in one year and yet they are to receive less than \$7 million. This represents a 1/2 per cent of the Saskatchewan budget. This represents pretty shoddy treatment to the old people of Saskatchewan.

We also see new funds in this budget for a prescription drug program. But again it is very hard to understand why it is necessary to have deterrent fees associated with that program; deterrent fees that will mean those who need help the most will still continue to pay higher costs than they can afford.

This budget also represents an attack on the quality of health care in this province. This is a continuing attack that started a couple of years ago. Budgets for mental health have been totally inadequate. The last two years have seen a real squeeze put on financing for hospital care. We shall see in this budget that hospitals are being strangled financially by the Blakeney Government, if you take, for example, the budget for Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan. Last year we budgeted for \$128 million, plus \$10 million in supplementary spending, plus \$3 million for the Souris Valley Extended Care, which gives us a total of \$141 million that was budgeted for last year. In this budget we find a total of \$154 million. This represents an increase of \$13 million and represents an increase of only 9 per cent. There is no way that Saskatchewan hospitals can exist on a 9 per cent increase. They cannot maintain services, they cannot maintain the quality of health care on a 9 per cent increase. It is very obvious that the Minister of Health has found the way to stop the rising cost of health care. He is willing to see services discontinued and the quality of care deteriorate. We have seen concrete evidence that costs have risen at least 35 per cent in nursing homes for Level II and III care in the past year. Salaries which are a large component of health care have risen 27 to 30 per cent in the past year. Hospital care is in for the exact same kind of increases as the nursing homes, likely 35 per cent. Hospital care will obviously suffer while attempting to continue with only a 9 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are not getting their money's worth in this budget. I am confident that I represent the disapproval of my constituents as I oppose this budget.

I should like to discuss one new program in Health and that is the prescription drug program. This is not only a bad plan, and an inadequate program but as the Minister of Health attempts

to implement this program we see some very interesting aspects of the NDP. First of all I should once again like to define the problem. I think all of us in this Legislature are aware that 2 per cent of Saskatchewan people pay 20 per cent of the cost of prescription drugs. About 5 per cent of Saskatchewan people pay 33 1/3 per cent of the cost. About 10 per cent of Saskatchewan people pay one-half, 50 per cent of the cost of prescription drugs in this province. We know that the cost of prescription drugs is somewhere in the neighbourhood of about \$18 million a year. I think that was in 1972. Therefore, loosely translated, this means that 90,000 people in this province pay half of the cost, they pay \$9 million; 90,000 people pay \$9 million! The other 800,000 people in this province pay the other half; or 800,000 people pay \$9 million. This represents an inequity. We also know from the survey in Weyburn in 1966 that fully 64 per cent of the families have drug bills, less than \$20 per year and yet other families have drug bills of \$500 a year and higher. That represents an inequity.

We know that those people over 65 years of age spend on the average three times as much as people under 65 years of age for drugs. That represents an inequity. We also know that those people with proportionately high drug costs are the chronically ill and the elderly. We also know that those needing the most drugs are often the least able to pay. These are the very obvious inequities and it is the position of the Liberal Party that these inequities must be removed. The very hardship felt by such a small percentage of Saskatchewan people must be lifted. The Saskatchewan Liberal party believes that those who are most in need, the elderly and the chronically ill, are the ones who should get the help. Surely that must be the objective of a good drug program.

I oppose the drug program as proposed by the Blakeney Government because it does not remove the inequities that exist, nor does it lift the hardships from that very small group so severely affected by large drug bills. Under the Blakeney drug program, 10 per cent of our people will continue to pay about 50 per cent of our drug bill. Those least able to pay will continue to bear a disproportionately high cost. The NDP drug program will provide a little help to everyone but it does not assure those who are most in need that they will get the help that they merit and deserve.

The worst feature of the NDP drug program is the inclusion of deterrent fees. Of course we have had deterrent fees before, we have had them for hospitals, we have had them for doctors but never have we had such a vicious form of deterrent fee and a comparison is going to point this out.

We had a deterrent fee of \$1.50 for doctor visits, doctor visits which cost about \$8. We had a \$2.50 deterrent fee on the hospital beds, which cost about \$50. Now we have a \$2 deterrent fee for drugs which cost an average of \$4.25.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — The deterrent fees on doctors and hospitals also had a limit of \$180 per family. In other words a person could quite possibly receive medical care costing \$5,000, \$10,000, or \$20,000, and the total cost to that person or family would be \$180. There is no limit as to the total amount of deterrent

fees paid in the NDP drug plan. There will be many chronically ill and elderly people who will be paying more than \$180 in deterrent fees on drugs. If the deterrent fee was bad before, then it is much, much worse in the drug program.

The NDP feel that a deterrent fee is necessary so that people who use prescription drugs may participate and be responsible in the use of medication. Another reason for the deterrent fee was given when we debated this plan on May 2, 1974, and I am going to quote from page 2,871 of the Debates and Proceedings:

The increase in prescriptions by physicians with the knowledge that no longer do drugs cost their patients anything directly will further exacerbate the problem of overprescribing. Further, patients will have more prescriptions filled where at present up to 25 per cent are never filled.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to this House that this prophecy has proven incorrect. British Columbia has completed a full year of paying full payment for prescription drugs for all people over 65 years of age. There is no deterrent fee in British Columbia. The Human Resources Minister, Norman Levi stated that there was no indication that doctors were giving in to pressures to prescribe unnecessary medicine. It is clear that using this argument to justify deterrent fees is just a red herring.

The other argument, and I shall quote again from page 2,871:

Further, patients will have more prescriptions filled where at present up to 25 per cent are never filled.

The other argument, of course, is that when drugs have to be paid for 25 per cent of them are never filled because people can't afford to get them filled. Is the Blakeney Government then saying that if we continue with people paying a portion of drug bills in the form of deterrent fees that they will continue to not get prescriptions filled and thereby save the Government some money. That is exactly what the NDP are saying. They are saying that the \$2 deterrent fee will keep some poor people from filling prescriptions, therefore, the Government will save money. This is a callous approach and an unfeeling approach to a very real problem.

Mr. Taylor, the Minister of Social Services when he spoke earlier today said that the NDP will continue to speak out for the poor and the disadvantaged. I don't disagree, you'll speak and you'll speak and you'll speak, the NDP are expert speakers. They are so expert that they speak out of both sides of the mouth at the same time. The trouble is that your actions don't back your speeches.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — We have to ask ourselves why the NDP would bring in such a drug program. Of course the philosophy of the NDP is that spreading a few goodies to a whole bunch of people is good for election time. So instead of helping those most in need, the NDP have decided to sprinkle the goodies to everyone. This means to me, politics before people and I charge the NDP with that hypocrisy, politics before people.

It is also interesting to observe the treatment given to the pharmacists by the Minister of Health. He accuses them of delaying the drug program. He then infers that it is the actions of pharmacists that are going to hurt the senior citizens and the chronically ill. This is absolutely untrue. It is the Minister of Health who is responsible for the delay. It is his fault because he has proposed a bad program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — To me it is incredible that the Minister is now attempting a campaign in the news media towards blaming the pharmaceutical profession. He is attempting to make pharmacists look like villains in the eyes of the public. The Minister has even resorted to threats to the Pharmaceutical Association. He says that if the delay continues the Government may have to consider alternatives to a contract with pharmacists. It was in the Commonwealth, February 26, 1975. He warns, "That a prolonged delay would result in the Government seeking alternate ways of getting these benefits to our people." These are strange words from a former union man who would presumably fight to the death to preserve the right of people to organize and to bargain collectively and the right of people to withdraw their services. The Minister's threats to seek alternate ways are a direct attack on the right of the pharmacists to organize in their association.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — These threats are a direct attack on the rights of pharmacists to bargain and to negotiate collectively. His threats of alternate ways is the same tactic as strike breaking. The Blakeney Government seems to have a double standard. It is obvious that in the game of politics played by the NDP they'll use any tactics that are to their advantage.

I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that when they elect a Liberal Government in 1975 they will have a drug program, a good drug program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — I want to tell our senior citizens that they won't be paying deterrent fees in that drug plan. A Liberal Government will remove those deterrent fees. I want to assure our senior citizens that when a Liberal Government is elected in 1975 they are going to get a fair share from their government.

I suggest that senior citizens look at what happens to senior citizens in British Columbia, in Alberta, in Manitoba and in Ontario. Senior citizens of Saskatchewan find that they come dead last in this list of provinces. They are dead last in a province headed by Mr. Blakeney. They will find they are second class citizens compared to other provinces. The elderly people in Saskatchewan have a right to equal or better treatment in Saskatchewan. Senior citizens now know that we can afford equal or better treatment than other provinces in Canada. The Blakeney Government has not given a fair share, a Liberal Government in 1975 is a guarantee for a fair share to senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.L. Tchorzewski (Minister of Culture and Youth): — I too want to join with my colleagues in expressing my pride in commending the Minister of Finance for the job that he has done as the Minister of Finance in his delivery of the budget for this fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, it is a budget that is a completion of the commitments made by the New Democratic Party in the election campaign of 1971. Mr. Speaker, it is a completion of those commitments and it also clearly indicates that things have happened in these last three years, that go even beyond those commitments. I certainly will disagree with the Member for Moose Jaw North, who just sat down, that this Government is running scared. Mr. Speaker, he is not even running in the next election campaign.

Let me make a comment on what we have seen in the last few years, Mr. Speaker. There now have been, if I am not mistaken, three budget critics in the Opposition since this Government came to office. None of those except one, Mr. Speaker, is in this House any longer. It appears that the heat was so great that they had to leave. This year, Mr. Speaker, there is a third critic for the budget, the Leader of the Opposition. We can only assume that the Members of the Opposition consider him dispensable because if that kind of record continues, obviously he is going to have to leave as well.

An Hon. Member: — . . . to the Senate?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — . . . Well possibly the Senate!

Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal said in this debate about a number of issues and one of them being that of senior citizens. The Leader of the Opposition spent a great deal of time talking about senior citizens. That's rather strange if you consider the record in the past of the former government.

Mr. Wiebe: — How come you're talking about them?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Ah, because we have something to talk about Mr. Member for Morse. Let me show you in a moment or two why we have something to talk about compared to the record that some of your colleagues had - you weren't there so you can be excused - when they were in government.

Let us look at 1971 and compare only to 1974. Saskatchewan Assistance Plan for senior citizens during Liberal years provided \$4 million and in 1974, \$7.6 million. Assistance to nursing homes in 1971 under the former government, \$56,000! Mr. Speaker, \$56,000! In 1974 under an NDP Government \$5.4 million and the Minister of Social Services today outlined and announced a further very substantial increase in assistance to those senior citizens who must live in nursing homes.

What about grants to build nursing homes? In 1971 \$525,000, in 1974, \$996,000. Community services, I think this is very important, Mr. Speaker, because one of the very important things that our senior citizens are asking for today and should have is the opportunity to be part of their community. Well in 1971 Liberals provided \$60,000 for community services for all of Saskatchewan; in 1974 our Government provided \$860,000 and there is budgeted this year something like \$1.2 million.

For Senior Citizens Home Repair, Mr. Speaker, in 1971 nothing, in 1974, some \$3 million. Low rental housing for senior citizens, Mr. Speaker, in 1971, nothing and in 1974, \$605,000.

It is not only that they gave very little, Mr. Speaker, but they in fact took away. The Liberals collected from senior citizens, they collected \$2 million in utilization or deterrent fees and collected \$3 million in medicare premiums. The Liberals in total in 1971 gave \$4.6 million to our senior citizens, they took away \$5 million, Mr. Speaker. A minus Liberal record for our senior citizens of something like half a million dollars.

Now in this House we hear the Leader of the Opposition get up and talk about what they are going to do for senior citizens. You just have to wonder.

In 1971, Mr. Speaker, if I may conclude the Liberal record, was minus \$5 million for senior citizens, the New Democratic Party record in 1974 was a plus \$23.2 million. With the increased funding this year and with the introduction of the income supplement program, it will be \$41.9 million. That's a record, Mr. Speaker, so I don't think that this Government or any Member on this side of the House has to run away from it or be scared.

Mr. Speaker, on this day we are at a time which is almost four years after the election of this NDP Government in Saskatchewan. These past four years have been years of achievement never before matched by any government, not only in this province but in fact all of Canada.

Those achievements have come about as a result of the hard work and commitment of many people. First and foremost is our Premier, who since 1971 has come to be recognized and respected as the leading premier and political figure in this country.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Under Premier Blakeney's leadership this Government through the Cabinet and the caucus and through dedicated civil servants has implemented programs, brought in sound legislation and administered wisely so that Saskatchewan is once again ahead.

The New Democratic Party in 1971 presented a platform called the New Deal for People. We believed that it represented a realistic, yet imaginative blueprint for the 1970s. It was designed to put Saskatchewan once more back in the forefront of social and economic progress. It represented a new deal and a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan.

With each budget since taking office, that New Deal has been implemented chapter by chapter. In this debate we are considering the concluding chapter in our book of achievements that everyone in this province has been able to benefit from.

Saskatchewan today is once again far ahead in social and economic programs. The Liberal years of rapidly declining population, the Steuart-Thatcher years of deterrent fees, pupil-teacher ratios, Bill 2, economic stagnation and high unemployment, the Liberal years of gerrymandering and interfering with

March 19, 1975

the rights of people to choose their government under a democratic system which took hundreds of years of struggle to acquire, all of these things, Mr. Speaker, are now gone. They are gone, Mr. Speaker, but they are not forgotten.

Every time the Leader of the Opposition is seen on television or heard on the radio or quoted in the newspaper, people remember how he and Liberal Members opposite consciously and intentionally destroyed many freedoms and rights of Saskatchewan citizens. They destroyed their right to be free from fear of not being able to get adequate medical care; and how they blatantly misused its power to endanger the principle of representation by population and the very foundations of democracy.

Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, remember. They will remember when they next go to the polls. They will ask themselves if the Liberal Party with the same attitude and the same leadership as that of 1961-71 can be trusted. I believe the people of Saskatchewan know who their friends are.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the major difference between this Government and the former government, between the NDP and the Liberal Party as it is today, is one of trust. The present government has proven that it keeps its commitments. It has been tested and it is trusted. The Liberal Party as a government proved that to perpetuate itself in power it would do anything to cling to that power, and therefore, Liberals opposite cannot be trusted.

This budget presented so ably by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Nutana (Mr. Robbins) as I said earlier, is a completion of the New Deal. Saskatchewan is moving ahead and in the next provincial election with the re-election of this Government, Saskatchewan will keep moving ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I recall a time in 1972 when I was given the honour of seconding the Address-in-Reply to the Throne Speech. In remarking about my constituency I said:

In the Humboldt area is still found a fairly dense rural population. The farm families in my constituency for the most part have always remained diversified. With hard work, determination and good management the farm people of Humboldt Constituency have retained the family farm. They are determined to continue to maintain their family farms and their rural communities. They, as the rural people throughout Saskatchewan, value their rural way of life and they are proud of their rural communities.

I repeat this, Mr. Speaker, because in the last four years this Government has brought in legislation and programs to help rebuild rural Saskatchewan.

This budget again reinforces our commitment to rural Saskatchewan and agriculture. It is clear that the former government was negligent in this area as in other areas when one compares this year's budget of some \$58 million in the Department of Agriculture to the \$16 million provided by the last Liberal budget.

Now I know that the Liberals talked a great deal about diversification but the problem is that they did very little

else. To be fair, I must say that they made some effort to encourage farmers to invest large amounts of money in hog production. I will give them that. But when the price of hogs fell to the very bottom, those same Liberals let those farmers go broke by doing nothing to provide price stability. This Government on the other hand has taken a comprehensive approach, programs have been provided to assist livestock production.

FarmStart has been very popular in my constituency, as it has throughout all of this province. It has provided an opportunity for many farmers, most of them young, to enter the livestock industry. I am very proud that the first FarmStart contracts were signed in Humboldt. One of the families involved in the signing was just beginning to farm south of that community. This farmer had worked for several years in the construction industry and FarmStart made it possible for him and his family to start farming, something they had wanted to do for many years.

The Hog Price Stabilization program is a fulfilment of our commitment to farmers in the hog industry along with the Hog Marketing Commission. These programs have made it possible for many hog producers to stay in business. Under Liberals, many like them lost all they had because no guarantees were provided.

The Crop Insurance program provides farmers with important security; the establishment of the Agricultural Machinery Institute being built in Humboldt which will provide important testing of agricultural machinery; the Farm Cost Reduction program to cushion the impact of increased prices of fuel used for agricultural purposes; the Agricultural Implements Board to make sure that farmers receive satisfactory service on the machinery they buy. These are all major programs encouraging this province's major industry.

Many communities throughout this province thrive when agriculture is prospering, they provide the services that the farming community requires. During the last three years these communities have been prospering and they have been growing. They can be confident of the future because of the new hope and stability provided by the programs which I have mentioned and many others.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major programs established by our Government, is the Land Bank Commission. It has purchased nearly 1,200 parcels of land since it began in 1972 and in the coming year the Commission has made provision to acquire up to 500 more parcels. Over 1,000 farmers are now leasing land under this program and by 1976 the number will exceed 1,500.

The fact that other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have shown considerable interest in this program - and in fact one American state will be introducing legislation this year which is similar to the Saskatchewan plan - is proof that it is a successful, imaginative and workable alternative as a land transfer system.

It seems that only Liberal Members choose to use innuendoes and misinformation to try to discredit the Land Bank Commission. Advertisements regarding the Land Bank Commission have recently been placed in newspapers throughout Saskatchewan. Thousands of dollars are being spent by the Liberal Party to promote information which is untrue. I intend to deal with several of these misconceptions.

Liberals opposite say that our forefathers left their homelands because big government controlled or owned the farm land. Many of our grandparents, and my grandfather was one of them, Mr. Speaker, came from countries where land ownership was a major problem. It was not the state or government which owned millions of acres, it was large absentee landlords who owned and controlled agricultural land on a system which was hundreds of years old. Farmers were nothing more than serfs working their own little plots of land and paying rent to the land barons. It was not government which directed the lives of millions of people, it was a handful of powerful closely knit landowners.

Today people in Saskatchewan are concerned about land ownership. When a farmer retires, he must sell his land to get back his savings and earnings he has built up over the years. Very often the only way he can get a good price is to sell to another farmer. Too often, these farms disappear as they are brought into the estate of a larger farm. As a result Saskatchewan has one less family farm.

Over the years there has never been a provision for transfer of land other than by the route of mortgage and finance companies. In 1971 the NDP placed before Saskatchewan people an option that challenged that stronghold of our society. This Government has accepted the challenge by offering the farmer of Saskatchewan their first real option - the Land Bank.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the Land Bank Commission has been established to assist in the transfer of ownership from one generation to another to keep the farm operating as a unit rather than having it bought into ever larger and larger operations.

I know there are two schools of thought on this, Mr. Speaker. One says that we must have a system where only money talks the loudest, the other alternative is that those who want to farm should not be prevented from doing so because they may not have the same financial resources as the established farmer.

The Land Bank Commission is in keeping with this second approach, it enables existing operations to recover their life earnings by selling their land. It enables the younger farmer to get into farming with a minimum of financial output. In this way he can build up his assets and become more firmly involved in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, there have been also comments made by Members opposite on various occasions about the land grab. I am not saying something new because others have said it, but with the figures as they are and the kinds of things we have seen, it would take (to acquire 65 million cultivated acres in Saskatchewan at the present rate) six to seven centuries to buy up all the land in Saskatchewan. When one considers that after 1978 the land will be resold to those lessees wishing to purchase their lease land it could take even longer to fully acquire all the farm land in Saskatchewan. Information concerning transactions are contained in the Annual Report of the Commission prepared for the Legislature. These reports are available to the public upon request. Statistics indicate that the Land Bank is helping to lower the average age of farmers. The

average age of lessees during the first year of operation was 34; the major effect of the program is to put more young people on the land, the reversal of the trend of the 1960s.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the real danger in farming today is not the New Democratic Party Government of Saskatchewan which has received this mandate from the people, it is the Liberal Party and its Members opposite and the various interests whom they represent and whose sole responsibility is not to young farmers who wish to enter farming but to those who would benefit by reduced numbers of farmers, inland terminals, wholesale rail line abandonment and the open market system. Now in recent weeks some of the Members opposite have been going around trying to dissociate themselves from their fellow Member in the Federal Parliament. They are saying that they think differently. But how can they agree with the LIFT program and how can they agree with inland terminals and how can they agree with putting more and more grains on the open market and destroying the Canadian Wheat Board, all of which were recommended as part of the recommendations of the Task Force on Agriculture and then say that they don't agree with these other things that their Member of Parliament is proposing to do, also recommended in the Task Force on Agriculture and have people believe them? I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that it is a question of trust that the voters of Saskatchewan are going to be considering in the next election and I think that they know whom they can trust, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the Land Bank is helping to build our future by strengthening our family farms and our rural way of life. And without this alternative there is only the system where nothing but money talks and where the very large farms get larger and the family farm is eliminated, where young people short on funds haven't got a chance to get started.

Mr. Speaker, I want briefly now to turn to some changes in the Department of Culture and Youth. I want to say that the demand for recreational leisure time services continues to accelerate. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this year's budget is estimated at some \$5.6 million up from \$4.7 million last year. I want to comment briefly on several of the new and expanded programs that are being initiated this year. Higher funding for recreation boards; a new social recreational program for the handicapped; increased funds for the Western Development Museum and museum support in general and changes in support for provincial sports associations. Also increased funds for the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

Mr. Speaker, the first of these is the Recreation Board funding. This year grants to recreation boards will increase by more than 60 per cent and will be distributed on a global funding basis. The level of funding this fiscal year is estimated at almost \$700,000 compared to \$434,000 last year and \$294,000 the year before. A system of applying for specific grants for specific programs is being phased out over one year. Over 500 communities now will be eligible for increased grants which they themselves will allocate, not the Provincial Government. A number of present programs are being assimilated into this new structure.

The Government of Saskatchewan has initiated a number of new programs in the last several years to allow local government more freedom in establishing their own priorities. This is an example of that kind of new freedom, something which Liberals opposite talk about but which only an NDP Government acts upon with speed and with decisiveness.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the second innovation that's being introduced this year and one that has been needed for some considerable time, is the recreational program for the handicapped. Under the program, community, regional and provincial associations may apply for assistance required to undertake certain programs or projects. A sum of \$37,500 in the initial year has been provided for this purpose.

I want to also make comment on this year's grant to the Saskatchewan Arts Board. This year's grant is by far the largest since the Arts Board was founded in 1949. Founded, Mr. Speaker, by the CCF Government of that day. When we came to office the Arts Board was receiving less money in 1971 than it did in 1966. In 1971 the grant was \$326,000, our Government increased that grant by over 10 per cent in its first budget and since then the annual grant has gone from \$360,000 to \$718,000 this year, a doubling of the grant.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — The Arts Board is to be commended for its activities and programs like the Summer School of the Arts which has proved to be of great benefit to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is running out. There are many things I could say and many things which I have said in other debates in this House on activities of the Department of Culture and Youth and activities of the Department of Consumer Affairs and I intend to have a great deal more to say on them. But at this time I want to make it very clear that I, as other Members on this side of the House am very proud to state that I will be supporting the main motion and I will be opposing the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E.F. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see that all of the experts opposite like to talk about the Land Bank. They are really on the defensive as far as the Land Bank is concerned. They like to tell us that even some Americans are coming up studying their Land Bank. What they don't tell us is that this is probably people from outside Chicago who are talking about getting some land for housing, a land bank of that nature. They would like to confuse us with talk of a land bank. They also like to keep talking about the time that it would take to buy all the land. Of course farmers aren't going to be fooled by this because they know that if they re-elect the NDP that the NDP will immediately accelerate the rate. At the rate they are going it would take them a long time. There is nothing to stop them from accelerating the rate and buying the land much more quickly than they are now. Farmers, of course, are aware of this. They also seem concerned about the fact that some of their

issues are slipping away. They thought that they could talk about orderly marketing and things like that. They should know that this is what they campaigned on about eight or nine months ago in this province. And they know what happened in 1974. Where are Knight and Gleave and Burton and all these fellows that cried around the country about orderly marketing. They are gone, they were wiped out. The same thing is going to happen to this bunch if they use the same issues as they did.

Mr. Speaker, I will have some more to say about these issues and at this time I should like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 o'clock p.m.