

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Fifth Session — Seventeenth Legislature**  
**22nd Day**

**Thursday, March 20, 1975**

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

**WELCOME TO STUDENTS**

**Air Cadets**

**Hon. N.E. Byers** (Kelvington): — Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to introduce to the House on behalf of Mr. Speaker, 25 Air Cadets seated in the Speakers Gallery. They are the Wynyard Air Cadets who are accompanied here today by their teacher, Mrs. Eccles. The Wynyard High School as I have indicated is in the constituency of Mr. Speaker. On this occasion I hope that their visit to this legislature will be worthwhile and that it will provide an opportunity for them to further their appreciation and knowledge of the democratic process.

I invite all Members to join with me in welcoming this group of Air Cadets from Wynyard and I hope that their stay and visit here today is worthwhile and fruitful.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. H.H.P. Baker** (Regina Wascana): — I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to a group of 60 Grade Eight students from St. Andrew School in the Douglas Park area. They are accompanied by their principal, Mr. Halter. The St. Andrew School is located in Douglas Park which is a highly organized recreational community and which will play a very important part during the summer games this year.

Again, a very warm welcome to the students and I hope their stay here will teach them much in the field of legislative work. A warm welcome to you all.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. R. Romanow** (Saskatoon Riversdale): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, Sir, and to the Members of this Chamber, 40 students from Princess Alexandra School, Saskatoon. I think they are in the Speakers Gallery - right. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Hawthorne. Princess Alex is one of the older schools in the city of Saskatoon. When I went to Westmount Public School we used to lick them regularly in hockey and the like, but now that I'm the MLA for the area, they lick Westmount regularly.

I'll be meeting with the students at 3 p.m. to say hello to them. I welcome them to Regina. I hope they find their visit here entertaining and informative.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS

### Inflation Controls

**Mr. D.G. Stuart** (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I should like to direct a question, in the absence of the Premier, to the Attorney General. In view of the fact that in the last election campaign the now Premier of this Province, Mr. Allan Blakeney, promised that a Saskatchewan NDP Government would impose selective price and wage controls if inflation continued and Ottawa failed to act. He also promised that they would at least have a prices review board. We are facing a continuing, sharp escalation in the price of farm machinery. The fact that we are coming to the time when farmers will be seeding, other farm inputs continue to rise . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Will the Member ask the question.

**Mr. Stuart:** — I will. It doesn't appear to have any connection . . .

**Mr. Messer:** — What's the Federal Government going to do?

**Mr. Stuart:** — The Federal Government isn't doing enough. I'll say that right now - the Federal Government isn't doing enough.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stuart:** — Okay, we've settled that. Now, what are you going to do? My question is: Will you do something, because I think our farmers facing seeding this year are finding this totally unacceptable. For us to say Ottawa hasn't done anything and for you people to sit there with the budget you have, my question is: What are you prepared to do to back up the need of our farmers to bring in these other controls, or at least bring the light of publicity on these rip-offs that appear to be taking place? What are you prepared to do? You haven't done anything up to date. What are you prepared to do right now?

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to answer the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the election promise. I stand to be corrected, both by my seatmate and the Premier, but I know of no provincial election promise with respect to price controls. I stand to be corrected in this area. But leaving that part, I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says that not enough is being done by the Federal Government to combat inflation. Nothing is being done by Ottawa to combat inflation. Now, the simple fact of the matter is that it is going to take the leadership of the Federal Government, which has the fiscal tools, the fiscal controls, federally, to control the question of inflation, to take leadership and wrestle this matter of inflation to the ground. And the only answer has to come from Ottawa. But I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that we have done our bit, provincially, in a number of ways. To use an example, the stabilization program for the hog producers comes in an inflationary period with respect to the

costs of production for them. And I say above all, what we have done is we have brought down a responsible solid provincial budget which does not fan the fires of inflation.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Steuart:** — A supplementary question. Just for the information of the Attorney General, it is quoted in the Leader-Post of June 16, 1971, the Premier made that promise.

**Mr. Speaker:** — We can't have debate. We must just have a question.

**Mr. Steuart:** — Well, I shall now move very rapidly, instantaneously to my supplementary question. The truth is, you've said you've done nothing. Now, will you recommend to your Premier, to your Cabinet and when the rest of them show up if they do, will you recommend that they immediately take what steps a provincial government can do and there is lots a provincial government can do. Set up the committee you promised to look into this and make it public, focus public attention if they are gouging our farmers for machinery and other farm inputs. That is number one that you could do. Also, would you take action into bringing in legislation to put in price controls which you have the power to do. So, would you quit ducking behind Ottawa, pretending you've done something when you haven't done anything at all and take some action.

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition makes all sorts of, with all due respect, wild statements about inflation. The fact is that about a year and one-half ago this Government took positive action to ease inflation in a number of areas. Removal of the Medicare and hospitalization premium was an example in a series of actions. The leader of the Opposition says it's not enough, well I'll tell you it's not enough by his standards but it is enough as far as the people of the Province of Saskatchewan are concerned. The Department of Consumer Affairs is on top of all of these areas with respect to gouging. The Minister of Agriculture has advised me that there is a committee, an internal committee with respect to fertilizer costs which has looked at the matter. And as far as the Province of Saskatchewan is concerned, for example, fertilizer costs are probably as low, if not the lowest, for any part of the western region. Now the simple fact is that inflation has to be controlled at a federal level and until such time as Prime Minister Trudeau and the Federal Liberal Government makes a commitment to fight inflation Canadians are going to suffer from it. We'll do our bit, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition, we'll do our bit to try and publicize that point to the Prime Minister of Canada at every opportunity we can.

**Mr. Steuart:** — The short answer is you've done nothing.

### **Cable Television**

**Mr. E.C. Malone** (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I have a question I should like to direct to the Minister in charge of Government Services. Recently there was announcement in the Leader-Post in connection with cable TV that the advent of cable

TV was going to be in the very near future. However, there was no date in the report that I saw as to when this service could be expected in the city of Regina. My question to the Minister is: Can you at this time give us an approximate date when cable TV will be available to the citizens of Regina. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I should like the Minister to assure us that the cable TV co-op or company or whatever it is, the franchise holder, will offer to the people of Regina and Saskatchewan all available channels, that is all the American channels that are available and they will not restrict their service to just one or two of these channels.

**Hon. J.E. Brockelbank** (Minister of Government Services): — Mr. Speaker, answering the Hon. Member's questions in reverse order. The number of channels that will be allowed for cable television in any city in Canada, let alone Regina or Saskatoon, will be determined by the federal regulatory body, the CRTC. It will be up to the community groups to put forward a recommendation to the CRTC with regard to the number of American channels they would like to receive, or foreign signals of any kind. The CRTC will then make the decision, it may be one or two or three, I am unable to say at this time.

With regard to the date when people can expect cable television in Saskatchewan, I would say with reasonable accuracy, 18 to 24 months after the licence has been granted. Now the granting of the licence date is the imprecise factor in this because that has to be decided by the CRTC, the federal regulatory body. They will make their decision, I would assume, on the basis of applications that come before them and requests by those applicants for a date. The date being talked about at this time by some of the applicants is the fall of 1975.

**Mr. Malone:** — A supplementary question then, Mr. Speaker. Why the fall of 1975? Are there no CRTC hearings prior to that date or is it a matter that the applicants won't be prepared until the fall of 1975?

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — The CRTC is holding hearings at all times during the year on different licence applications. I would assume at this time that the CRTC doesn't have enough pressure for hearings in the Province of Saskatchewan and consequently they are not calling them at this time. I would expect that pressure to increase as we get into the year further and that they will at that time decide to call hearings.

### Meeting At La Ronge

**Mr. A.R. Guy** (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek). I believe about two weeks ago the Minister of Health and the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan (Mr. Bowerman) visited La Ronge and had a meeting with the town council and members of the hospital board and so on. The mayor of the town invited the local editor of the newspaper to attend the meeting and I understand from the newspaper that the Minister of Health insisted that the editor be removed from the conference room prior to the start of the meeting and would not allow him to attend. I wonder if the Minister would give the reason why he

took that action at that time?

**Hon. W.E. Smishek** (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, it is true I was in La Ronge about ten days ago and we had a meeting arranged with the hospital board and with the medical profession. The invitation to the newspaper man was not extended by me. He came there uninvited.

**Mr. Guy:** — He was invited by the mayor.

**Mr. Smishek:** — Well, he might have been invited by the mayor but the meeting was called by us. We had things to discuss with the hospital board and it is not normal when there are things you might want to discuss in confidence with a board or the medical profession to have in attendance the newspaper people. We did then meet, following our meeting, with the newspaper man and we gave him the story for the press. He was also free to discuss with the mayor what we discussed and also the medical profession. It is not our customary method to be having a meeting with delegations in the presence of the press.

**Mr. Guy:** — A supplementary question. I think that the Minister hasn't really answered the question. Surely to goodness if the mayor of the town who is also the chairman of the hospital board . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Ask the question, please.

**Mr. Guy:** — I would if you would just allow me. The mayor of the town is also the chairman of the hospital board. He invited the editor. I don't think it is fitting for the Minister of the Crown to overrule a local government. That is always their pattern, overrule a local government of any community.

**Mr. Smishek:** — Prior to the meeting I met with the mayor and he did not advise me that he invited the press to that meeting.

## 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 amendment thereto by Mr. Malone (Regina Lakeview).

**Mr. E.F. Gardner** (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, quite a number of Members on both sides of the House in this Debate have referred to the Land Bank Act and rightly so I believe because there is no doubt this is going to be one of the major issues in the coming election. Rural people continue to be concerned about massive purchases of our farm land by the NDP Land Bank. Last fall when they purchased the huge Matador Farm in western Saskatchewan they set up the first state or collective farm in North America and Mr. Messer was reported in the paper, and I haven't heard him deny it on any occasion: "That this is the first of many such arrangements."

These are the words he used. Land will no doubt be purchased from independent farmers, consolidated into large blocks and operated as state farms. No one is allowed to buy this land from the government and this again is something that has been discussed here and I invite anyone who is in doubt about this to get a copy of the lease from the Land Bank. It is no problem to get a copy of the up-to-date lease, read it very carefully yourself and in no place will you see that a farmer has any option or any opportunity to ever buy that land.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — One of the main issues in the next election will be simply this, who is going to control the farm land in Saskatchewan? Will it be free and independent farmers or will it be the socialist NDP Government? You know we are often asked in the country at meetings where the NDP are getting all the money to buy this land. Up to now we have had to give rather a vague answer. The Finance Minister has now admitted that they are using money borrowed from the Canada Pension Fund to finance the Land Bank. Over \$43 million of money contributed for pensions has been used by this socialist Government to buy up farm land for the state. We are also asked what the Liberal policy is regarding the Land Bank and I should like to put it on record here today so that there is no doubt about it.

First, we would abolish the NDP Land Bank because we simply don't agree with the philosophy of the Government owning our farm land. We could go into this in great detail but I am just making this point very clearly. Secondly, land presently leased from the Land Bank would be sold to the tenant who now has the land. Now we feel that this farmer is the logical purchaser because he has built his farming operations around this land. He may or may not have been the most deserving applicant originally but we feel it would be an injustice to take the land from him now. Thirdly, the Provincial Government would not buy farm land but would facilitate the transfer of the land from a retiring farmer to a deserving farmer. The provincial Liberal government to do this would provide the security by guaranteeing a loan for these farmers so they would have no difficulty in purchasing land.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — This, Mr. Speaker, is the key to the Liberal program as it is now one of the major problems facing young farmers. I should like you to note at this time also that there will be no problem for retiring farmers who wish to sell their land as the market would improve by having government guaranteed purchasers in the field at all times to buy land. If necessary the provincial Liberal Government would subsidize the interest for a period of years or other conditions of the sale to facilitate transfer. At the time of sale we would do whatever is necessary to facilitate the transfer but we would not break the lease of the farmer if he wished to hang on to it for a period of time. This is consistent with the Liberal philosophy of returning ownership of farm land to farmers.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — Mr. Speaker, in this debate

yesterday, my colleague for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) referred to our position on the Crow's Nest rates and to be sure that everyone is clear on our position I am going to repeat what he said:

The Crow's Nest rates are a basic right of western farmers to which they are fully entitled. I am opposed to any change in these rates. You know what the Minister in charge of the Wheat Board has said, he said, farmers have no need to worry, there will be no change in the Crow's Nest rates. The Federal Government and the Wheat Board have no intention of changing the Crow's Nest rates.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — Mr. Speaker, a good deal of time and money is being spent on a subject where everyone is in agreement. We see ads in the paper, we see the NDP politicians holding meetings and of course everyone wonders why they're doing this. And it's a very simple political reason. The NDP and the Minister of Agriculture, the Provincial Minister of Agriculture want the farmers to forget about real provincial problems.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — The Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Messer would like the farmers to forget about the Land Bank for about three months. He doesn't want them to talk about the Land Bank. He doesn't talk about it in his speeches. He likes to talk about something else. The Minister doesn't want to talk about the compulsory Hog Marketing Commission. He doesn't want them to remember that there was no vote of producers when he put it in. He doesn't want them to remember that there is no producer control of the Commission and that hog marketing in this Province is now a mess. And I have here a few recent press reports and I'm sure that most people have seen them. One indicates that the hog manager was fired and we realize that there have been some great problems in the Hog Marketing Commission. We see in another press report of a hog marketing workers strike. Another one said fewer pigs were going to market and they go on to report that the hog population in the province is down by 28 per cent. And I'd like to make a comment on this.

I see the Minister of Mineral Resources is not in his seat but I should like to quote from a press report that he put out a year ago last spring, April 1973 and he was speaking at Kindersley, I believe. And this is put out officially in a press release at the taxpayers' expense. At that time Mr. Cowley said:

Programs like the Land Bank and FarmStart are aimed at increasing cattle production by 75 per cent and tripling our hog population as soon as possible.

Now if they are going to triple their hog population, they are going to have to reverse the trend because immediately after he said that the hog population went down by 28 per cent.

The provincial auditor, as you know, has reported inefficiencies in the operation of the Commission and again I look at the press report. It says, "First hog marketing records

inadequate". The producers, Mr. Speaker, could do a better job of operating their own affairs.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — The Minister of Agriculture should immediately change his policy of having government officials and himself run the Commission. He should turn it over to the producers. And I call on him to do this immediately.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — You know Mr. Messer would like farmers to forget about the difficulties faced by our cattlemen at the present time. His cash advance program for calves has been a disaster. Feed costs are high and calf prices have declined. The Minister of Agriculture has put our farmers further in debt and if the young farmer doesn't pay his loan in the time it is due, the NDP will charge him 14 per cent interest. 14 per cent interest, Mr. Speaker.

I have in my hand here, and I'd be glad to send anyone a copy who would like to look at it, an Order-in-Council put out by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Messer on October 29, 1974, referring to the calf loans and I quote:

Each loan shall bear interest on the principal sum at a rate of 14 per cent per annum until the entire amount of the principal sum and the said interest thereon is paid in full.

Now how is that for taking a whack at the cattle farmer when he is in real difficulty! 14 per cent interest by the Minister of Agriculture for these young cow-calf producers in the province.

The NDP would also like farmers to forget about the drastic rise in the price of materials used on the farm. It's been mentioned here already and farmers are aware that fertilizer has gone up from about \$95 a ton to \$190 a ton and indications are that it may continue to rise. Baler twine up from nine dollars a bag to \$30 a bag. Barbed wire about the same amount. Machinery and repairs are sky high.

What is the Minister of Agriculture doing about it? Absolutely nothing. We would welcome a Provincial Government investigation into machinery prices, and if initiated by the Government, we would give it our full support.

Farm fuel is up 50 per cent in two years. Still the NDP does nothing.

We're supposed to have a Consumer Affairs Department in Saskatchewan. No one has ever heard of them, especially the farmers.

The NDP would rather not talk about strikes that are plaguing our grain industry and the problems we are having with our grain movement. Farmers are losing many millions of dollars in lost sales at a time when grain prices are excellent. By the time the grain is moving freely, we don't know what can happen. The price might drop and there will be a very



substantial loss to the farmers. In addition to this our reputation as a reliable supplier of grain is being ruined. Union bosses who are responsible for a good number of these strikes are friends of the NDP. Our Provincial Minister of Agriculture doesn't want to talk about that. He doesn't get in touch with them and tell them to try and get these strikes settled. He does nothing. He goes around the country talking about some mythical change in Crow's Nest rates. The Minister would rather talk about some non-issue like this so that farmers would forget about the mess that he's created with his own policies. You know the Minister of Agriculture would also like to sweep under the rug the situation regarding the Saskatchewan Feed Grain Commission which he set up in 1973 with a great deal of fanfare as we all recall. He sent out a letter to every farmer in the province and he keeps saying he doesn't know how many farmers there are but he doesn't have any difficulty in sending everyone of them a letter very often and a very politically motivated letter at that. But the Feed Grains Commission that the Minister set up with a very auspicious birth, with all of these letters going out, he quietly disbanded last year and I have the report from the paper, "Saskatchewan Feed Grain Market Commission officially disbanded." The truth of the matter was that he spent thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money setting it up and announcing it. It served absolutely no function and it simply died a natural death.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP want complete and absolute control of every aspect of agriculture and complete control over the farmers of this Province. They're working towards that goal and no one can deny it. If they are ever re-elected they will accelerate this program. Much of the legislation has already passed by this NDP Government. They're just waiting until after the next election to put it into effect.

And I'm going to tell you some of the things the NDP would do. First of all purchases for the Land Bank would be very greatly stepped up. They like to talk about the time it would take to take over the land at the rate we're going. Of course we all know that as soon as the election is over, they'll very greatly step up the rate at which they're purchasing these farms. State farms would be established all over Saskatchewan. And again I quote Mr. Messer's words from the Leader-Post on October 12, 1974 when he talked about the Matador farm purchase. He said this would be the first of many such arrangements in the future. We also would know there would be a compulsory cattle marketing board set up by this Government without a free vote of producers, without producer control. He's done exactly that for hogs. Cattlemen, you know, Mr. Speaker, are a pretty independent bunch of people and the NDP are afraid to jump on them too hard just prior to an election. And as soon as an election is over, we all know what could happen.

Those of you who followed the press reports of the last NDP provincial convention will know that they discussed at length two proposals which are basically NDP policy and I'd like to remind you of those two proposals.

One was the abolition of tax-free gasoline for farm trucks and I'm sure all those Members opposite who were at the convention will remember the discussion and also the discussion that went on about restricting the size of farms. You will also recall the press report put out by the former Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. McArthur stating that there would

have to be something done about restricting the size of farms. Some moves have already been made in these directions but they are again waiting until after the election.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — If you'll remember in last week's Western Producer a letter which I think gives all farmers something to think about and I'd like to refer you to that letter, if any of the Members would like to take a look at it. It was suggested that the Government could insist in having the first option in buying any farm land offered for sale and that all the land in an estate might revert to the province. If re-elected, Mr. Speaker, the NDP will no doubt set up an Agriculture Land Board which would have tremendous power in controlling and gaining control of farm land for the socialist state. Now some of the NDP Members may get up later in this debate and say that this is only a guess or speculation. I might remind them that we were guessing when we guessed that a hog board would be set up without a vote and without producer control and we were exactly right.

I'd also like to remind you that in the December 1973 session I predicted that the Department of Agriculture was checking into the possibility of setting up state farms and subsequently this has been done. Again we guessed right in this regard. All evidence indicates that we are right again and I'm sure that some of these suggestions will be emerging facts if the NDP are ever re-elected. NDP philosophy is to control agriculture completely so it is not difficult to speculate on how it will be done.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other item in the budget that I would like to spend a moment on and I refer to the pitifully small amount given to our old age pensioners. At the present time the old people of this province receive a guaranteed amount of about \$220 per month, all from the Liberal Government in Ottawa. Many provinces across Canada have added benefits for senior citizens. But what about Saskatchewan? Now there is some doubt in the budget whether the payment was going to be \$14 or \$20 to these people, but regardless of what it is, out of a budget of \$110 million, only \$7 million is being spent on this program for senior citizens. We've made it clear that a Liberal Government has made a firm commitment to guarantee all people over 65 years of age an income not of \$225 or \$230 a month but \$350 a month or \$500 for a couple.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gardner:** — Mr. Speaker, rail line abandonment will be discussed by one of my colleagues later in this debate but I should like to mention one thing in this regard. In certain areas of this province most people agree that some rail lines must go. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is in the process of reducing its elevator points from about 1,100 down to about 375. The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Messer, in this House a few days ago mentioned a number of rail lines where there is a duplication of service but many present rail lines are absolutely necessary and these must stay. There's one in my constituency, Mr. speaker, running through Maryfield and Kipling. It is a main CN line and it must be transferred to the permanent network as soon as possible so that it cannot be touched for 25 years. There should

be no problem having this done. The districts concerned should get together and present a united front. I've already done some preliminary work in this regard and accumulated some necessary information.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make one further comment. The provincial government revenues today are at fantastically high rates, due to high grain prices, inflation, and a world demand for potash and oil. The Provincial Government is getting far more revenue from the taxpayer of this province today. For example, in the Education Tax in 1972 they took \$72 million from the people of the province. This year they will take \$139 million from the people. The Provincial Income Tax in 1972, paid by the taxpayers of this province, was \$70 million. This year the Government will get \$169 million. From Liquor Tax, \$29 million in 1972, \$55 million this year. It is unfortunate that the NDP are not using this money to either reduce taxes or improve services.

Alberta, with a similar type of economy has no sales tax. They've removed completely the education tax mill rate levy on farm land. They have a much lower rate of provincial income tax and it's too bad that we are not able to enjoy these advantages here. But Alberta has a free enterprise government, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a socialist government.

A wasteful, extravagant inefficient government that hires hundreds of its friends at huge salaries and throws the peoples' money away on socialist schemes while the taxpayer is paying the shot.

I believe it's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that I will be supporting the amendment, but not supporting the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. T.L. Hanson** (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure and enthusiasm that I rise to enter this budget debate. I want to take a couple of minutes just to counteract some of the misrepresentation that the Member opposite for Moosomin has given to this House. When he talks about using Canada Pension Plan money to finance the Land Bank Commission, I think he is misrepresenting the facts, because every government in Canada is entitled to use the Pension Plan money for anything it sees fit. That is our money. We have paid into the fund and every government uses it for its priority projects. Under the Liberal Government the priority project happened to be four-laned highways and pulp mills and I say we're doing a lot better job with that money, putting farmers back on the land.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — When I hear them talk about the Crow's Nest rates, last week the Crow's Nest rates had to go! This week they've got to stay! I think they're getting saddle sores and a little crotch bound. They switch sides on a horse so often. I was just absolutely amazed out at Sedley last week at a 'Save Our Railways Committee' to see the smooth politicians coming on totally adopting a Pool policy when two weeks before they were opposing it strongly. You know figures lie when politicians figure, or at least when some politicians figure. When the Member talks

about the Feed Grains Commission, the reason the Feed Grains Commission had to be abandoned was that the Federal Government would not allow us or give us the power to make it work and they full well know it. And I ask the Members, when is the vote coming on the Feed Grains Policy that Otto Lang brought in? Remember that was promised a while back. You talk about the freedoms of democracy. When are we going to get some out in western Canada? The old Liberal strategy is divide and conquer, and that's exactly what they're trying to do on the railway situation right now.

Mr. Speaker, I know the people of Saskatchewan and particularly the people of Qu'Appelle-Wolseley endorse and support the programs outlined in this progressive, humanitarian document.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — I think that the statement in the Financial Times of March 17 sums up the attitude of the vast majority in measuring the performance of this Government and I want to again read it into the records of this House. I quote:

Nonetheless the 1.14 billion Budget was still considered a conservative document in an election year, forecasting in classic New Democratic terms a slim surplus of some \$3 million. The document appeared at first glance to be typical of the character of the Administration of Mr. Blakeney, attractive to the taxpayer, yet sensible enough to stand the testing appraisal of professional economists who are fed up with having to hand this Government the good housekeeping accolade every year.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — I think the sound business practices of this Blakeney Government will soon become, not only the envy of other governments, but the example to the other governments. And I'm proud to have played a small part in the direction of this Administration.

I want to refer specifically to a few programs which affect my constituents directly and you will notice, Mr. Speaker, that I use specific figures in my comments, not the generalities like thousands of jobs and millions of dollars, as are so callously bandied about by the Liberal rumour mill.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — Have you ever noticed, Mr. Speaker, they do not take a position on a question or issue based on principles or morals. Their only guidance has been and will remain pure pork barrel politics and motivation by the dollar sign. I'm sure they have picked their colour well. Green is a cold colour in the colour spectrum, Mr. Speaker, and is used in most countries as a predominant colour in paper currency. Cold hard cash. Cold hard politicians and I suggest that after the election, Mr. Speaker, we will see a lot of cold hard green-faced politicians, mainly Liberals, turned out to pasture.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — The Leader of the Opposition criticizes our Hog Stabilization program saying we give more to the pigs than to the pensioners. My farmers, and I repeat, farmers, receive \$264,751.37 to stabilize their operations as of August 1974. We have 319 producers in the Qu'Appelle-Wolseley constituency which would make the average received \$830. I repeat, the \$830 was received by the farmers, not the pigs and these farmers do not appreciate the front rows of the Liberal benches opposite referring to them as pigs.

The FarmStart program has granted \$375,892 to 69 farmers in my constituency. Total capital loans to these individuals reached \$1,898,232. Are the Members opposite trying to tell us that the inflow of this nearly \$2 million has not stimulated the economy of every community in my area? Yes, I will admit that most of these farmers borrowed funds to go into cattle, not hogs, and I can well imagine that some of them are having difficult times with cattle prices being as low as they are. But let's remember a few things. Cattle prices are low because of a fictitious law of supply and demand. To say that there is not a demand for beef when millions of people are starving, is an outright contradiction. It is the need for money which deprives the Ethiopians and the Bengalis from purchasing food that they so urgently need. A problem accountable not only to nature's droughts but to the capitalistic system which permits people to die of starvation while beef producers lose money here, only to create an artificial market, Mr. Speaker. The federal answer, send some fertilizer over to them to eat.

I want to also remind those opposite that under FarmStart the repayment terms are far more attractive than from the banks. Most of these farmers, Mr. Speaker, do not have to even make payments until next fall on FarmStart cattle loans. We are not about to foreclose on their assets as would the banking institutions whose representatives are the Liberal Members opposite.

Land Bank has also played a role in revitalizing and strengthening our communities. The Liberals are trying to smudge up the success of the Land Bank on the question of the words 'may sell'. I want to stress the fact that those who sell to the Commission do so voluntarily and those who lease the land do so voluntarily. If the lessee is worried about the right of ownership, why would there be nearly 20 applicants for every parcel of land offered by the Commission? The answer - they trust our Government, they like our program, and they appreciate the opportunity to start farming.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — Would the farmers in the southwest corner of the province, where Allen Oliver (Shaunavon) comes from, would they be willing to give up their leasing rights? I don't think that any of them would want to try and finance the capital required to purchase the large blocks of land that they need to make a viable cattle operation in that area. It seems strange to me that the Liberals can argue to do away with the Land Bank and yet they would oppose most vociferously the sale of that land down there because maybe some of their friends couldn't muster up enough cash to buy it. I want you all to consider the lessees of these Land Bank farms in your own area.

Let's look at our own district. Let's look at the individuals, Mr. Speaker. I look at Fillmore, where a young farmer and his wife got a farm unit. He formerly worked for the corporation farm in our area. Did the Boll Land Company offer to get him started? No way. They like hired hands and they want hired hands and they don't want tenants. They don't want someone running his own farm.

I look at Odessa, where one of the first units was allocated. He complained about some problems with the red tape and the forms and the purchase provisions on the buildings but when I asked him if we should have delayed allocating the land until all the forms were perfect, he answered "no". He appreciated getting that extra year of production and he appreciated getting that start. That start to be a farmer.

I look at Sintaluta, Mr. Speaker, where two young couples rent from the Land Bank. They are a vital part of that community and they will be a vital part of the school system in years to come. They appreciate the Land Bank and they know it works.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — When asked whether they worried about the option to buy the land, most of the Land Bank tenants replied, "Who cares, we like it this way", or "With what, if we had money we would have borrowed through Farm Credit and bought our own land". Probably the most common answer has been, "No, we don't worry, we trust you fellows!"

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — I wonder if the Liberals opposite ever had anyone tell them, 'we trust you fellows'.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — Last week a man from Calgary came to see me. He has a family with three small children and he's fed up with the city rat race. He wants to farm and he wants to farm in Saskatchewan. He has some savings and qualifies well under the Farm Credit Corporation's regulations. Decent land in Alberta now moves at about \$250 to \$300 an acre, comparable to approximately \$175 an acre for similar land in Saskatchewan. No matter which province this individual chooses, Mr. Speaker, he must almost certainly rent land or maintain another job if he expects to provide a decent living from the land. His collateral base can not finance enough land to make a viable living. If he did buy a farm for \$100,000 he would pay \$285,000 for it by the time the mortgage was paid off. This potential farmer wished that there was more Land Bank land available in Saskatchewan.

Certainly we know of some problems in this dynamic new approach to land tenure and we may know of an applicant who is just as qualified as the one who received the land. But let's not forget the 1,500 new farmers who are farmers because of the Land Bank, instead of being chained to some job that does not fit their ambitions.

March 20, 1975

I want to turn now to another aspect of the budget. Mr. Speaker, since I was elected as part of this Government, \$2,296,631.77 has been spent on highway programs in the Qu'Appelle-Wolseley constituency.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — I am proud of this program which is rebuilding highway 33, highway 16, doing work on 47 and eventually on the four lanes of No. 1. Another \$3 million of work is still needed, after the complete neglect of this constituency by the former government. Sure they oiled some highways just before the election but we needed a complete rebuilding program and we're getting it now.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — Had they not scuttled the Department of Highways' construction crews, our highway budget might be 15 per cent lower today. The few crews that we did have left moved dirt last year for approximately 35 cents a yard, while many of the tenders were coming in at 55 to 60 cents. Certainly government crews are not the total answer. But, we must rebuild those crews to a size where they will act as a proper yardstick and control in the construction costs. I'm glad to see further funds coming into my constituency this year. The spin-off of these highway programs certainly affects the economies of our communities in a favourable way and we appreciate it.

I want to turn now to our budget and to the senior citizens. The flexibility and humanitarian conscience of this Government permitted nursing homes to be built in communities never before possible. We've got a nursing home in Indian Head, a 32 bed home and I'm certainly proud of the fact that we were able to do this as our Government.

Mr. Speaker, I had other prepared notes. I had to take some time out of my address to correct some of the problems that the Member opposite brought up; some of his misrepresentations. In summing up, Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more time to deal with other matters which are important to my constituents, but I shall deal with these at a later time and in a later debate. The most serious matter for Saskatchewan right now, Mr. Speaker, is the fungus-lingus virus which has once again attacked Saskatchewan and threatens to destroy the railways, the elevators and the small communities.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hanson:** — Fungus-lingus can only be controlled by small bits of paper and these small bits of paper are ballots and I'm confident that the electorate, the farmers and the townspeople and the senior citizens will not forget the actions of the provincial and federal Liberals. LIFT, deterrent fees, 1,600 new taxes in 1968. They will not forget and they won't forget being called pigs today. I'm confident that the people will rally behind our Government and bring in more budgets such as this one and that's why I'm a New Democrat. I like working with a government the people can trust, Mr. Speaker. I will support the budget and oppose the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. H.H.P. Baker** (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, budgets presented in this Legislature, we all know, have far-reaching effects on the whole economy of this province. They either spell restraint on the economy, thus creating unemployment, or give it a buoyant future, thus creating more employment. This budget contains sufficient funds that will keep up with the rapid progress and growth of our fine province at a solid pace. Yes, it is a budget of progress and achievement. I commend the Minister of Finance for his presentation.

I have said time and time again that the future strength of our Canadian economy will always lie in agriculture. Canada and Saskatchewan can only remain strong by having a good agricultural economy. How can this be achieved? First of all, there must be security given to farmers. This can be accomplished through a stabilized agricultural industry. By this I mean, we need to set floor prices for all agricultural commodities. Floor prices for hogs, similar to what this Government has done over the past two years. Floor prices for cattle and all other livestock on the same basis. Not one year at a time, but at least for a five-year period, tied to an escalation clause if prices rise or decline.

Who is to take the lead in this? It is obvious that the leadership in this must rest with the Federal Government because agriculture is spread over most provinces in this country in some form or other. Yes, there could also be a cost sharing by provinces. This is the only way we will get security and stability for the farming industry. This is the only way to keep the farmers on the land. This is the only way to encourage others to take up farming.

The agricultural countries are saying, grow more food for the hungry world! Even Otto Lang is saying this now. Not too many years ago his cry was: "Seed less, the world has an overabundance of natural foods. Please, farmers don't grow any more, follow me and I will LIFT you out of your problems."

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — Yes, he lifted us into hundreds of millions of losses for our western Saskatchewan farmers. It is on his conscience that perhaps many in the world have suffered through starvation because of this senseless policy. The extra grain we would have had might have been shared with the undernourished and starving millions.

What else is lurking upon the horizon that can financially put our farming industry into bankruptcy? Number one is freight rates, Mr. Speaker. To destroy the freight rate structures that now exist under the Crow's Nest rate system, would spell disaster to the farmers, the cities, towns and villages of this province and the whole West. The issue of Crow's Nest rates is an issue of such magnitude that it is enough to declare war on Ottawa or create another Louis Riel Rebellion. You can't trust them in Ottawa, because they are always speaking with a forked tongue. You will be paying 75 cents to \$1 a bushel in not too many years, Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, to haul your wheat if the federal policies are carried out, when today you only pay an average of 12 cents a bushel. I have always understood that Mr. Weatherald, the Member for Cannington, emphatically wants



the Crows Nest rates removed, thus supporting the Federal Government. This is what his people out there are telling me. Yes, our cities, villages and towns will suffer, too.

These Crow's Nest rates must be kept at all costs as they are the pulse and heartbeat for western agriculture and particularly for Saskatchewan farmers. Agriculture is also the heartbeat for our urban communities. If the farmer hasn't got it, we in the cities and other urban centres haven't got it either. Actually behind it all is that they really want to destroy orderly marketing, and this is part of their overall plan.

I could also bring into this the financial and economic effects that rail line abandonment will create for many of our smaller urban centres. It is difficult and rough now to maintain the status quo for them. Rail line abandonment would destroy the very basic fabric of our smaller urban areas, thus causing further financial ruin and decreased taxation for our future provincial budgets.

Another serious cause for ruined provincial and municipal budgets is that dreaded word, inflation. Last year the generous contributions given to urban municipalities, namely cities, towns and villages revitalized these communities. The cities, towns and villages received the \$10 unconditional grant per person, also police grants, transit grants, sewage grants, library grants, equalization grants and others, making a total of over 2 1/2 million dollars for 1974 for our city. The urban centres for 1975 really needed another \$10 to \$15 unconditional grant . . .

**Mr. Weatherald:** — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** — What's the Point of Order?

**Mr. Weatherald:** — Mr. Speaker, the Point of Order is I wish to make it absolutely clear, I said in my speech yesterday I was not in favour of removing the Crow's Nest rates.

**Mr. Baker:** — . . . to help defray the 12 per cent cost of living that hit this country and us in 1974.

**Mr. Weatherald:** — The Member has misconstrued, deliberately misconstrued what I said.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! Those are debating points . . .

**Mr. Weatherald:** — I am not in favour of changing the Crow's Nest rates . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! When a Member makes a statement and the other Member comes back with their interpretation, those are debating points.

**Mr. Baker:** — The Member for Cannington likes to dish it out but he can't take it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — The urban centres for 1975 . . .

**Mr. Weatherald:** — The Member opposite can read the transcript. I dare him to read the transcript.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! We can't have a crossfire this way. This is a debate . . .

**Mr. Weatherald:** — It is a matter of what I said, and what I said was I am in favour of no change in the Crow's Nest rates.

**Mr. Speaker:** — If you wish to follow the rules then you must wait until the conclusion of his speech and not during the speech to do so.

**Mr. Baker:** — The urban centres for 1975 really needed another, if I may repeat, Mr. Speaker, \$10 or \$15 unconditional grants to help defray the 12 per cent cost of living that hit this country and us in 1974. The \$75 per capita grant from which Regina will receive over \$11 million over a five-year period was a welcome gift last year. These moves, as I said, revitalized our communities. Through this we created new projects, increasing employment which was the reason in part we had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Virtually we have no unemployment in our city of Regina, in other words, we are looking for people. Because of these new facilities and services, naturally our operating costs have gone up, but the inflation of last year has skyrocketed so much that it is putting municipalities into financial difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to other items in the budget. The \$200 Property Improvement Grant being raised by \$40 this year will certainly be welcomed by taxpayers to help cover the spiralling inflationary trend over the past year and will cover some tax mill rate increases which will be imposed by most of the cities, towns and villages in 1975.

I will always be proud of the Property Improvement Grant because it was in my first speech in this House of 1965 at which time I advocated this method of property tax relief. I am pleased that the pensioners or senior citizens will receive an increase in their pensions for a single person of \$20 and for married couples an increase of \$36.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — We know they deserve more in this day of high costs. But it is time that the Federal Government acted on pensions now.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — I have always advocated pensions be given without the Means Tests to all pensioners and in this case the increase

would have applied to all pensioners over 65 years of age. To this end I recommend that this House call upon the Federal Government to reduce the age to 60 for men, under the Canada Pension Plan and a lower age for women. I am glad to see an increase in grants to those living in nursing homes.

May I repeat, as I have done on numerous occasions, that I believe most emphatically that all costs for levels of care in our nursing homes be brought under the medicare plan. I have always believed and advocated in this House that the Government must have a cradle-to-the-grave program for all people whether rich or poor.

I am pleased to see the plan for pensioners, in which they will receive \$500 for repairs to their homes, is continued. Many pensioners are very pleased with this plan and are taking advantage of it, in other words, over 14,000 pensioners have taken advantage of this fine program. Perhaps we could expand it to the point where a pensioner can apply for it every three years. This is one way of upgrading their homes and does not permit deterioration of properties.

Mr. Speaker, because the budget last year did give new life to our throttled economy and our population, our population has increased by over 6,000 people in Saskatchewan since January, 1974. The city of Regina's population is growing rapidly. Our housing and other construction had reached a new all-time high of close to \$94 million. Regina was the only city in Canada that showed a marked increase in housing construction and it appears it will exceed that record in 1975.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — It appears that this year's overall construction could also exceed that of last year. Hopefully, many of the 103,000 people that left us from 1968 to 1971 will come home again. Many are already making their way back because of our buoyant and heated economy, realized because of a good New Democratic Government.

The people of this province in the coming election are not going to be hoodwinked by false promises as was the case in 1964. They want this Government returned . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — . . . to keep building a solid economy, one that will give us a wider tax base, one that will give all of our Saskatchewan people security. They want an economy that will give us freedom from want; an economy that will keep us free from deterrent fees on people who become ill; they want a government that will continue to give us free medicare for hospital and doctor bills; they want an economy that pays people decent wages; they want a government that provides extended holidays with pay and good workmens' compensation payments; they will fight to help us keep our New Democrat wonderful government insurance plan; they want to keep the hearing aid program and the dental care for children. They enjoy free chiropractic services; hopefully it is not too far off that we have a complete dental care plan for all citizens in Saskatchewan as soon as possible, and they will support a drug plan that keeps costs within reason.

We believe in sharing the fruits of our labour or in other words equalize and share the wealth with others. They don't want a government that creates a situation where ten or more people are waiting for the other man's job.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have confidence in the good people of Saskatchewan, that they will return this New Democratic Government at the next election . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker:** — . . . because they know if there is a change again, it will create disaster for them; insecurity in making a living for their families and destroy their standard of living and quality of life once again.

To those of you who are within reach of my voice today, I know that you appreciate the security that this Government together with you has developed in this province. I know, too, that you and I want to keep it so for our families. I invite the people of Regina and Saskatchewan to gird themselves and see that we never lose this Government again.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this people's Government will be back even stronger than before.

I support the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. A. Matsalla** (Canora): — Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a great pleasure to take part in this Budget Debate. This year's budget is the fourth balanced budget of this New Democratic Government. All four budgets are benefiting the people of Saskatchewan and they have the effect of carrying out the NDP election platform of 1971.

Mr. Speaker, I want first of all to congratulate Finance Minister, Wes Robbins, for his effective presentation of Saskatchewan's record billion-dollar budget. I am certain that the people of this province will appreciate the tax cuts, as well as the added services contained in the budget. The majority of Saskatchewan people will recognize that this Government is trying to provide the best in service to its people, but, Mr. Speaker, there will be a small minority group of Liberals and Conservatives who will not see, nor will they hear, nor will they understand, what this budget is all about, and particularly so, Mr. Speaker, is the group to your left led by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday last when taking part in the debate, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that this budget is a 'Do nothing Budget.' He also spoke of it as "Nothing of consequence for anyone". Can you imagine anyone being so shutoff, so tunnel-visioned and so politically confused, as not to see anything good in this budget?

Mr. Speaker, in the 1971 election, the New Democrats presented a New Deal for People program. The people recognized and accepted the program as in their best interests and gave the New Democratic Party a strong mandate to carry out the program.

This New Democratic Government, Mr. Speaker, has now carried out its election program. In many instances it has gone beyond its commitments. The performance of this Government is one that the people of Saskatchewan can trust. Mr. Speaker, it has demonstrated responsibility, faithfulness and honesty to the electorate. The Liberal preachings of "doom and gloom" and "impossible" turned out to be a New Democratic Government success story of action and true performance.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my next remarks more specifically to the people of my constituency.

The economic and social conditions in the Canora constituency are typical of the parkland region. Agriculture is the prime industry. The small family farm is the life fabric of the community. The statement of "when the farmers have it, everybody else has it", is very true and very applicable to our area. The economic conditions of the farmers relate directly to the economic conditions of the businessman and the worker in the community.

Over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, and during the New Democratic Government's term of office the farming industry has been experiencing some of its best years. With fairly good crops, improved prices and greater farm security, farming in our area is becoming quite attractive. Through the Government's Land Bank, FarmStart, and other agricultural programs many elderly farmers were given the opportunity of retiring in dignity and many young people were given an opportunity to start and expand their farming operations.

Mr. Speaker, the Land Bank is talked about very highly in our area by both the old and the young, by New Democrats and, as well, by many open-minded Liberals. These people, Mr. Speaker, recognize the real purpose of the program and how it could maintain the existence of the family farm. The distortions and untruths used by the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal spokesmen to scare people that the Government is taking over the land in the province simply illustrates and reinforces the lack of credibility in the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, I want to devote some of my remarks to the various accomplishments in the Canora constituency. During the last four years, the condition of highways in the Canora constituency has shown marked improvement. No. 5 highway from Canora, west to Saskatoon, was reconstructed; No. 14 from Yorkton to Saskatoon was reconstructed to a high grade standard; No. 49 from Preeceville to Kelvington was completed; oiling of highway No. 314 from Buchanan south to connect No. 14 at Springside and highway No. 229 to the provincial park provides a dust-free road between two main highways, No. 5 and No. 14, and a resort road to the park area at Good Spirit Lake; and No. 9 and No. 49 between Stenen junction to Preeceville was also reconstructed. We in the Canora constituency can be proud of the highway system we have in our area. At this time I want to commend the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) and his staff for allocating a fair share of the highway program to our constituency.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns of the New Democratic Party and the Government was, and is, to continue to encourage young people to take up farming. This Government's Land Bank, FarmStart and associated agricultural programs are being

directed towards that concern and are proving very successful. In the Canora constituency alone, some 88 Land Bank leases were granted and some 67 FarmStart applications were approved. The capital amount expended in FarmStart amounted to over \$1.5 million and the grants provided to the 67 young farmers amounted to \$308,000. This, Mr. Speaker, is a real and true effort by this Government to set up young people in farming.

Through the agriculture support programs, other projects have been undertaken. A new veterinary clinic is being built in Preeceville. The grant allocated towards its construction amounts to \$25,000. In addition, this Government is providing substantially increased veterinary travelling, clinic maintenance and stockyard inspection grants to the Norquay and Canora veterinary services districts. Attention has been given by this Government to flood control and drainage projects. The Canora constituency in the year 1973-74 received grants amounting to \$116,150, as compared to \$31,214 paid in the last year of the Liberal Government.

The Hog Price Stabilization program, Mr. Speaker, was a salvation to the many hog producers we have in the riding. Some \$117,922 was paid in subsidies to 283 hog producers. Incidentally, the payment here was made to hog producers and not to hogs, as insinuated the other day by the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke in this debate. His remarks, Mr. Speaker, were an insult to the farmers and hog producers of this province, as well as a smear on our senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the Leader of the Opposition ought to make a public apology to these people and the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in our New Deal for People election program we promised to reduce property school taxes down to 25 mills. We have fulfilled this commitment and as a matter of fact have gone beyond the promised tax reduction. In 1974 school taxes were reduced to an average of 23 mills. This Government is aiming to maintain this level in 1975. This tax reduction was only possible through substantial increases in school operating and construction grants and through this Government's performance in increasing and extending the Homeowner Grants from \$70 to homeowners, to the maximum Property Improvement Grant on homes, farms and businesses up to \$330 - Mr. Speaker, a difference of well over four times.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to examine now with you how this Government performed in providing our school system with assistance towards improving services in the small community centres in the Canora constituency. These are some of the accomplishments: a new gym in Preeceville; a new gym in Invermay; an addition to the Senior Elementary School at Canora; a new gym at Buchanan; the beginning of construction of a new gym at Rama; and presently plans are being finalized to construct an addition to the elementary school at Preeceville.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, has great faith in the young people and it believes in providing the best possible school facilities in our education system. I want to commend the Minister of Education (Mr. MacMurchy) and the Government for giving special attention to vastly improving school facilities in small community centres. On behalf of my constituents I want to say, "Thank you, it is appreciated."

Mr. Speaker, one of the most effective community programs introduced by this Government is the municipal-provincial Winter Works program. The program is having a tremendous impact in providing small communities with facilities, particularly recreational, that otherwise would not have come about.

Under this program, many local governments and projects in the Canora constituency benefited from the grants available from street and road improvements to construction of new municipal buildings and from the renovation of community halls to construction of new community skating rinks. In Canora constituency alone, Mr. Speaker, many thousands of dollars of grants were paid during the past several years and many more thousands of dollars have been committed to be paid to the various municipalities and communities in this coming year.

Mr. Speaker, new and increased grants enabled rural and urban municipalities to maintain and provide the services demanded by local people. The increased snow removal grants for rural municipalities for last winter's operations reduced the cost equivalent to about three mills and in some instances up to five mills.

Allocation of more funds for grid and main access roads helped to speed up the construction of all-weather roads in rural areas. Since the introduction of the Operation Open Roads and MainStreet program, by this Government a couple of years ago, the quality of life in small urban centres has become richer and more attractive. As a matter of fact, some communities are experiencing a population growth.

The greatest impact in urban community development, Mr. Speaker, is coming from this Government's introduction of the Community Capital Fund. Under the program all towns undertaking capital projects can receive up to \$75 per capita over a five-year period. In the Canora constituency, this amounts to some \$500,000. In addition, the communities are paid an unconditional grant of \$10 per capita which amounts to well over \$60,000 annually. And, Mr. Speaker, this year's budget will extend the unconditional grant to organized hamlets.

The Liberals during their seven years of office and during campaigns gave lip service rather than deliveries. Rather than providing assistance to the town communities and equalizing the cost of services to the people of Saskatchewan, the Liberals imposed taxes upon taxes and said to the people of Saskatchewan that they have to be responsible and that they have to be prepared to pay for services. In the words of the Leader of the Opposition when he was the Provincial Treasurer in 1968, he said in his Budget Address and I quote:

Our Government believes that the amount people pay for services should be related to the use they make of these services.

This was their philosophy in 1968, and this is their philosophy today.

You can be sure, Mr. Speaker, that when Liberal spokesmen criticize the proposed drug plan and suggest removal of the small fee to be charged, they are speaking tongue-in-cheek and with hypocrisy. Their motive is to make it difficult for the Government to introduce the drug plan with the objective of destroying

it before delivery.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the budget before us is a good budget. A budget that will receive the acceptance of the majority of Saskatchewan people. This budget continues to move in the direction I am convinced people want us to move. It clearly documents that this Government, through its good management and through its new policy of resource development, is returning to the people of Saskatchewan the benefits of tax reductions and services they are rightfully entitled to. I will be giving my full support to the budget and will be supporting the main motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. H.W. Owens** (Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Minister of Finance on the budget he presented to this Legislature on Friday, March 14, 1975. It is a pleasure and a privilege to support such a magnificent document portraying the plans and ambitions of this Government for 1975-76 and beyond. A forecast for the magnitude of the programs has been made possible as a result of the institution of farsighted, revolutionary policies of the New Democratic Government since assuming office in June, 1971.

It is hard to realize that in only four years, the Province of Saskatchewan has been lifted from a deprived, depressed, despondent economy with high unemployment and falling population to the progressive, positive, healthy, economic surroundings we enjoy now, with practically full employment, to increased population figures. This Government during the 1971 election campaign proposed changes to upgrade our lagging and failing economy, the result of the seven years of Liberal Government administration. This Government has carried out those proposed changes, made them a reality, and the people of Saskatchewan are now reaping the benefits and according to the budget, will continue to reap the benefits of this progressive legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we are enjoying the results of four years of the most effective government in Saskatchewan's history. It is encouraging to note the healthy financial position of our province and the prospects for continuing prosperity. It is discouraging to note the regressive and restrictive policies we are, as a province, confronted with from our federal counterparts in Ottawa. The most distressing aspect is that these policies that have such an impact are proposed by our own Saskatchewan elected representative Otto Lang, and supported by the Liberal Members sitting in opposition to your left. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are expecting a provincial election in the month of June. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are listening to the progress in this Assembly. Their reactions to what they hear during this Budget Debate will be reflected in their actions at the polls. I feel fortunate to be sitting on a Government bench and, therefore, able to fully support this budget. Opposition Members cannot effectively oppose it and retain any credibility as legislators in Saskatchewan.

I note the Minister, in the budget, has designated significant sums of monies for the institution of new programs and for the extension of many that are currently being supported, either partially or totally, by provincial revenues, in every case for the betterment of society in general and for humanitarian



principles in particular.

Mr. Speaker, the cancellation of taxes in some instances, the reduction in taxes in other areas, the increases in exemptions in the succession duty, the increases in grants in many programs are measures that will be welcomed by most residents of our province. These changes reflect the increases in revenues from a growing economy and adjustments to the rates of royalties from natural resources. I congratulate this Government on its progressive and aggressive action in the total field of natural resources. These are actions which are providing the people of Saskatchewan with a greater return from their own reserves, returns which earlier filled to overflowing the bank accounts of corporations in faraway cities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about a Government program that intrigues me, and that is the Saskatchewan Land Bank Program. I suppose one of the reasons for this is because of the deal made by the Land Bank Commission and the Matador Co-op farm at Kyle, Saskatchewan and the deal made by private individuals with the Beechy Co-op Farm at Beechy, both farms located in the Elrose constituency.

The Matador Co-op farm deal is I am sure, the largest single transfer of farm land made by the Land Bank Commission, up to this time.

I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to this transaction because of the storm of protest that rose from the Liberal Opposition Members to your left, following the announcement of that most significant transaction. You recall, I am sure, the cry, "New Democratic Party Government Grabs More Land."

Mr. Speaker, it is beyond my comprehension to understand how anyone, be it a single person or a government, can 'grab onto' anything under a voluntary program. The owner makes the decision whether or not to accept the price offered. No pressure is applied by the Commission - the seller voluntarily decides.

In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, the owner, the Matador Co-op farm, turned down an offer of significantly higher price than that made by the Commission. Their principles could not be bought with money. Those principles uphold the co-operative concept of farming and only through the rental system of land transfer offered by the Land Bank Commission, was it possible for a new farm co-operative to become a reality. The result has been the incorporation of a ten-family co-operative farm unit. Yes, Mr. Speaker, ten families are secure in a viable farming operation. Their future livelihood is assured, the community will thrive as a result.

May I contrast that transfer of land with the sale of the Beechy Co-op farm about 12 miles distant, a similar co-operative farm sold to private investors. Three in number, only one actively farming in the community. The result, in this case, of a loss of approximately ten families from the community. I leave it to you to decide which of the two transactions is the better for the future of the respective communities and for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this Government for instituting the Land Bank system for land transfer. I commend the Government for

budgeting more funds to extend the program. Its popularity is spreading rapidly. I recommend to the land owners of Saskatchewan the facilities available to them through the Commission for land transfer. Again, Mr. Speaker, let me repeat, the plan is voluntary, you are not obliged to accept the offer made by the Commission, the choice is the seller's. Likewise, the lessee has a free choice to apply for a lease. If the agreement is not to the applicant's liking - no agreement is made.

What could be more democratic? The cry, "Wolf, wolf", is falling on deaf ears. Young farmers and expanding farmers are finding a way through the Land Bank Commission, to set up or build up a viable farm unit, thereby allowing them to stay on the farm or return to the farm and pursue the livelihood they love. This opportunity was not available to them under the former Liberal administration. Well do they remember the promise of that Liberal Government of low-cost money for farmers - money that never was.

Mr. Speaker, these people remember the promises made and they also remember the promises kept, and well will they remember the Government that kept them, come next June.

Mr. Speaker, there is another matter facing our agricultural community and in fact all of Saskatchewan and western Canada, that I wish to make a few comments on and that is rail line abandonment. Much has been said and is being said with few, if any, concrete decisions being made. Our spokesman from the West, sitting in Ottawa, appears to be backing-off recently toward a less aggressive policy. I just wonder if the prospects of an election in Saskatchewan in June is having a bearing on the emphasis he is using in his recent news releases.

Farmers, especially grain producers, are showing more concern in recent days, about rail line abandonment as they realize the disastrous effects the proposed changes would have on the future of their farming enterprise. Rail line abandonment coupled with inland terminals, variable handling charges and elimination of the Crow's Nest rates could change and will change the entire farming economy in Saskatchewan. Not only will it change the farming economy but it will change our total economy including our communities, our towns, our cities, our total way of life.

When I survey the situation that would exist in the Elrose constituency, if the rail line proposals were to be carried out, I am amazed, it's unbelievable. The Elrose constituency without any rail lines is just not conceivable. Such a move would be a disaster. I am heartened by the actions of the farmers in the area meeting to study, to protest, to propose acceptable change. I encourage them to continue and increase their efforts. This grassroots support will enhance the efforts of the Government of Saskatchewan as it continues to deal with Ottawa, endeavouring to reach a rational approach to rail line and grain handling services in our province.

Mr. Speaker, Crow's Nest rates are an integral part of Saskatchewan farming economics. Removal of this legislated rate on western grains from local elevator delivery points to ports of export is beyond the comprehension of fair-minded citizens. The prospect of forfeiting this piece of legislation, for any reason, is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, inflation is probably the most disturbing

factor in our budget process and is reflected by our apparent inability to have any control over ever-increasing prices. The Minister has dealt to some extent with the problem as it affects the provincial budget. I should like to make a few comments as I see a phenomenon as affecting the individual.

Inflation is reflected very graphically in the cost of everything one wishes, or indeed needs to buy. Prices are constantly rising. This is accepted today as a fact of life and is beyond the control of the buyer. Whether or not the article, be it an electric appliance or an automobile that is needed is the decision of the buyer. Just how the purchase is to be paid for is also the decision of the buyer. However, that decision is far too often influenced by the easy availability of credit, one of the curses of modern living if one fails to understand how to handle it.

In purchasing an article, far too often the buyer is more interested in the lowest dollar amount of the down payment than the actual cost of the purchase, in many cases not even inquiring into the amount of finance charges and/or interest charges.

Mr. Speaker, shopping for financing is a most important part of buying on a credit base, sadly, an aspect that is seldom considered. Finance contract buying along with credit card purchasing has become a part and parcel of our society. These conveniences are easy to come by, but are not free, as many are led to believe. Someone pays and pays dearly for the privilege of the use of credit and that someone is the party who accepts the service with a signature.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, credit buying can be convenient, but is the convenience worth the price? Credit purchasing is costly, a very significant factor in pushing inflation to unprecedented levels. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, can we as individuals protect ourselves, even in a small way?

In my opinion, personal budgeting is a process in learning to manage our resources and as such should be a subject in our educational system, now very conspicuous by its absence. In consideration of the lack of budgetary instruction in our school curriculum, I would propose that a suitable course be designed and its use urged through the community college education system. A simple easy route to the people.

It is my firm belief that next to the use and abuse of alcohol in our society, comes the misuse and abuse of our financing or money in our society. Proper buying and budgeting practices would have a very beneficial effect on the final cost of an article with a related effect on the cost of living and inflation. Marriage counselling has become a very important subject for young people contemplating matrimony, money counselling or budgetary control could possibly smooth off some of the bumps normally encountered after the sparkle of the honeymoon has faded.

Credit cards and finance contracts are like lambs in wolves' clothing. They miraculously and unsuspectingly materially increase the cost to the unlearned. They should be stamped, "users beware".

On a more pleasant note, Mr. Speaker, it is most encouraging to witness the growth of the co-operative movement in

Saskatchewan. It is encouraging to realize that more and more people are turning to this philosophy of working with each other to accomplish objectives they know are not attainable by individual effort. It has been a long time since the Rochdale residents of England pioneered this humanitarian way of life. Statistics are providing the figures to show the momentum of growth in recent years, indicating the residents of Saskatchewan are realizing the benefits available through co-operative effort.

One phase that is extremely heartening is that of the credit union movement, in which the members are using the service available to them to handle their own financing and return the fruits of their efforts to them, to enrich their standards of living, rather than having the cream of the profits skimmed off through institutions over which they have no control.

To indicate to you what can happen and is happening throughout the province, may I use as an example the credit union in my own home town of Eston. This credit union was organized in 1942 by only a handful of members. I am proud to say I was a founding member and have had the privilege of watching this growth from a small founding membership with practically no assets to an organization of 2,385 members with assets of \$12,843,000. This is only one of many that could be cited. Mr. Speaker, I point this credit union growth out to you to show that along with other affiliates such as the Co-op Credit Society and the Co-op Trust, the people of Saskatchewan are building a firm financial institution upon which they can rely. The credit union movement is owned and controlled by members on a one-to-one basis. I foresee great things for future Saskatchewanians through this great organization.

May I also, Mr. Speaker, compliment the Government for the formation of the Saskatchewan Development Fund, thereby providing a means whereby people may invest in a fund to help build Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this, the fourth budget of Saskatchewan is the largest ever for the Province of Saskatchewan. Other budgets were received with enthusiasm by our people, this one will bolster their pride in our Government to higher levels. The performance of this Government since taking over the reins of office in 1971 has no equal. Saskatchewan citizens know that what this Government says it will do - will be done. Its credibility is beyond question. Many times we hear comments such as, "Oh well, this is an election year so this is an election budget." In all probability this is true. However, this budget is much more than an election budget. This budget is designed to promote the growth of the Province of Saskatchewan in every facet of its varied economy. This budget is designed to make Saskatchewan a better place to live in physically and financially. This budget is designed to build Saskatchewan's future into a model of socialist democracy, to be enjoyed by Saskatchewan residents and gazed on with envy by all people.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the budget and oppose the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. J.G. Richards** (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the pleasure of speaking at one of the nominating meetings for an Independent candidate of the northwest constituency of Athabasca at Ile-a-la-Crosse. Since then Mr. Rod Bishop has been declared as an Independent candidate in that constituency and my lonely vigil as the one Independent candidate for the forthcoming provincial election is ended. I wish Mr. Bishop a success in his challenge for the riding of Athabasca in the forthcoming provincial election.

Mr. Speaker, to come to the budget before us perhaps the most important single figure pertaining to the finances of Saskatchewan is a figure that nowhere appears in the budget. It is a figure of \$160 million which the Minister of Finance informs us existed in the Energy and Resource Development Fund as of the 28th of February, 1975. Mr. Speaker, if we begin to look at the windfall resource revenue available to the people of Saskatchewan, even assuming there may be no drastic re-organization of priorities in taxation this year to be added to that \$160 million, assuming a conservative production of 70 million barrels at \$3, achieved by the Government will be \$210 million. The Government is estimating on potash, \$119 million, making a very reasonable assumption of a \$2 increase in Ottawa on the price of oil and that the Provincial Government takes 50 per cent of that, and another \$70 million.

Mr. Speaker, at the moment Saskatchewan is in the rare privileged fiscal position of having upwards of \$400 million in annual revenue which, if you had asked a Treasury official two years ago whether it would be available to the Saskatchewan people, he would have scoffed and laughed and considered it to be in the realm of total impossibility. Obviously we have the sheiks of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Export Countries), the most successful union the world has ever seen to thank in large part for this, but also we've got the hassling that has gone on between provincial governments, federal government, the oil companies, over who is to benefit from this windfall increase in resource revenues. So ferocious has been the hassling back and forth among all the parties involved that any rational discussion of how best we, as citizens of Saskatchewan, should spend that money, has been lost. At the risk of being a bit utopian, Mr. Speaker, I should like to devote my contribution to the Budget Debate to trying to force into the political debate coming up for this provincial election, just precisely what are some of the options that we as Saskatchewan people could choose to do with these fortuitous funds which are at our disposal. Now what could be done with it? Well, if we were to believe some of the worst Liberal ravings on the subject, it should all be given back to the resource companies because they need it. Somehow the oil companies would spend on an average of \$20 million on exploration during the late 1960s per year, somehow they should get a great deal more of up to \$200 million on oil tax revenue now. But, Mr. Speaker, if you ignore the Liberals and I think it is a fairly safe assumption to do so when it comes to looking for rational ways of using tax revenue, if we ignore the Liberals and we concentrate on what the Government is doing, I don't think we have cause for a great deal more optimism.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Richards:** — Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote from Bill 42. Bill 42 was a piece of legislation which established the Energy and

Resource Development Fund, and the purposes of that fund, Mr. Speaker, were:

- (a) to encourage and assist the Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Corporation or any person operating jointly or in partnership with such a corporation to the exploration and development of oil and natural gas resources of the province;
- (b) to encourage and assist persons to explore and develop the energy and mineral resources of the province;
- (c) to encourage and assist research into the conservation, development, production and utilization of the energy of the mineral resources of the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is clear from that kind of a document is that the thinking involved is a thinking that continues and perpetuates the idea that economic development in Saskatchewan should be based on large capital, expensive projects whether of a resource or industrial nature. It implies that. It implies that the province that tries hardest is going to emulate Alberta and its massive pouring of funds into an oil base, petrochemicals, tar sands, ammonia, fertilizer, petrochemical projects. We are going to try and use this money to develop energy, capital intensive resources. Now alternatively, Mr. Speaker, it could be said that the full purpose of that clause is to try and pull the wool over the eyes of the feds, that the purpose was to try and confuse the feds and that this wasn't really tax money, it was something which was over there in some separate energy fund. It wasn't really available to be used for discretionary, general programs, the Government and the people of Saskatchewan might decide upon.

I very much doubt if Tommy Shoyama, former head of Saskatchewan's Economic Development Planning Board was very much amused or confused by that piece of legislation. I suspect the Federal Government is fully cognizant that there is a final clause in that piece of legislation which permits the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council to do anything he likes with that money. And I suspect that the only effect that section on the Energy and Resource Development Fund may have had is to confuse the Saskatchewan people as to what are the options open to them.

Mr. Speaker, if that is one concept of what could be done with the money I am afraid another unconscionable way to spend the money is merely to fritter it away. Governments are very good at frittering away even large amounts of money. And to give you one example of where that insidious process is afoot, rather than thinking through what could be imaginative alternatives and ways of using this windfall which has arrived is instead that we are frittering it away on programs such as the Minister of Finance's announced intention of spending up to \$35 million for subsidizing gasoline. Why spend \$35 million to keep down gasoline prices? Why not spend it on sugar prices or food prices? It is totally arbitrary, Mr. Speaker, that we should choose to spend \$35 million on gasoline as opposed to any of a number of other commodities whose prices have seriously inflated recently. Inasmuch as the utilization of energy is roughly proportionate to the income there is no progressive aspect in the reduction of fuel prices.

Let's look at the orders of magnitude involved. The

expenditure of \$35 million on a gasoline price subsidy is more than the combined total to be spent on the Senior Citizens' Supplement and the Family Income Plan. In fact the Senior Citizens' Supplement which the Minister says will cost \$7 million for an entire year, is merely 20 percent. In other words, the Senior Citizens' Supplement could have been increased five-fold if we were prepared to pay higher gasoline prices. A very good case could be made that there would be a lot more equity involved in the paying of higher fuel prices and a higher Senior Citizens' Supplement.

The Family Income Plan is an excellent plan that I support. It's a large and expensive program but it costs only \$24 million, considerably less than the \$35 million budgeted for fuel price subsidy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that instead of frittering it away, instead of seeking the large pulp mills, potash mine expansions, steel mills, not that I have anything per se against their development, but instead of seeking these large capital investment projects and certainly instead of the Liberals' proposals to give the money back, I would argue that what we should go for now and what we should be prepared to argue, is for an ongoing rural wage subsidy of considerable scope and magnitude. Shades of John Deverell!

I have certain modifications to make of which I won't refer to explicitly but none the less it is high time that we resurrect the idea. Mr. Speaker, a particular reform such as an ongoing wage subsidy, only can make sense in the content of the overall politics of rural development. Far be it from me to want to ignore the needs and nationalize the resource industries. I would also argue that such a program as I am proposing would make no sense unless we tackle the organizational inefficiencies of rural government as it exists now. Shades of the whole county argument of a decade ago! We should be prepared to resurrect the arguments and the need for an efficient strong local government system which involved the elimination of the patchwork of overlapping rural administrations. And far from arguing for the retrenchment or the abolition of the Land Bank I think ultimately we in Saskatchewan are going to have to face the need that ultimately the Saskatchewan Land Bank become the sole owner of land in Saskatchewan and that leasing become the major ten-year device to be used to preserve farming as we want it.

But to return to this wage subsidy and let's give it a more dignified title, I'll call it a rural income bonus for the sake of the argument. I would argue that it should be available to all enterprises outside Saskatoon and Regina. That if incorporated they would have to be either Crown corporations or co-operatives. And if unincorporated, they would have to be owner-operated family enterprises. In other words, the family farm - if truly a family run operation - would be eligible.

Mr. Speaker, what purpose could be served by expenditure of a large sum of money out of the windfall resource revenue we have? Very simply, I will list five. Obviously we are interested in the creation of more employment in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Secondly, I think it is nonsense to promote such employment unless we also promote non-capitalist modes of organizing that employment. We are interested in the promotion of equalization of incomes. And a technical economic argument that I shall try to make as simple as possible, is that we should be using; our subsidy dollars for encouraging labour-

intensive techniques as opposed to subsidy of capital that is involved in most existing subsidy programs. Fifthly, I would argue that inasmuch as we are paying for these programs out of this resource taxation, implicit in all of this is a desire to conserve and reduce energy utilization.

What is the rationale for doing this? Why should we be interested in expending large sums of money in this manner and have the kinds of provisions that I have specified, have any rationality to them?

First, I would argue that it should be available potentially to all enterprises, not strictly to manufacturing enterprises. The main important employment opportunities to be generated not only in the manufacturing sector but also in farming, in the service sector, such an ongoing wage subsidy could be the margin that is preserved and encourages the development of retail services in small sectors and overcomes the built-in advantage of the large urban sector. Such a subsidy could be the margin which means that there are a number of small pole treatment plants throughout northern Saskatchewan instead of one large pole treatment plant costing \$3 million in Prince Albert. This program should be graduated by regions, going from, I would argue, nothing in Regina and Saskatoon and I trust the Hon. Mayor of Regina doesn't take offence to that; another graduation for other cities in Saskatchewan; another graduation for rural southern Saskatchewan and increasing to the order of \$2,000 per year, which we should be prepared to pay for jobs in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to elaborate on a further point, virtually all existing subsidy programs for regional development have been built up on a patchwork basis and they basically involve the subsidy of capital. They lessen the cost of capital used in production. They don't lessen the cost of hiring people. The DREE programs are a classic example of that. It would be far more efficient for a \$1 of subsidy spent in subsidizing the hiring and employment of people, not the hiring and utilization of machinery. But, Mr. Speaker, the same argument which applies to the DREE grant also applies, for example, to a fuel subsidy. Fuel subsidies constitute a subsidy to the operation of capital and as such I think that we should be prepared to face up to the idiocy - I think there is no other word ultimately to describe it - the idiocy of programs such as purple gas.

Purple gas has been a sacred cow in Saskatchewan politics, almost as sacred as the deterrent fees in the other direction. But if anybody looks rationally at the expenditure of dollars of taxpayers' money on purple gas for farm fuel subsidy as opposed to some more rational way of getting that money into the farmers' pockets, I think he would be willing to see and to admit that it is irrational. It is irrational in the sense that the subsidy is worth more, the bigger your operation, the more machinery you have, the more fuel you consume. The bigger your farm, the more you benefit.

I think of another classic kind of contradiction which it creates, a very particular and humble example. You now have a native fellow who runs a trucking operation near Lestock. He was running a trucking operation, he didn't qualify for purple gas because he wasn't a farmer. But why? What rationality is this to deny a form of subsidy to that native person trying to



operate a small trucking operation when it was available to farmers in the immediate vicinity. Both are valuable services, both the local farmers in the Lestock area and that native fellow running a trucking operation, both are providing a useful valued, economic service to the community.

I think a final question, Mr. Speaker, is how much? It is impossible to budget for this kind of program with only the limited research material which is available, that's not a plea for any increased budget allocation this year. I am very grateful for the increase over last year accorded for the Independent Member in the Estimates. Nonetheless I think that for such a program to have any impact we must be prepared to consider that the whole income bonus would have to run up to \$2,000 per job in northern Saskatchewan. I think we must be prepared to envisage the expenditure of \$100 million to \$150 million annually on such a program if it is to have any benefit. Of course, that sum would partially be offset by the cancellation of the wasted moneys in the Department of Industry and Commerce on capital grants. It would, in part, be offset by the elimination of farm fuel subsidies. Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I think that this program must involve, if it were to have any impact, a major expenditure of funds from the Provincial Treasury.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, is such an idea utopian? Yes, I think certainly such an idea at this juncture is. But if we don't use the time that we have now, Mr. Speaker, in the brief fiscal sunny climate that we have in Saskatchewan to think through the major new directions that we can go, then we will have only ourselves to blame when, come to the next recession, we are scraping and scrambling as we were in 1969 and 1970 and in depressions before that. Now is the time when we don't have overwhelming fiscal pressures upon us. Now is the time with the forthcoming provincial election for Saskatchewan people to start thinking how do they plan, how should we use the windfall revenue that has come to us, are we to follow in Alberta's footsteps and be "Avis" to Lougheed's "Hertz", are we going to find steel mills and potash expansions to use up the money? Not that I have any particular objections that there should not be some developments in these fields. Are we going to fritter it away in a series of uncoordinated, ill-thought through programs, or are we going to use this opportunity that has been sent us to try and seriously, once and for all, put the energy, the money, the effort into preserving rural Saskatchewan. In fact, making of the Saskatchewan option, as the Premier has referred to it, not political rhetoric but the substance of measures, financial and organizational thrusts of the Provincial Government in years to come.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. H.E. Coupland** (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take part in this Debate and I first want to say that there really were no surprises. I had predicted that the budget would be a record budget so far as spending was concerned in the province and it is.

Mr. Speaker, when one realizes that this is an election year, it is not hard to understand why the NDP Government is handing out payments to all segments of society to try and buy their way back into office, and with the taxpayers' own money.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — Lets have a look at the NDP record of taxation and see where this money is coming from which they are giving away. In 1971 the last year of the Liberal administration we estimated revenue from all sources of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan at \$451 million. This year the NDP will take \$1,144,000,000 from the taxpayers. Some record. Mr. Speaker, to break this down we find the Liberal Government in 1971 collected \$68 million in education and health tax. This year the NDP Government will take \$139 million, an increase of over \$70 million. Or take the income tax, as an example, Mr. Speaker. In 1971, in the last year of the Liberal Government, we collected \$69 million income taxes from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan but under the NDP in 1975 they will take \$170 million, a whopping increase of \$100 million. Another first for the NDP. Liquor profits have doubled under the NDP from \$20 million in 1971 to \$54 million in 1975. One could go on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Even the energy crisis created by the Arab countries enabled the NDP to take an additional \$50 million in revenue from the oil companies and virtually put them out of business in Saskatchewan. The NDP Government is receiving \$119 million from the potash industry due to the world shortage and high demand and I am sure that they will kill the goose that is laying the golden egg by their excessive and depressive tax policy, which has already stopped the expansion of over \$200 million in the potash industry. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this expansion could and would have provided a bright future for a lot of young people in our province and would have also assured the supply of fertilizer for the countries around the world who need it so badly to stave off starvation.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP in 1975 will receive \$333 million from the Federal Government in Ottawa. This is three times as much as the Liberal Government received in 1971. Mr. Speaker, this \$333 million, while it is federal money, it is still money derived from the pockets of the taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, with all this revenue coming into the provincial coffers it is no wonder the NDP Government are scrambling around trying to find places to spend all this extra money in light of the upcoming election. They have tried to give every voter a little piece of bait.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the people of Saskatchewan to look around and assess the improvements that they see in their own areas and see if they can see where the Government is spending that additional \$690 million of the taxpayers' money to their advantage and I am sure they cannot. Mr. Speaker, a good deal of this additional revenue is being used for the 4,000 additional employees the NDP have hired since taking office, not to mention the tremendous increase in office space needed to house these additional employees, nor the cars and expenses that go with driving cars, providing hotels, meals and so on. I am sure the money has not been spent on highways. Try going to Lloydminster from St. Walburg. No. 3 highway, especially from the Saskatchewan River to the meridian, cannot even be called a road. No. 55 highway to Green Lake from Meadow Lake leaves a lot to be desired. Cars were being pulled through all last summer. The Government started work on that over a year ago, did some work last summer but still no road.

Mr. Speaker, people will ask why mill rates in towns and

cities have to go up this year when the NDP Government has an extra \$690 million to spend. Or the cattlemen could ask, why there could not have been a tax holiday on lease fees and taxes on their leases to help them over a tough situation of low cattle prices and help them recover from the serious flooding situations of last spring.

Mr. Speaker, hospital boards could ask why the Government is so niggardly in the amount of money they get to run hospitals. One could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure people throughout the province will be assessing the record of spending of this NDP Government and will find it wanting. It is very easy to give away money, especially if it is the other fellow's, such as the \$6 million they gave away to get rid of the pulp mill in Meadow Lake; \$10 million to Intercontinental Packers in Saskatoon; \$15 million to IPSCO out here. Mr. Speaker, when revenue is coming in like it is and I might add that the reason Saskatchewan is in such good economic condition is because of the federal agriculture policies that have put money in the hands of the farmers of the province from which we all benefit.

I say, Mr. Speaker, rather than finding ways of spending all this extra money coming into the coffers of the Provincial Treasury, the Government should either cut back on what they are taking from the taxpayers of the province or set up a reserve fund against the day when economic conditions may not be so good. That would be far more responsible, Mr. Deputy Speaker, It seems this Government is more concerned about building up a bureaucratic empire in the Province of Saskatchewan which they think will keep them in office than they are about the welfare of the taxpayers of the province, or our senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago I mentioned a case of Government interference in a local credit union which had caused the firing of their manager. I want to inform this House of another case of Government interference. This time in a co-op. It seems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a person cannot say anything about this Government for fear of losing his job. This happened to the manager of the co-op in Canora. He wrote a letter to the Minister of Agriculture criticizing his department for buying the Matador Co-op farm. He felt governments should not interfere in co-ops. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture did not appreciate this criticism so he turned the letter over to the Minister of Co-ops. The Minister of Co-ops, in turn, got in touch with the Board of Directors of the local co-op at Canora and had the manager fired forthwith. This is just another example of the arrogance of the Government opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker. No one is safe from the heavy hand of this NDP Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the same thing happened to numerous people who criticised the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. When they had the fortitude to criticize DNS they were fired.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say a few words about programming on the CBC. I realize this is not a provincial responsibility but I have a lot of concerned constituents and it is time someone took a stand to clean up programming on the CBC.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in February I wrote a letter to Pierre Juneau, Chairman of CRTC, with a copy to the

Hon. Hugh Faulkner, Minister in charge of CBC, expressing my concern about the obscene garbage we have been watching over CBC.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — I get a bang out of their slogan, “First Choice”. I have to say, and I have to admit, that in Meadow Lake the CBC is first choice, but only because it is the only choice. My letter was printed in our local paper and in the North Battleford News Optimist and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must say I have received a tremendous response both by phone and letters in support of my stand. I feel it is time that people speak out against this obscene, pornographic garbage that is being thrown at us. It is bad enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this is in a theatre, in movies, but when it is brought into our own living rooms and at the taxpayers’ expense, I object strenuously. To follow that up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was amazed to see an article in the Leader-Post, of the 13th of March, by one John Hirsch, CBC head of television drama and to see him on CBC Sunday night, last, saying that they are going to rerun such programs as Baptizing’ which was a program that triggered off all the adverse response. To say the least, the program was disgusting. Mr. Speaker, John Hirsch is going to rerun that program in defiance of all the people who found it obnoxious and I call on the Hon. Hugh Faulkner to remove him from the post as head of television drama on CBC.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — Mr. Speaker, just to show Mr. Hirsch’s arrogance I will quote his last two paragraphs in this article:

Obviously programming must not go more than a few steps beyond what viewers are accustomed to, and just as obviously there must be a very wide range of programming that caters to the famous ALL . . .

In other words, we have to give the viewers not only what they think they want, we have to give them the kind of high quality that the honest, creative artist we are trying to employ, knows they will want once they try it and once they get to like it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — Mr. Speaker, who is to say the honest and creative artists he talks about are qualified to tell us what we should see and what is good for us. I say hogwash!

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — This is what we get, Mr. Speaker, when we have too much government control. We have bureaucrats telling us what is good for us, whether we like it or not. I feel there is an underlying scheme to try and break down the moral fabric of our society and it must be stopped, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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**Mr. Coupland:** — Mr. Speaker, people are really concerned about the NDP buying up land through the Land Bank and setting up state farms such as the Matador. I was happy to hear the Leader of the Opposition enunciate our policy which will place the credit of the government behind any new farmer and the small farmer wishing to expand. We also will offer for sale on easy terms the land now being rented to those farmers holding leases. If a farmer does not want to buy then he may continue to lease. Mr. Speaker, I am positive the Liberal Family Farm Development Plan will be well received by the farmers of Saskatchewan, both those wishing to sell or retire, as well as those wanting to get started.

Mr. Speaker, I was at the SARM convention and was glad to hear the Hon. Mr. Lang make statements that should allay the fears of the farmers in regard to the Crow's Nest rates. He stated, and I quote from a news release dated March 14, 1975:

To Mr. Messer I say stop your distortions and stop worrying farmers about the Crow's Nest rates. To the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool I say it is sad to waste the money on a needless advertising campaign about the Crow's Nest rates.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** —

To farmers I say there will be no change whatsoever in the present structure of the Crow's Nest rates unless you yourself see the advantage in getting the money involved more directly.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Coupland:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Lang is saying is that there will be no change unless the farmers want it. That is a lot different than the NDP policy who put in the Hog Marketing Commission and never gave the farmers a chance to say what they wanted.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Otto Lang also stated that the Government of Canada has no policy to abandon rail lines, but just the opposite. They have a program of reasonable, logical rail line protection, wherever and whenever it makes social and economic sense to provide that kind of service. It's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that while the NDP try to spread gloom and doom in regard to transportation that the only rail lines abandoned in Saskatchewan were done when we had an NDP Government in Saskatchewan and a PC Government in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, because I feel this is an irresponsible budget I will support the amendment and vote against the motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. W.E. Smishek** (Regina North East): — Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance on his budget of fulfilment.

This fourth budget of our Government, as my colleague so

aply pointed out marks the fulfilment of the commitment we made to the people of Saskatchewan in the New Deal for People during the course of the 1971 election campaign.

The current budget and those presented in the three previous years document the systematic way in which our Government has gone about fulfilling the commitments we made to the people of Saskatchewan.

New Democrats take pride in their election programs. We regard them as firm commitments, not mere political gimmicks as the Liberals do - something to be thrown away into the garbage can once elected.

Mr. Speaker, the current Liberal financial critic and Leader of the Opposition followed the footsteps of his predecessors, his eyes fixed firmly on the past and his brain turned off to the progress and circumstances of today.

During the presentation of the budget by the Honourable Minister of Finance last Friday, I watched with care the behaviour and facial expressions of the Members opposite. Mr. Speaker, first they tried to heckle, then they tried to laugh, then they slouched in their chairs, then their chins dropped and then their faces turned pale, almost green as each new program was announced. Then they called for an adding machine, Mr. Speaker, to tally up the tax reductions and tax cuts and add up the new programs that were being announced. Mr. Speaker, one of them just about fell off his chair into the wastepaper basket as they realized that their small group of 13 would be reduced to even lesser numbers after the next election, except for the Leader of the Opposition, who every once in a while exploded in a nervous giggle or laugh, as he saw his chances improving for a seat in that other place in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, finally the Leader of the Opposition got to his feet to deliver his rebuttal and the hundreds of people who came to listen to the budget got up and left. And there he stood gasping to say something useful as comment. But it just didn't come. Mr. Speaker, afterwards he met the Press and how did he describe the budget? Let me quote, "Nothing of consequence for anyone!"

Mr. Speaker, I am sure he was living in the past, back to the last budget of Friday, February 26th, 1971, that he presented. His budget which had nothing of consequence for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have with me the Steuart budget which was presented to this House in 1971 and the estimates that he presented.

And let me compare the budget for agriculture for example, of 1971 to the 1975 budget, Mr. Speaker. You know, in 1971 the gross budget, ordinary and capital expenditure including the federal reimbursements, that's the gross budget, amounted to \$16.8 million. Mr. Speaker, look at the 1975 agriculture budget, almost \$60 million, close to a 400 per cent increase. \$11.5 million for programs under FarmStart, designed mainly to help young farmers to get established in farming. \$12.7 million in grants for the farm cost reduction of fuel, that is rebating farmers with seven cents per gallon on farm fuel, an average of \$170 per farmer. \$2.8 million in grants for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, almost double what was provided last year. \$1 million for agricultural stabilization, another new program announced. You know these four programs alone, Mr. Speaker, totalled to the

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amount of \$28 million, programs that were not in effect in the years of the Liberals.

And the Leader of the Opposition says, 'Nothing of consequence for anyone!' You know, if he tries to tell that to the farmers there's no question they will laugh at him. They know the value of these programs. They know the value of crop insurance, of FarmStart and of seven cents per gallon rebate on farm fuel.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at the 1971 budget for Education, including university operating costs. In that year the Liberals proposed to spend \$140.3 million in total. Why, Mr. Speaker, this budget will provide \$140.2 million in operating grants for school boards alone, over \$26 million more than last year, designed to keep the mill rates down and allow extra funds for school boards and to establish new programs and to provide for salary increases. Over \$4.6 million in Saskatchewan student grants or student aid programs, over 300 per cent more than was provided in the last Liberal budget which was less than \$1.5 million.

\$10.25 million of gasoline taxes have been allocated to automobile insurance to keep car insurance premiums down to reasonable costs.

I compared the 1971 Liberal budget for health and I looked at our budget at the present time. Mr. Speaker, a curious thing I discovered. You know, Mr. Speaker, this year we will be spending almost \$9.5 million more on the hospital services plan alone than the Liberals proposed to spend on the total public health programs, excluding the Mental Retardation program which has been transferred to Core Services and now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Social Services. And further, under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, there are no deterrent fees to pay, no premiums to pay, no wage guidelines for the hospital employees and nurses to fight, no major deficits for the hospital boards to face. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the budget for the Department of Health has been increased by \$124 million when you include the services provided under Social Services for the mentally retarded.

And the Leader of the Opposition says, "Nothing of consequence".

Well, the hospital employees' wages which have gone up by more than 100 per cent in the last four years, is that nothing of consequence? Chiropractic services ensured; a hearing aid plan established; a children's dental care plan has been launched; double the number of chronic care beds, mainly for the elderly; ten health and social centres opened; small hospital closures stopped. Mr. Speaker, some \$100 million worth of hospital construction has been approved or is in various stages of development, and more new health programs at various stages of implementation; a drug plan on the horizon.

Mr. Speaker, whom are health services for? They're for the people, they are the beneficiaries. Mr. Speaker, I'll have more to say on health services a little later.

Now let's take a look at housing. In the last term of office, the Liberals budgeted for a measly three-quarters of a million dollars for housing. This budget provides for \$11.25

million worth of a housing program, a 15-fold increase.

This budget provides a 24 per cent increase in the highway, bridge and public improvement construction over that provided last year, almost \$30 million more than was provided in the last Liberal budget.

In this budget we propose to provide over \$40 million in Property Improvement Grants, that is almost four times as much as was provided by the Liberals, all designed to help reduce property taxes.

For the Leader of the Opposition to say that there is nothing of consequence in this budget, is an insult to the intelligence of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the Honourable Members to compare the budget and programs of the Department of Social Services of today with the budget of 1971, the last, last budget of the Leader of the Opposition. 1975 budget, \$1.6 million for employment support programs, nothing in 1971. Look at allowances for day care, \$1.7 million in the current budget. What was provided for by the Liberals, Mr. Speaker? It was a mere pittance, a mere pittance of \$65,000. This year we are providing over \$8 million for residents of special care homes, almost a 50 per cent increase over last year. Do you know what the Liberals provided, Mr. Speaker? Not a single penny for this kind of support for the senior citizens.

But to hear them talk now, they would try to make you believe that all of a sudden they have developed a concern for the senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague says, "deathbed repentance" because the record of the Liberal Party in the field of health and in the field of provision of services for the senior citizens is indeed a dismal record, a record for which the Liberals have no credibility at all.

There is \$24 million for the Family Income Plan, a plan that is the envy of all low-income people of Canada. You know watching the television news last Monday evening, I noted that the Federal Minister of Health and Welfare says that this is the type of a plan that is essential to lift the poor from the welfare rolls and to create incentives for them to seek employment.

And now we are moving with an income supplement plan for the senior citizens.

These are just a few comparisons between the last Liberal budget in 1971 and our budget of 1975. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was gasping and grasping and reaching in every direction in an effort to finding something to attack this budget with. But he failed, as did his predecessor.

Mr. Speaker, for the first two years of this Legislature we had Mr. Ken McLeod as the budget critic. But, Mr. Speaker, as I look about he's not here any more. Ken is gone.

Then we had Cliff McIsaac as the Opposition critic last year and after one year he gave up. He is gone too, Mr. Speaker, and now, this year we have the Honourable Dave Steuart, Leader of the Opposition as the budget critic. One wonders if he, too,



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will soon be departing from our midst. Perhaps to join some of his former colleagues in Ottawa's resting place for the unsuccessful Liberal political leaders. I would have to say that Saskatchewan's gain would be Ottawa's loss, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have now briefly described what this budget means to the people of Saskatchewan, as I compared it to the last Liberal budget.

Let us look at what this budget does for the citizens of Regina. Naturally many of these items will also apply to the other cities and towns of our province. But what does this mean to the citizens of our Queen City?

First, I want to remind the people of Regina of a \$15 per capita community capital fund, this means \$2.2 million for the current year. Over a five-year period, this program will provide \$11 million into the city of Regina. It will help to keep the mill rates down to a reasonable rate.

Second, unconditional grants at \$10 per capita this year will mean a further \$1.45 million for Regina. Just in these two programs alone our Government is assisting the citizens of Regina with \$3.65 million in the current fiscal year.

But there is more, much more for the citizens of Regina. Property Improvement Grants have been increased from \$160 this year to \$200. Compare that to the Liberal Homeowner Grants of \$70, Mr. Speaker, three times what the Liberals provided in 1971. Again, I find it difficult to believe that the people of Regina will consider these grants as something of 'no consequence'.

Library grants have been increased from \$43,000 in 1971 to \$190,000 in the current fiscal year.

Our public health grants to the cities have increased from \$1.50 per capita to \$1.75 per capita in this budget. In 1971, under the Liberal Government, per capita grants were only \$1.25. Our 1975/76 per capita grants of \$1.75 represents a 40 per cent increase over the Liberal Government figures.

Police grants for Regina in 1971 were \$145,000. In the current Budget we are proposing over \$1 million, Mr. Speaker, nearly ten times that provided by the Liberals.

Significant funds will be provided for the regeneration of both the Regina General and Pasqua hospitals.

Significant increases in school grants for both the separate and public school systems have also been approved. Again, a comparison with the grants in the last Liberal Budget in 1971 shows increases of more than 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker. In 1971 the Liberal Government budgeted for \$3.5 million for the separate schools and \$5.7 million for the public school system. In the current budget our Government, in contrast, has approved a grant of \$7.1 million for the separate system and \$11.5 million for the public school system. This is more than double what was provided for by the Liberals, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Highways is spending \$1.7 million on the Ring Road and a further \$800,000 on the rail line relocation.

Housing programs under the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will see a further \$2.8 million to expand and upgrade housing in Regina.

Planning is being started on a new provincial office complex located in downtown which will make a major contribution to the revitalization of the downtown core. Also a new government building is being planned for the area immediately south of the Health Building. We hope to tender this building in the current fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, both these projects will mean a significant economic contribution to the construction and service industries in Regina.

The Government has committed itself to capital grants for a new high school for Regina North East. It is now up to the Public and Separate School Boards to come to an agreement on what they are prepared to do for this needed facility.

Mr. Speaker, in the last budget, our Government approved \$1 million for the Western Canada Summer Games. This will help build an Olympic track, Olympic-size swimming pool and a marina for the aquatic events.

We have also approved a further \$350,000 for change room facilities in Douglas Park. These facilities will add significantly to the facilities for Regina athletics and for those who enjoy recreational sports.

Does the Leader of the Opposition really believe that this is 'nothing of consequence' in this budget?

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Leader's criticism of the budget is only matched in cynicism by his comments on the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan. The Honourable Member's pleas for immediate action made me think that he has lost either his memory or his sense of shamefulness completely. It was his Party and his Government which procrastinated for seven long years over a drug plan.

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition thinks that the people of Saskatchewan have forgotten his Party's promise of a drug plan in the 1964 election campaign. During their three years in Government after 1964, they did nothing about introducing a drug plan that they promised in 1964.

Since the Liberals fooled the people once, they decided to try again in the 1967 campaign. In 1967 they promised that they would hold a referendum on a drug plan. Did they bring in a drug plan, Mr. Speaker? Did they even hold a referendum? No, Mr. Speaker, they did what Liberal governments are so capable of doing, of doing nothing.

In 1971 we promised that we would implement a plan to greatly reduce the cost of prescription drugs for the citizens of Saskatchewan - a plan that would be based on a drug formulary and bulk purchasing. We then decided to go beyond that pledge, Mr. Speaker. We appointed an expert committee to develop a drug formulary. This committee will continue to work to update and extend the formulary. We have entered into distribution contracts with existing wholesalers. We have been involved in extensive negotiations with the Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association. These negotiations were successful with the negotiating team named by the druggists. However, the members

did not support the agreement by their own negotiating team and then approved by their executive council. As I have indicated publicly and in this House, the fact is the druggists rejected some of the main features of the plan to which their own representatives had previously agreed.

I should like to remind this House that in the fall of 1973 the pharmacists met with us and presented us with their recommendations as to the main features of a provincial drug plan that they wanted to see established. Among those recommendations was one that said that the beneficiary should make a contribution towards the cost of each prescription.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the pharmacists have now said that they want to remove any charge to the consumer even though they previously suggested this should be included in a provincial plan.

I should add, Mr. Speaker, that partial financial participation by the consumer is a feature which has been supported initially by the pharmacists, is being supported by the doctors and by the nurses as well. This was also recommended by the Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Medical Care known as the Thompson Committee and also recommended by the Federal Royal Commission on Health Services for Canada, chaired by Chief Justice Hall.

Mr. Speaker, the pharmacists have asked for a limit of a 50-day supply on drugs. We don't understand this new requirement which would limit pharmacists and doctors to exercise their professional judgement on the amount of drugs to be supplied to a client through a single prescription. Thirdly, the pharmacists want more money - \$3 per prescription instead of the sliding scale negotiated from \$2.65 to \$2 depending on volume of prescription sales. We think the negotiated dispensing fee was fair, perhaps even generous, Mr. Speaker.

In British Columbia they can charge up to a maximum of \$2.55 per prescription; in Alberta up to a maximum of \$2.65; in Manitoba up to a maximum of \$2.25; in Ontario up to a maximum of \$2.60 and in Quebec a flat rate of \$2.15. But here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because we are trying to introduce a universal plan they are insisting on a flat \$3 fee, much higher than in any other province.

We suggested a sliding fee in order to give extra financial support to the small rural pharmacists. This sliding fee scale would not over reward the large volume outlets in the cities and which are in many cases owned by chain companies and department stores. The final point of difference involves the term of the contract.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government agreed to the additional request by the pharmacists, the cost to the public purse would be in excess of \$13 million per year. I want to emphasize that under the plan that had been negotiated, the maximum consumer prescription charge would not have exceeded \$2 per prescription.

Mr. Speaker, we are back in negotiations again with the pharmacists and we shall continue to negotiate as fairly and as responsibly as possible. We will certainly not be stampeded into hasty action by the unsolicited advice from the Party opposite.

Mr. Speaker, following Liberal advice in how to bring in a drug plan would be like following a prescription for disaster. The people of Saskatchewan trust the NDP with health programs. They know that we will introduce a comprehensive drug plan. They know that we are not responsible for the delay and I know that the model that we will set up for the prescription drug plan, the model that we will establish will be followed eventually by other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, our Party's concern for the senior citizens of Saskatchewan illustrates most strikingly the difference between NDP and Liberal philosophy. The NDP want to help senior citizens to be as independent as possible contributing their talents to make our country strong. We want our senior citizens to be happy and have a fulfilling life. We are not prepared to use senior citizens as political footballs like the Liberals do.

During those seven lean and hungry years of Liberal rule in Saskatchewan, what did the Liberal Government do for senior citizens? The answer is brief and clear. The Liberals imposed deterrent fees. They closed their hospitals; they did not provide help to the senior citizens, they did not even express a concern for the plight of thousands of our Saskatchewan senior citizens.

By comparison, what is the record of our NDP Government over the past four years? And, what does this budget do for the senior citizens - a budget which the Leader of the Opposition characterizes as containing 'Nothing of consequence.'

Mr. Speaker, as a first move and a first gesture in a major effort for the senior citizens we removed the deterrent fees within a matter of days after taking office. We then abolished the medical and hospital premium for the senior citizens. We introduced the Hearing Aid Plan to drastically reduce the price of hearing aids, a program of particular benefit to the senior citizens.

It is true we have had some difficulties with the plan; it is true we have had some administrative problems, but, Mr. Speaker, this is a program that is now being examined by every other province in Canada to be copied by every other province in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Smishek:** — Mr. Speaker, we introduced financial subsidies for people in Level II and Level III nursing homes. A large sum of additional money is provided in this budget to increase their benefits. My colleague the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Taylor) has given the details of this program yesterday in the House. Level III subsidies increased from \$7 to \$10.50 per day and Level II subsidies increased to \$3.50.

We virtually doubled the number of extended care beds in Saskatchewan. We introduced the Senior Citizens Home Repair Program. We extended reduced fares on Saskatchewan transportation buses for senior citizens. We increased the amount of government money for low-cost senior citizens' housing, which is most welcome and appreciated by the senior citizens. I could list many more actions which our NDP Government has taken to assist our senior citizens. In this current budget, we have the

beginnings of a senior citizens' program which we feel is a dramatic move forward, Mr. Speaker.

We are introducing supplements of \$20 per month for single individuals and \$36 per month for married couples, who are receiving full OAS and GIS benefits. Not a large supplement, Mr. Speaker, but a good beginning. We have established a senior citizens' council and will be creating a senior citizens' branch with the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, we are launching a chiropody (foot care) program in the Department of Public Health - a program of particular benefit to senior citizens. The foot care program will be staffed by salaried chiropodists of the Department of Health, at a cost for the first year estimated at \$100,000. Home care will be expanded by increasing the number of home care programs operating in the province and increasing the services available for these programs. We will increase the sum allocated to current home care programs from \$916,000 last year to almost \$1.6 million this year. That represents almost twice as much money for home care to what was provided last year. We will be setting up a demonstration project in occupational therapy with a budget of \$68,000.

Two teams of two occupational therapists each will work in a variety of settings to determine the rehabilitation potential of occupational therapy in home and community settings.

I also want to announce the beginning of another new health program, Mr. Speaker, for senior citizens. The beginning of a special geriatric program - \$85,000 is provided for the employment of a geriatrician and provision of a special bursary program to assist physicians to specialize in diseases of the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robbins) said in his address, senior citizens will also benefit from an expansion of the respiratory disease unit at the University Hospital, Saskatoon. I am told that fourteen and one half per cent of hospital and medical care costs are attributed to respiratory conditions primarily affecting the senior citizen. The need for specialization is self-evident. This special unit will include 11 new positions and other resources, at a total cost in excess of \$170,000.

You can add to these programs like the Saskatchewan Hearing Aid Plan and the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program, both of which are of particular significance for senior citizens.

I recently announced the beginning of phase I of the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living Plan which will cost just under three quarters of a million dollars this year. SAIL will provide needed artificial limbs, braces, wheelchairs, walkers, commodes and similar aids, at no cost to the handicapped. Phase I, which began on March 1st, involves the provision of prosthetics and orthotics, that is the replacement of a missing body part with an appliance such as an artificial arm, leg or hand, called the prosthetics, and devices such as leg or back braces called the orthotics.

Phase II of the SAIL plan will be introduced in the near future. This will involve the provision of equipment such as wheelchairs, lifts, commodes, walkers and other aids designed to make daily living easier for the handicapped. These devices

will be provided on a loan basis for as long as they are required by clients. There will be no charges to the handicapped for any of these aids or services.

Mr. Speaker, in 1971 we pledged that we would provide a program which would reduce the cost of these devices. We went beyond this pledge, we are providing them at no cost to the handicapped, another first in Canada.

In addition we are providing funds to enable municipal governments to improve transportation for the handicapped. \$543,000 has been budgeted for this item.

The Senior Citizens' Home Repair Program, which was expanded by more than 50 percent, to \$4.6 million this year, is assisting senior citizens in making their own homes more adaptable for independent living. These programs have done a great deal to enable our citizens to remain in their homes and to remain as independent as possible for as long a period as possible.

Mr. Speaker, when you combine the existing and new health programs designed to help the elderly and those that will be introduced such as the drug plan, when you add up the new, existing, and improved senior citizens' programs developed and administered by the Department of Social Services, coupled with the senior citizens' house repair program, I am confident that our pioneers are better off living in Saskatchewan than in any other province in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Smishek:** — In total our programs give our senior citizens more security in every way.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has come out with a promise to guarantee senior citizens \$350 per month for single persons and \$500 per month for married couples. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Liberals have bothered to work out how much that promise would cost; I have been told that preliminary estimates suggest that it would cost at least \$80 million a year. This reminds me of the 80,000 new jobs promised by the Liberals in 1964. They didn't put much more thought into that promise today than they did in 1964. This Liberal promise for senior citizens, Mr. Speaker, will end up in the same category as the 80,000 jobs that they promised to the workers.

Since this legislature opened we have heard a number of comments from the other side of the House about the delays in opening the Plains Health Centre. Mr. Speaker, let me try to set the record straight.

Perhaps the Opposition has not been sufficiently awake to realize that the Plains Health Centre is open and is operating. Some 77 beds are currently in operation and I am advised by the administration of the hospital that within the next few days more beds will be open increasing to 100 beds.

The Opposition Members like to talk about delays in getting this facility into operation. Mr. Speaker, let me tell this House a little story pertaining to the Plains Health Centre, history that they so conveniently forget. Mr. Speaker, The South Saskatchewan Hospital Centre Act was introduced by the

Hon. Premier in 1964, when he was the Minister of Health. The legislation was passed during that session. That same year the Liberal Government took office. During the 1964 election campaign the Liberals promised the people of Regina and Saskatchewan that if they were elected they would proceed to build a new hospital in Regina. They said they would take immediate action. The NDP Regina candidates also campaigned on the pledge to build a new hospital.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the Liberal immediate action. It took them until 1967, three years, to proclaim The South Saskatchewan Act, an Act which was passed in 1964. Finally they appointed the first board and then they procrastinated for another year while the so-called hospital planning committee examined the question of allocation of services between existing hospitals and the proposed new hospital. The record will show that in April of 1965 the then Minister of Health, now the Leader of the Opposition, stated in this Legislature that construction would start within two years, with completion within three years. That would have meant completion in 1970.

When the South Saskatchewan Hospital Centre Board presented its initial planning report to the Department the projected completion date was then changed to November of 1971. Then in December of 1968 the board revised its completion date to August of 1972. The reasons for the delay primarily related to problems in allocation of services and as well as consideration of an automated material handling system in a new hospital.

Mr. Speaker, line drawings for the hospital were finally submitted to the Department for approval in July of 1969. Remember that the Minister of Health, in 1965, stated that construction would start in 1967. The construction timetable was then changed to indicate a December, 1972 completion. Construction finally commenced in August of 1970. Remember that the Leader of the Opposition said that by 1970 the hospital would be open. What happened? That was when they just began construction. That makes almost six years of Liberal bungling and delaying, Mr. Speaker.

When I became Minister of Health, I found that the problems of bed allocation and services between the Regina hospitals was still to be settled. The two former Liberal Health Ministers laboured for four years and produced nothing and resolved nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we appointed Dr. Clarkson to work with the Regina hospital boards and the medical community - he worked with all the interested parties and finally an acceptable solution with all concerned parties was worked out. It didn't take us years, Mr. Speaker, it did take several months.

The architect who was appointed by the previous administration went bankrupt - this certainly did not do anything to expedite the construction. We had to find a new architect in mid-stream. The construction project was certified as completed in May of 1973.

But the final checks demonstrated that some 260 flaws such as minor electrical and mechanical deficiencies. These took time to correct. Just at that time the construction industry was in dispute.

Since the Liberal administration did not, or could not come to grips with the allocation of services, much of the equipment

could not be ordered, thus a further delay, Mr. Speaker. It is these problems - the failure or inability of the Liberals to make decisions which have caused the serious delays in getting the hospital into complete operation.

It should be recognized that this is not just another hospital, Mr. Speaker, it is a teaching hospital, affiliated with the College of Medicine in Saskatoon. The College experienced problems in recruiting some of the permanent department heads. Also at present the nursing shortage is causing some difficulties in adding further beds. Mr. Speaker, I should add as well that it is the intention of the board to phase in the remainder of the beds in the Plains Health Centre as the two boards rationalize the number of beds in the other two hospitals, the Regina General and the Pasqua.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals tell us that they don't believe in planners and in planning and that is true, Mr. Speaker. When I became Minister of Health, among the other things that I found out that while they started construction on the Plains Health Centre and just a few days before the election was called, they started the initial construction of the Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences, immediately east of the hospital. We found to our amazement that they provided a roadway of 28 feet, a roadway of 28 feet, which, if the third phase of the Wascana Institute would be built, it would mean that within a period of a half an hour in the mornings, there would be 1,400 vehicles going to the hospital and to the Institute on a 28 foot roadway, Mr. Speaker. It is true that the Liberals don't believe in planning. One of the things that we had to do immediately was to acquire land to provide enough of a roadway to be able to take the traffic. This, Mr. Speaker, certainly didn't add to expediting use of the hospital.

While the Liberals perhaps had in mind a hospital, they didn't want anybody to go into it and that is why they didn't provide for an adequate road to the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about the hospitals and especially the Regina General and Pasqua hospitals. Some weeks ago, I announced a major regeneration of these two health facilities. We appointed Dr. Graham Clarkson to come up with a program design, in consultation with the administrations of both hospitals, that would have the overall objective of completely modernizing both the old hospitals and integrating their services with those of the Plains Health Centre.

When we talk about regeneration, we mean major rebuilding to bring these facilities to the most modern and current standards possible. It will mean an expenditure of millions of dollars. But, we are determined to provide the best possible health facilities to the people of Regina and southern Saskatchewan - services that are co-ordinated and integrated. Provision has already been made in the current budget of \$1 million in the much needed renovations to the Pasqua Hospital and I hope that those renovations can be started at the earliest possible date, those are the directions given to the South Saskatchewan Hospital Centre Board.

The job of renovating and adding to the University Hospital in Saskatoon is proceeding and we have allocated a further \$2.5 million for that project in the current fiscal year - tenders on that project are to be called any day now - this project is



expected to cost in excess of \$20 million.

These allocations are part of our continuing efforts to keep our major hospital facilities up-to-date and capable of delivering the kind of quality care that our citizens have become used to. Mr. Speaker, I only regret that the previous government did not see fit to devote the same amount of concern and funding in keeping these major facilities up-to-date. Perhaps if the Leader of the Opposition had been as concerned about the Regina General and Pasqua Hospitals - as he would have us now believe - a great many of the improvements might have been made in the era where costs were considerably less.

While we are committed to spend large sums of money on rebuilding and regenerating our hospitals in Regina and Saskatoon, we are not ignoring the smaller communities. Major renovation expenditures have been approved for Yorkton, Kamsack, Swift Current, further renovations for Moose Jaw are being considered. New hospital construction is well on the way in North Battleford, Biggar and Lestock. New hospitals have been approved for Elrose, Climax and Lampman and many others are being renovated and improved.

The Assembly recessed from 5:30 o'clock p.m. until 7:00 o'clock p.m.

**Mr. Smishek:** — Mr. Speaker, when you called it 5:30, I was discussing the question of our provision of funds for the redevelopment of hospitals and new health facilities.

While we have been providing funds for new and better hospitals and expanding our health services generally, we have not forgotten the employees who deliver health services on a daily basis. There were few areas of Liberal mismanagement which were more glaring than their handling of wages and their wage guidelines for hospital employees. Just compare the hospital employee's wages at the present time to those of the Liberal years.

Mr. Speaker, dietary, laundry and housekeeping aides ranged from a low of \$213 a month to a maximum of \$295 a month in June of 1971. They now receive from a low of \$520 to \$558 for this same class of employees, an increase of almost 145 per cent at the bottom of the wage ranges. Nurses aides who were earning as little as \$242 to \$330 a month, are now ranging from \$536 to \$575 per month. Certified nursing assistants who were getting \$330 a month to a high of \$405 per month, now are in the range of \$653 as a minimum to \$711 per month. Orderlies who were at \$370 a month to a high of \$430 a month, now get a minimum of \$700 to \$764 per month. Registered nurses were earning a minimum of \$500 to a maximum of \$570 per month, now, Mr. Speaker, the lowest wage for a nurse is \$798, going up to \$927 a month.

There are few areas where the Liberal record is as bad as their treatment of low paid hospital workers. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to compare the Liberal record from 1964-1971 with the record of this Government in its first four years of office.

Mr. Speaker, once again we have increased our budgetary allocations for programs to deal with alcoholism and alcohol abuse. Last year, you will recall, we launched the AWARE program

with a budget of \$520,000. That budget has been increased by over 40 per cent for the coming year to enable the program to carry on the good work that has been done. Recognition has come to the program from a number of sources. The Manitoba Alcoholism Commission has purchased some of the AWARE ads and commercials for their own use. I also understand that the Ontario Government has expressed interest in the material in that program. I have no doubt that as other jurisdictions see the generally positive reaction we have had to the AWARE program they will also show an interest in the materials we are producing. I am advised that a telephone survey of some 800 families is being undertaken to evaluate the response to the AWARE program. I am also told that the advisory committee which we had appointed from a cross-section of a community of Saskatchewan is considering an analysis of baseline data on attitudes toward alcohol and alcoholism. I expect to hear from the committee in the near future with its recommendations and its comments on the data being provided to them.

We have also increased the budget for the Alcoholism Commission of Saskatchewan to just under \$1.9 million. That is close to four times the amount the former Liberal Government spent on the work of the Commission. The Commission is developing a community service program which provides for a regional co-ordinator for each one of the ten health regions in the province. This will enable the Commission to reach greater numbers of people within communities outside the main population centres.

Last year the total amount budgeted for education, treatment and rehabilitation, programs related to alcohol abuse and alcoholism totalled \$3.2 million, Mr. Speaker. This year our Government will be spending approximately \$4.3 million for alcohol-related programs. Included is \$600,000 for hospital care provided for patients diagnosed as suffering from alcoholism. In addition, several thousands of dollars will be spent by the Medical Care Insurance Commission for physicians' services. I think it is safe to estimate that the cost will be, or the money allocated will be closer to \$4.5 million. Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to announce that we have budgeted almost \$120,000 for an alcoholism detoxification unit in the city of Moose Jaw. This is one more step to carry the program to all parts of the province.

We are also working with the Indian and Métis people towards new and better treatment, rehabilitation, counselling and alcohol education programs for the native population of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention four items related to the operation of our psychiatric Services Branch. The first item concerns three projected relocations of facilities. The Munroe Wing, here in Regina, and the McNeil Clinic in Saskatoon and the establishment of a new psychiatric facility in Weyburn.

The McNeil Clinic in Saskatoon has been housed for many years in rather small and inadequate facilities. The growth in services rendered through the clinic has grown significantly and new premises are needed. I am happy to announce that we have obtained a lease on much larger facilities - the Sisters of Zion residence in Saskatoon. This building will be renovated and I am told the clinic will be moved into the new premises in early summer.

In Regina for some time now, the physical conditions of the

Munroe Wing have been a matter of concern to many of us. I am sure they were a matter of concern to the former Minister of Health. Deficiencies were identified in the structure as far back as 1967. While a number of these deficiencies were remedied by various small renovation projects, it has been evident for some time that alternative accommodations were required. Discussions have been held with the Board of the Regina General Hospital and an agreement has been reached whereby two units of the Regina General Hospital will be reassigned to serve as a 44-bed inpatient psychiatric unit. That is an increase from the present 30 beds. We anticipate that units will be functional as a psychiatric ward early next month, Mr. Speaker.

A few weeks ago I was in Saskatoon to officially open the new Applied Research Unit for Psychiatric Services Research facilities. As you may know, we already have what is regarded as the most advanced Biochemical Psychiatric Research Unit in North America. The addition of an applied research unit will broaden the base of our psychiatric research effort. This unit will give us the capacity to thoroughly research the future course of our psychiatric program and enable us to evaluate more completely the present program and make appropriate changes where necessary. I expect the unit to be able to give us some good insights into the cost effectiveness of community versus inpatient care costs.

Mr. Speaker, much more can be said about new and improved Saskatchewan health programs. When a province becomes recognized by noted authorities from one end of the country to the other, and many others, as again regaining the leadership in the health field - there is a feeling of satisfaction and pride. Hardly a day passes when we don't have out-of-province and out-of-country visitors coming to examine and to learn about our health plans, and to see this laboratory of success and experiment being put into action.

Mr. Speaker, the dental program for children is the health success story of the year. There is just no doubt in my mind that this plan will be copied by other provinces. As has already been stated, next year children ages 5, 6, and 7 will be covered.

The \$250,000 neonatal intensive care unit or referral centre at the University Hospital at Saskatoon is a major step forward for high-risk newborn infants and their mothers and is designed to reduce the infant mortality rate.

The new medical bursary program is beginning to produce positive results. It is expected that out of 50-some medical students who will graduate from our College of Medicine this year, 30 or 33 will remain in Saskatchewan. Over 60 percent, a major breakthrough, Mr. Speaker. All of us should be proud of this positive result.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal financial critic says there is nothing of consequence for anyone. Even the most cursory glance at the budget reveals that there is a great deal for the people of Saskatchewan in this budget. Even the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix which is not noted for its support for the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, writes a complimentary editorial on March 19 calling the budget Mr. Robbins' New Deal. I invite the Members opposite to read that editorial and to have an outside group help open their eyes to see that they, too, concur with what this budget is trying to do.

This budget has a significant number of direct and indirect tax reductions as has been previously stated. Let me give you just a few examples. Remember each of these items represents taxes that would have been collected from the ordinary taxes of this province, in some cases in the form of higher mill rates had these measures not been introduced. These represent annual savings of millions of dollars. Let me point out in conclusion, income tax reduction of \$27 million; abolition of deterrent fees, \$7.5 million; abolition of hospital and medical premiums, \$18.5 million; property improvement grants, \$40 million; grants for police services \$3.2 million; equalization grants almost \$2 million; community capital fund \$9.4 million; unconditional operating grants to local governments \$6.2 million; grants to LIDs \$.6 million; gas tax rebate and reductions \$35 million; taxes on meals and reading materials \$1 million; raising the exemptions on succession duties \$1.7 million. These represent a per capita saving, Mr. Speaker, of over \$195 for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, some \$179 million in direct and indirect tax reductions to the people of Saskatchewan. It is not quite the same thing as simply reducing the tax rate to what it was in 1964. No matter how the Leader of the Opposition tries to cover up the facts, Mr. Speaker, I support this budget because it represents another step in the orderly development of this province. This budget, like the other three that preceded it are of major consequence, of major benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, a budget of fulfilling our New Deal for People. Mr. Speaker, the Opposition may find nothing of consequence in this budget but I say to you that the people of Saskatchewan will find in this budget the seeds of prosperity and they will show their support of it when the next election is called.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the budget and I will oppose the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. A. Thibault** (Melfort-Kinistino): — Mr. Speaker, you know I have been keeping very quiet listening to a lot of garbage and I never bothered you, now I should like to have a few minutes just to speak about the budget. Before I proceed in speaking about the budget, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few kind words about the way you have performed your duties in this House.

Some time ago I went and asked you whether you would permit me to bring my knitting in the House and knit while I listened to all this noise. You said that you would have to order me to remove my knitting. You know, knitting is very relaxing and when the pressures are on you know you can pass a little time away. So I decided to do something about it and I think it is the first time in the Commonwealth that an MLA has knitted a pair of mitts for a Speaker. Therefore, here you are, Mr. Speaker. You see, I took two evenings to knit these. The cuffs are knitted in gold colour to represent the way you have done your job and I think it is a little way of expressing how well you have done your job. No words can be found to say how well you have done it over the years . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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**Mr. Thibault:** — . . . and so that you can remember me - and I am going to tell you many reasons why I want to remember you - you were my first seatmate when I came here in 1959 and you taught me so well that I was able to top the Liberals all this time and I'm still here.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thibault:** — Here you are, if you will just take them over to Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — You should knit a pair of socks for Dave Steuart, he gets cold feet.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thibault:** —I want to say that when I first came here, the first Sunday that I stayed over the weekend, you know I was a little boy that wasn't away from home very much and to spend a weekend in Regina, it's quite lonesome. Mr. Speaker, you were the Member who invited me over for the Sunday meal. I am going to tell you, you just don't forget these little things. So I could go on and on and say many kind words about you, but I hope that when you wear the mitts that you look at the golden cuffs and the rest is knitted in brown. You can use your imagination about that. So, so much about the mitts, now I should like to say a few words about the budget.

I want to say that when I first came here in 1959 the budget was \$130 million. You know we have gone a long way, now it is over a billion. A lot of progress has been made and I just want to mention one thing that the Liberals are beefing about. It is the Land Bank. When I look at the Mickey Mouse Show that they have on television it is an insult to the intelligence of the voters of this province. I am going to tell you I feel sorry for the Opposition, two of their best Members have left and two of the ones that are in this House, the Member for Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) and the Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) are retiring. The kind of noise that the Member for Lumsden (Mr. Lane) makes, he's going to scare the rest of the Liberals away.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thibault:** — Mind you, I had a convention last night in Wakaw. That community bragged about the Liberal convention a few weeks ago, they said they had a big crowd. Well I'm going to tell you how that convention went last night. With the Premier speaking they filled all the chairs that were in the auditorium, then they went over to the Legion Hall and brought the benches in. After that they went over to the lumber yard and brought some more planks in and they sat on planks because there wasn't any room left.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thibault:** — Then we told the rest of them, well boys it is just too bad you'll just have to go home and trust in the Lord we

are going to do the best we can for you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thibault:** —However, Mr. Speaker, everything that has been said about the budget has been dealt with lengthwise, crosswise, upstairs, downstairs, but I'm going to tell the people of Saskatchewan not to trust the Land Bank in the hands of the Liberal Party.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thibault:** — Leave it in the hands of the people that brought it into being, just like when they brought in medicare. The people of the province trusted the Liberal Party with medicare and you know what happened to it. They said, no, no give it back to the hands of its mother. The hospitalization was the same thing, they talked against it and then after it got working they said, it's good, it's good. But keep the Land Bank there, people of this province, for at least another four years so that little baby will have a chance to grow. They are trying to smother it before it is born. Give it a chance but give it a chance with the Blakeney Government, that's what we want.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, that is all I want to say.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. E. Kramer** (The Battlefords): — Mr. Speaker, I certainly am very, very pleased to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague here on the Front Bench, the gentleman who just spoke and congratulated you on your performance. You entered this House, I think some six years before I did . . .

**Mr. MacDonald** (Milestone): —Why didn't you let him run again?

**Mr. Kramer:** — Well I think those choices were up to him, but anyway the Member for Milestone has two ears and one mouth and I wish he would use them accordingly.

You know when the Member for Melfort-Kinistino was speaking about the mitts and the knitting, all of a sudden it made me think of the Leader of the Opposition and a couple of them over there. None of them have much wit but I think one thing that you have to admit is that our Leader of the Opposition has a fair bit of native wit. It always amazes me how he weaves and threads his little stories, prevarications, misrepresentations into the whole thread of his program and his actions. You know I was just thinking, Mr. Speaker, and the Member for Kinistino, that the Leader of the Opposition is truly a well-knit wit.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robbins) for the tremendous budget that he has brought forward. Certainly that could not be done, Mr. Speaker, without the able leadership of the Premier. And certainly it

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could not be done unless it was by a party that was dedicated to bring programs to people. In any case, and in spite of the Leader of the Opposition and the Members of the Opposition lighting up the smudge pots and throwing up their smoke screens as usual. Spending literally hundreds of thousands of dollars by trying to once again scare the people, the old fear tactic, they will be unsuccessful. These people are scared to death. Mr. Speaker, these people are scared to death.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — They don't really know what to do about it. They know that Mr. Lang and Mr. Trudeau are having quite a time convincing the people of western Canada that they have any right whatsoever to be the government or that they can trust them at all. So here you have it, as it has always been. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, when the people opposite, were a little refreshing. There was a voice over there at one time that would stand up and say to Ottawa . . .

**Mr. MacDonald (Milestone):** — Who won North Battleford?

**Mr. Kramer:** — Who won North Battleford! Nobody. They sent a veterinarian down there by accident and nobody needed a veterinarian more than Pierre and Otto Lang.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — I don't think that anybody . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — . . . take a walk . . .

**Mr. Kramer:** — When they get elected . . . I'll send you . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Let's have a little more quiet.

**Mr. Kramer:** — They consider they elected somebody when they get elected with 34 per cent of the vote. I suggest to you that I was elected in the Battlefords with 64 per cent of the votes.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — Next time . . . you keep saying that, you've been saying that for 20 years.

**Mr. Lane:** — That's the first time . . .

**Mr. Kramer:** — Right on. Well, Mr. Speaker, when Pierre's puppets and Lang's lapdogs get through interrupting, I'll get on with my speech.

**Mr. MacDonald:** — Well, when are you going to start?

**Mr. Kramer:** — Right now. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak in this House and support the budget, to be associated

with its benefits for our Saskatchewan people. To be associated with a Government that chooses to put people first in its priorities and in its planning. As part of that concern for people, Mr. Speaker, my Department wishes to see the total transportation picture in our province balanced in such a way as to provide maximum mobility of people and goods, no matter where within our province. We intend that our Department provide a network of safely designed, carefully maintained roads along the routes most used by our people and by our commercial traffic. We intend that other modes of transportation such as air transport and urban transit be placed in a position where they can offer maximum service to the people and communities they serve. And we intend, Mr. Speaker, that all these good things be provided in an orderly manner at the least possible cost. We plan our transportation program carefully in order to provide the best use of our tax dollar and maximum benefit to Saskatchewan people.

The program, Mr. Speaker, which I will table at the end of my talk, outlines what I believe is an excellent approach to meeting the immediate transportation needs of our province and its people, as well as an excellent return for our dollars.

The Department of Highways and Transportation, acknowledges its responsibility to provide the people of our province with the opportunity for maximum mobility. And with its forward-looking program we display our intent to carry out this responsibility to our citizens.

Each of us Mr. Speaker, knows only too well the effects of inflation over the last year or two. Inflation effected our Department as much, or more than others, since construction costs are one of the chief components of that inflation. So we have our largest budget ever, Mr. Speaker, a leading budget, more than \$109 million. But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the programs for people proposed by our Department, we feel that the taxpayer is indeed getting value, good value, for every dollar spent.

Mr. Speaker, I will proceed with my summary of the highlights of this year's Highway program. I will show that the program indeed takes into account this Government's concern for people, that there is orderly planning and construction to meet their needs, and that we are continuing our efforts to provide the wisest possible management of our facilities and resources charged to our responsibility.

The largest item in our ordinary expenditures this year is the \$25.5 million we plan to spend on maintenance and repair of existing highways and bridges. Almost a quarter of our total budget, Mr. Speaker, is allocated for keeping our existing highways in good repair, for making what we've got to last as long as possible. We see this budget increase as being good stewardship of past and future tax dollars used in highway construction.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, dollars spent on maintenance are dollars retained within the rural economy, a goodly portion of our maintenance staff is stationed in smaller communities. They live there, they work there and they spend their money in those smaller communities. With the extension of our oil programs, more and more of these maintenance crews will be needed and several new depots and maintenance sections will be opened up



this year.

We have these new miles and many of them, I'll go into that later, and that does put a tremendous strain on the work force that we have at the present time, especially, Mr. Speaker, when there is a real shortage as there was last year, a real shortage of help.

Our Department has been charged, Mr. Speaker, in recent days with allowing the highways of our Province to deteriorate, and with being unconcerned about their safe and efficient operation. That, I submit, is completely false!

It is no secret that 1974 gave us some very difficult times. If I were able to credit the Members across the house with sufficient ability, or witchcraft, I would almost say they had the bad weather made-to-order for us.

The construction industry, on whom we rely to a large extent, was plagued by a shortage of workers and trucks. While it is heartwarming, Mr. Speaker, to have such a high rate of employment in our Province, having more jobs than people caused problems last summer. We began a new series of training programs for heavy equipment operators, to ease our own labour shortage.

These programs gave our Department the drop on International Women's Year . . . we graduated several young women from those heavy equipment courses last fall. And they do a fine job. Little things happen occasionally. One of the girls thought she was going to be a cat skinner and brought a knife. One of them . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — . . . one of them brought a bowl of milk.

**An Hon. Member:** — Who brought milk?

**Mr. Kramer:** — You've got to give them a carrot, bring a carrot for the people opposite. You know, it's no wonder, I really don't know what they're going to do across there, Mr. Speaker, when they lose their last veterinarian, because those braying donkeys surely need one.

**An Hon. Member:** — What good would it do when there are not going to be any around?

**Mr. Kramer:** — Spring flooding throughout our Province.

**Mr. Lane:** — What will you do when there's no emergency service?

**Mr. Kramer:** — Oh, we'll get to you, Gary. Spring flooding throughout our Province taxed the Department's resources to the limit. Almost \$1 million was required to combat the flooding, not including the \$611,000 spent in our all-out effort and successful effort to save the town of Lumsden last spring, in April.

**An Hon. Member:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — Yes, you know, Mr. Speaker it was wonderful . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — It was not!

**Mr. Kramer:** — It was wonderful to see the activity, the activity that went on there. Every available machine was running. Private contractors, Department of Highways, the local people, everything was running, everything was loaded and moving. The only thing that was running empty was the Member for Lumsden.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — What was he packing around, his mouth wouldn't hold water.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — You know, he was tearing, he was tearing back and forth, Mr. Speaker, across the dikes with his ruby lips flapping in the wind. And trying to make an impression. Somehow or other he was trying to be associated but he didn't quite know how. After he went by one old timer who was busy filling sand bags, said, "You know, if that young feller could suck as good as he can blow, we wouldn't have a water problem."

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**An Hon. Member:** — Ah, they read you pretty well, down there in Lumsden.

**Mr. MacDonald (Milestone):** — After a half an hour you finally got a laugh!

**Mr. Kramer:** — Despite the problems, eh, it's only ten minutes. Despite problems like these . . .

**Mr. Lane:** — Tell them about how you ran after me to get into the picture.

**Mr. Kramer:** — Despite problems like these . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — . . . our Department managed successfully to complete a large portion of our 1974 highway program. We moved crews from wet areas to dry ones; we coped with too much water and too few people; we dealt with equipment and material shortages. In short, Mr. Speaker, there was a commendable, a commendable total effort on the part of my Department's staff. I'm proud of my staff, from the newest recruit to the most seasoned veteran. Their dedication will continue to be a significant factor in this year's highway program.

Our program this year, Mr. speaker, will follow our Government's policy of orderly development of existing systems to meet the needs of our people, continuing to meet the Department's philosophy that all areas and people of our Province are entitled to travel on roads of a good standard. A total of \$69.5 million has been allocated to capital construction in our budget.

The figures I have just given, Mr. Speaker, propose a 15.5 per cent increase in paved mileage and an 8.7 per cent increase in oil-treated surface within our total provincial highway mileage. We are responsible for more than 12,500 miles of highways in this Province.

Of this mileage, Mr. Speaker, some 11,600 are in our numbered provincial highway system. Fully one-third of this mileage is paved, and 44.4 per cent is oil-treated, providing 9,000 miles of dust-free driving surface for our Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan commerce.

As a point of interest, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has only 5,160 miles of dust-free and secondary roads.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has improved a great deal lately. They've had a good Government over there for the last six years and they are improving, but they are, without a doubt, still some 4,000 miles behind Saskatchewan, despite a larger highway budget.

**Mr. MacDonald** (Milestone): — Thanks to Ross.

**Mr. Kramer:** — Well, that's just, look at the history, we'll give it to you, the statistics don't show it.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is making tremendous headway, it . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — . . . Ross.

**Mr. Kramer:** — Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has made tremendous headway, particularly since they kicked out that Liberal-Conservative coalition. You never could tell just what it is there. They have doubled their budget. I think that with the kind of budget that we have compared to Manitoba's, that we've done a tremendous job. And I'm not discrediting theirs. I say that there has been a good consistent highway program throughout, throughout the last 20 years.

**Mr. MacDonald** (Milestone): — Ever since 1964.

**Mr. Kramer:** — Well you get, you . . . Mr. Speaker, I wonder who has the floor here.

**An Hon. Member:** — We don't know.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order!

**Mr. Kramer:** — I wonder, Mr. Speaker, who the people opposite are, they continually like to compare us when they can find something that is a little under the door. They like to do this when they find something a little better. They go across, when it suits

them, to Alberta, they go across to Manitoba. It's interesting to note that Alberta, with three times the highway budget, over a period of years, what do they have for oiled surface? Well, they've got, Mr. Speaker, 6,529 - still 2,500 less miles of oiled surface roads compared to Saskatchewan, in spite of tremendous budgets.

**Mr. MacDonald** (Milestone): — But they are good.

**Mr. Kramer:** — Well, so are ours.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, order!

**Mr. Kramer:** — I think you had better get back to the Regina Inn.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kramer:** — Well, whatever, it's a little less than . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, order! There's just a little too much crossfire going on. A little bit adds a little spice but too much pepper in the soup.

**Mr. Kramer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The remainder of the total mileage consists of gravel and earth highways in the province, service roads, northern tributaries, industrial access roads and stub connectors for which we are responsible. We also dust-treat over 80 miles of internal park roads, maintain 66 miles of various camp, picnic, historic parks, weigh scale and airport sites.

This year's program continues our past policy of emphasizing construction of two-lane highways. We plan to spend nearly \$30 million to extend and improve this network of safe roads for our people, for our tourists, and our commercial traffic. We are concerned about safety, Mr. Speaker.

We will continue our modest program of four-laning on highways where traffic volumes require it for safety. And we will continue to make use of existing highway surface for this program, in order to provide the most four-lane mileage for the least cost. This will take four-laning this year from Moose Jaw to Swift Current and it won't be stopping somewhere along the road at the ranch gate.

It is of interest perhaps, to note that in 1961, when the first four-lane, since 1961, when the first four-lane communication was opened in this Province, that construction has averaged 23 miles annually. More than 100 miles have been opened to traffic in the four years since this Government took office, Mr. Speaker, an average of 25 miles per year added to the safer four-lane highway mileage.

To make transportation safer and more efficient for our northern residents, to encourage the development of tourism and the use of our natural resources, we are this year allocating \$8.2 million for the construction of northern two-lane highways. Under the program, we will continue approximately 54 miles of

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paving on Number 2 highway to La Ronge, and a portion of Number 55 highway between Green Lake and Meadow Lake.

We plan to oil-surface a total of almost 80 miles of highways 106, 163, 155 in the north of Saskatchewan and grade 18 miles of highway 55 in northwestern Saskatchewan. There are many other smaller projects which are too numerous to mention.

Northern Saskatchewan is important and our construction program is evidence of that fact. We cannot and will not throw away vast sums of public money on roads to nowhere, on roads that serve no communities, that lead to empty holes in the ground, Mr. Speaker. I think the folks across there know. Situations like this are not unknown but Mr. Speaker, they are an inheritance, an inheritance from the previous Liberal administration who built roads not for our people, but for their friends in big corporations in eastern Canada, the kind who take our resources and run. That kind of stewardship our Province can do without. Mr. Speaker, those, they will never forget. The people of northern Saskatchewan especially will never forget. Roads starting nowhere, ending nowhere, some built for a big publicity stunt for industries that never come about like the Primrose Pass, the Anglo-Rouyn road where literally millions of dollars were spent. They weren't satisfied, Mr. Speaker, to give our resources away, they had to build a road for nothing to Hudson Bay to allow them to haul it out.

The traffic count, the traffic count on that road today is down to practically nil since . . .

**Mr. Guy:** — How many rabbits?

**Mr. Kramer:** — . . . there, there's . . . I heard you were out there lately and you couldn't find a single rabbit track. That's about the only thing you haven't chased, is rabbits.

Anglo-Rouyn monuments, Primrose Pass, monuments of Liberal inefficiency. Both of them monuments of inefficiency. All of them, Mr. Speaker, and there are scads and scads of others, scads of others.

Somebody said that I shouldn't be dredging that up. It's amazing, it's amazing, Mr. Speaker, \$90,000 spent. They spent more than \$5 million on a road to haul that rich copper ore out to Flin Flon and we got \$90,000 in royalties back for the copper of the province.

The empty hole the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan were left holding the bag and these people over here lecture us about good business. They dare to stand up here and lecture us about how to run business, to say nothing about Davy's Big River sawmill and a few others. The sodium sulphate that was given away at Snake Hole Lake and Alsask. Given away and the corporations, the socialist corporation that is going to net us a profit this year of \$2 million on an original investment of only \$250 and they lecture us about business deals when they indulged in nothing but giveaways. Nothing but giveaways during their regime and why did they indulge in those giveaways? I'd like them to tell us.

Mr. Speaker, we consider it important that people travelling our northern roads, in search of new resource or recreation

areas, are fully aware of the potential of our vast northland. Under our signing program we are erecting northern regional map signs at key points on roadways penetrating our beautiful northland. They show route information and list general recreational facilities available. In areas where a large number of northern outfitters operate the area map and directory of outfitters and services are supplied. These will all be shown at strategic points. That's our concern, Mr. Speaker, concern for people from our own province and elsewhere will use this area and concern for the citizens who make their living by providing the services.

Other new signing programs are being introduced this year under the \$400,000 allocated in tile budget. City entrance map signs will be erected on turnouts on city outskirts. They will show routes and points of interest in the city. Indeed, we have already installed one of those at Yorkton. It was erected in time for the official opening of the Saskatchewan Yellowhead Route in Yorkton last year. Incidentally, that was attended by delegates and visitors all the way from Prince Albert, British Columbia and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Other programs we have introduced for the travelling public as well are the regional campground and campground services signs. Nor does our concern end with the required traffic and information signs, but extends into traffic safety. This year, our Department has allotted a great deal more than \$1 million to improving traffic safety in our province. That includes things like our "Please Join Us" signs, promoting the use of seat belts in automobiles. Since the beginning of this particular promotion the use of seat belts by the travelling public has tripled.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being at a Ministers' Conference at Winnipeg, when safety seat belts, weights and measures were all being discussed. The problems were raised, even those problems of pollution devices. We pointed out, the Saskatchewan delegation pointed out at that conference, that one thing that the federal people could do, and the federal representative was there - was to make, if they want people to wear seat belts as Mr. Lalonde suggests, then for heaven sake have then give us a uniform seat belt that works. They keep changing those as often or oftener than the people across the way change their shirts. This is a complete "schmozzle". Last year Chrysler put out a product that you couldn't get tied unless you were a magician, they will change it again next year. First they are on one side then on the other side. If we are going to have people have confidence in seat belts, I am suggesting that there should be one uniform type and every company should have the same type of seat belt so that when you reach for it in an emergency you know exactly where it is at. This was agreed on and I hope that by next year that they will be moving in that direction.

This year our Department has allocated a great deal more than \$1 million and we hope that the voluntary use of seat belts will increase. I don't think that there is any way that you are going to pass legislation to force people to use their seat belts until you have a majority of the people wanting to use them and having confidence in them. Our program has met with success. The use of seat belts this year, fortunately has tripled in Saskatchewan and I am sure that it is one of the reasons that our accident rate hasn't been even higher than it was. \$250,000 of this year's budget has been allocated for signalization at

railway crossings and \$100,000 has been set aside for roadway illumination at critical locations. And that is not enough, we should have more.

Even more safety measures, Mr. Speaker. Installation of guard rails; intersection treatments, such as channelization, rumble strips and turning bays; flattening side slopes and approaches. These all are being done just as quickly as we can find the men and the material to provide this service. All safety improvements have a high factor return in reduced accident rates for the amount of investment involved and are being looked at. We are proud that our Traffic Safety Branch, established last year is providing considerable input to the department's traffic safety efforts, as well as assisting and co-operating with other agencies in the field. Incidentally, that again was a first for Saskatchewan, the first highway traffic safety division that was established by any provincial government in Canada. Since that time I believe five other provinces have come in with us. We have had our Western Ministers' Conferences and I believe now that all the four western provinces have set up highway safety traffic divisions and I am sure that these will bring results when you have people who are specialized and whose job it is to seek out the danger areas; to find out what the cause is and do something about it.

In 1974 there were 23,776 traffic accidents in Saskatchewan which accounted for a loss of 318 lives and 9,839 injuries and a recordable, identifiable loss of \$46.5 million. This, Mr. Speaker, is an astonishing figure. It is a figure that we should not really have to face, but that is the cost of accidents. These are regrettable losses and the doubled budget this year for safety is at least, I hope, a part of the answer.

It is worthy of note, Mr. Speaker, that 46 per cent of these accidents occurred on urban streets; 27 per cent occurred on municipal roads; only 19 per cent on our provincial highways. Two years ago, when I asked for these figures, the estimate by the Saskatchewan Safety Council was 28 per cent of the accidents were occurring on highways. I know that statistics may be faulty but it seems that we are able to bring the accident rate down. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that money should be provided somehow, liaison should be provided somehow, so that municipal governments, urban and rural, and our traffic safety division should be liaising more and more with the Saskatchewan Safety Council to reduce this ever-increasing accident record and the loss of life and injury to people.

It is worthy of note, Mr. Speaker, that these figures have changed drastically in the last two years. Another factor that I want to mention that has certainly lent itself to more safety consciousness was the Legislative Committee on Safety, chaired by Mr. Thibault and with Members from both sides of the House making their contributions. I believe that that, too, certainly has had a tremendous effect and I believe that the advice that we got from that Committee has been invaluable.

Other special programs within the comprehensive transportation picture are included in this program document and under the urban transit assistance, again initiated by this department last year, another first. We provide financial assistance to cities with operating transit systems, the program currently provides the following major items: 75 per cent toward the

cost of transit facility construction; 3 cents per passenger carried; 50 per cent of the cost of new busses.

I hope that this will encourage somehow and by advertising and through persuasion, we can get more of our people to use the transit system. I believe that the congestion, the parking space, all of those things that we find almost intolerable and annoying downtown could be solved if we could popularize the use of transit service. There is no reason at all why as many cars should be going downtown every day as there are when they have good, safe transit service.

These are good programs, Mr. Speaker, but there are other persons who need equal opportunity in transportation. This year again, for the first time, transit systems for handicapped people will receive assistance under an extension of our urban transit program. These people have a special mobility problem and they have a right to transportation. We will underwrite 50 per cent of the operating deficit and 75 per cent of the rolling stock purchase - that is the purchase of busses - for special transit systems for the handicapped. This new program, with a budget of \$555,000 is designed to fill this important need in the lives of our Saskatchewan people.

Other assistance planned for cities under the urban transportation assistance program will include \$4.5 million for construction and improvements of the highway connector streets, also, arterial collector streets within our cities. And \$200,000 has been earmarked to meet the present commitments for transportation studies in Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford. These studies will take the same form, I hope, and provide more information than the Regina Transportation Study did that was tabled two years ago. I believe that we can learn something from that. I hope that the answers which these urban areas get will be even more useful than that one.

Airport assistance, another transportation mode we are concerned with, and, Mr. Speaker, our airport assistance program will provide assistance for the construction, operation, and maintenance of community airports. Our program is designed to complement the existing federal assistance policy. Several Saskatchewan communities are now participating in this program and we have a request from many more communities.

In northern Saskatchewan air transportation is a vital element of the total transportation picture. Nearly \$2 million has been allocated for construction, additions, and improvements to key northern airports, which will become bases for water bomber operation.

The Department of Highways has undertaken construction of the Meadow Lake airport, the La Ronge airport is being built in co-operation with the Ministry of Transport. We are pleased to share in this step towards protection of Saskatchewan's resources. It also improves the potential for air transport in all our northern communities. Northern people rely on the plane for supplies, travel, and emergency aid, much more, Mr. Speaker, than those of us who have access to provincial highways and municipal roads themselves.

This year will see the completion of our Operation Open Roads and Operation MainStreet program. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, when this program was announced in the House in



1972 that our goal was to provide dust-free roads to every community with a population of over 100 requesting this assistance. Smaller communities were served if they were within three miles of a provincial highway. Also, this provided 70 per cent of the construction costs and 50 per cent of the maintenance costs to oil surface the main streets of these communities. We accept the full responsibility and have taken more than 500 miles of these access roads into the highway system.

By the end of the 1975 construction season, nearly 500 communities will have participated in this popular program. Another program for people, Mr. Speaker, one Saskatchewan can be proud of.

Further to improve rural living in Saskatchewan, my department is now undertaking a highway extension program. Nearly \$2 million has been allocated this year to incorporate high volume traffic grid and connector roads into the provincial highway system. There are two objectives in this program. First, to provide safe, dust-free surfacing and adequate maintenance for safe use by the travelling public and second, to relieve rural municipalities of the excessive maintenance costs of heavily travelled through-traffic roads. Already in 1974 over 270 miles of grid roads were added to our highway system; by June 1st, another 185 miles will have been added and another 175 miles by year end. We anticipate doing work on many miles of these additions this year.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that since I have been Minister of this Department more than 1,000 miles have been added to the provincial highway system, removing that burden from hundreds of municipalities as well as assisting smaller communities with their main streets. This once again, is another program for people, a program that keeps faith with the people in rural Saskatchewan. Compare this then to the Liberal-Lang program of rail line abandonment, which is designed and deliberately designed, to destroy the small communities to the advantage of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the foreign grain buying cartels.

**Mr. Lane:** — You abandoned more than any other government in the history of Canada

**Mr. Kramer:** — I am sure that you were abandoned when you were born! Mr. Speaker, would the Member please ask his question after I am through. He has that privilege.

Access to resource areas, to parks, historic sites, to scenic spots enjoyed by our own people and by tourists, these are the object of a \$1.4 million allocation in this year's budget as well.

All the programs that I have mentioned we see as a part of a comprehensive transportation picture in Saskatchewan.

We see the 1975-76 highway program contributing to our provincial economy as well. Most of the new construction and the building of highways is done by private contractors. Maintenance dollars stay in the rural communities. Signing programs encourage both our Saskatchewan travellers and our tourists to stop and investigate our small communities, on spend dollars in

our province rather than speeding through as they have done in the past. We believe that we have many places of interest to offer the tourists of Saskatchewan and we have provided the means, to tell them where it is at.

Our northern program is forging ahead, providing good quality roads that will provide access to markets for our lumber, fishing, fur, and mining industries. During 1974-75 our department completed a 285-mile winter road from Turner Lake northwards to Uranium City, providing a land link for that community and its people. Literally thousands of tons of machinery and materials have already been trucked over this road to Cluff Lake and Uranium City. But even more important we feel is the feeling of isolation experienced by these northern citizens, and this is being altered by the opportunity to have and use a land link with the rest of our province, even for a short time.

We are including more than \$3 million in this year's budget for our bridge construction. The Maymont Bridge will be completed and opened to traffic this year. Nearly \$1 million is provided in the budget for the commencement of the Maidstone Bridge. These two major bridges in north-central Saskatchewan will provide year-round crossing facilities in that area - a level of service and safety unapproachable with summer ferry service and winter ice crossings. Upstream releases of water on the river above Edmonton have created, over the last few years, serious conditions and they have spurred our efforts to provide safer crossings as soon as possible.

Cost sharing programs - the Department of Highways is concerned that Saskatchewan residents get maximum value for every dollar spent on transportation. For that reason, the department actively seeks to use every cost-sharing program available. Under the previous administration, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan wrote a poor track record of seeking Federal Government assistance. You may rest assured that this Government works very hard to get its share of whatever federal funds may be available for our projects. I believe, Mr. Speaker, we got less out of the total federal assistance until 1971 than was available to Saskatchewan and under their leadership received \$9 million less than Alberta and it didn't get its share. It all went to Quebec and to the Maritimes and to Ontario and a little to British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, we have already signed agreements and received from the Federal Government some \$4 million under the highway strengthening program. We anticipate some \$6.5 million in revenue from them this year. The goal of this program is uniform load standards across Canada. We recognize the value of the program for interprovincial commerce, so far we have co-operated in this program. But let no one forget, Mr. Speaker, that this is only on the primary system and Saskatchewan is getting less than our two sister provinces again. For what reason I don't know. As I say we do the best we can. We have received \$21 million and we have 2,000 miles of primary system compared to Manitoba's 1,300. Some time ago one of the people opposite said, "What are they complaining about." Let us remember the reason we are getting this is to accommodate trans-Canada commerce. Some of these trucks owned by the CPR which are moving back and forth across the country and why I don't know when these people have rail lines, but they insist on doing this and there are a great number of these that are CP Transport. Don't for one minute forget that the only thing that we can do with this \$4 million a year is to add to the existing pavement

that we already have. Not one yard of dirt not one bit of widening on any roads that are in need of improvement or construction. This is only a drop in the bucket as far as the real needs of road improvement, as far as trans-Canada traffic is concerned.

Some of our secondary highways are capable of taking increased load limits but at the cost of reducing the designed physical life of the pavement. This does not make sense for Saskatchewan taxpayers. Because a reduction of a road's physical life reduces its economic life and brings forward future costs of resurfacing or reconstruction, thus, increasing the annual capital road costs. No cost-sharing programs that are in sight can take care and put up that kind of money.

Additionally, costs involved with upgrading oil surfaced roads and low strength pavements to the primary systems standards would be prohibitive and could not be supported through vehicle and fuel taxation by the people of this province. We are concerned that allowing higher weight limits on the whole would put a pressure on the provincial network and would further encourage major shifts in commercial traffic from rail to truck transport. And that is the last thing we want to do. This would have a serious and costly implication for the people of Saskatchewan.

In concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, may I repeat that I am indeed proud of what this Department has accomplished. In spite of the serious weather problems, in spite of the shortage of personnel, materials and trucks, the staff of the Department of Highways has put forth a commendable effort towards the accomplishment of the 1974-75 goals. The contracting industry has also done and made a tremendous effort under great difficulty in many cases to bring about the culmination of a good program last year. The spirit that prevailed among those who worked night and day last April to protect the town at Lumsden from a river gone mad, the spirit that drove men and machines over 285 miles of frozen muskeg, forest and over ice-covered lakes to Cluff Lake and Uranium City, the spirit that worked hard and long hours to make up for lost time in last year's program, this is the spirit, Mr. Speaker, that will make and achieve the goals and make those goals a reality for 1975-76. This program is for the people, this is a program which we all should be able to support.

The highways budget I have outlined to you, Mr. Speaker, is only a portion of this year's total budget which meets the needs and aspirations of all the Saskatchewan people through every department. The budget brought forward by the Hon. Wes Robbins is one that I am pleased to support and which the people of Saskatchewan, I am sure will all be proud.

Before I table this program, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to a couple of things. There are some errors, there was a misprint, it has been changed. I am tabling this document but I want to make it very clear that this document is an outline we hope to meet. There can be extenuating circumstances which may not allow us to go ahead with every program that is mentioned in here. I say this because of situations we got into last year. We had contracts called, tendered on Highway No. 1 east; the contractor after looking the situation over for a fairly long time, two contracts, decided that inflation had robbed him of any possible profit that he might make and left his deposit on the table. He left \$24,000 on the table and walked away

from a successful bid, because he felt that inflation would not allow him to complete those contracts. Those kinds of things can happen. We can call for tenders, Mr. Speaker, as we have done and when too high, we will not accept them. This will not allow us at times to carry out some of the programs. That is why I warn the House that this program is not a complete commitment; we will do our best to meet the programs that are outlined here.

Mr. Speaker, I am simply saying this in tabling this document. I don't want somebody coming along next year and telling me that I didn't do this or I didn't do that. I am sure that more than 90 per cent of this will be carried out but there are extenuating circumstances.

**Mr. MacDonald** (Moose Jaw): — You won't be here next year!

**Mr. Kramer:** — Just like Roy did, just like Jim Mauher didn't; just like Alf Dyck did; and who was that other fellow. Oh, yes, he is a senator now, Senator Sparrow - the bird brain. He is going to peter out just like the rest of them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to simply point out in tabling this that there are a couple of minor errors, I have marked them. There is another item that could be misunderstood. I have been talking about a \$75 million budget - at one point in here we refer to a capital budget of \$69.5 million. That \$69.5 million does not include the urban capital assistance that goes to the cities; that brings it up to the \$75 million. I should like the people of the press to note that, please, because I don't want to be accused of giving two different sets of figures.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion, I will not support the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. A.R. Guy** (Athabasca): — After 15 years in the legislature I never thought I would have the opportunity to follow a speech like we have heard here this evening by the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer). I have heard a great number of Minister of Highways from both sides of the House. We have heard them give their program in honesty and without the side quips and the additional remarks which were prevalent here this evening. But I never saw a man stand in this House and present a highway program with the apologies that we have heard here tonight.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — First of all he wouldn't . . . You know there has never been a Minister of Highways who has not presented his highway program to the Members on both sides of the House, before he delivered his speech. But tonight he was afraid to give his program to us so that we could follow it. I found it rather amazing that he never went through the program and said this is what we are going to do for this highway here or this highway there. He hadn't the courage to provide a program and he hasn't got the courage to stay in the House, it looks as if he is going to leave now. Never has there been such a terrible performance. I saw the Premier sitting there with his back to the Minister,

with his head in his hands and I couldn't help but think, that he was thinking back to the day four years ago when the Minister of Highways crawled down the corridor and begged to be put into the Cabinet. I thought then, that the Premier must have said, why did I let myself into this in a weak moment? Why didn't I stand strong and say, we don't need him in our Cabinet? I noticed that both the Premier and the Attorney General were in the Assembly when the Minister of Highways started his speech, five minutes later they were both gone and then the Premier came back because he understood that the Minister of Highways was going to speak for 25 minutes. When he came back in he thought it would be over but he went on for 45 minutes, he kind of underestimated.

I knew when I came in here this evening and saw the Minister of Highways that we were going to get a speech. That is the only time the Minister of Highways appears in the legislature when he is going to make a speech. The rest of the time he is out auctioneering.

He mentions about the hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising but I will tell you one thing, the Liberal Party pays for their advertising.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — They don't have Service Printers, the printing company owned by the NDP taking the taxpayers' dollar and paying for their advertising. The Liberal Party is too straightforward and honest for that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — We don't use Service Printers, we don't use the Commonwealth to build up the election funds for the coming election campaign.

**An Hon. Member:** — They won't let us!

**Mr. Guy:** — I think the Minister of Highways should recognize that.

Then the Minister of Highways went on to make some remarks about the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Transport in Ottawa. I will tell you, he can say what he likes, but the majority of the people of Saskatchewan are proud of Cliff McIssac.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — He made a great contribution in this legislature and he was one of the first MPs elected who was immediately appointed as a Parliamentary Secretary in Ottawa. They recognized his ability. And a two-bit politician from North Battleford says, well you know he is a vet by accident. I will tell you that the provincial Member for North Battleford had a job to do after the last federal election, his requirements as an auctioneer all of a sudden were in great demand. He had to auction off a lot of defeated NDP candidates. And there was only one buyer,

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan bought every one of them! They were all losers and the Premier and the Front Benches bought them all. John Burton, Bill Knight, you name them, all working behind the scenes now. I am sure, because I will tell you one thing that I have learned in politics and the Members opposite I am sure have learned it, that if you can't win as a candidate, you will never run a campaign for winners from the backrooms. You will never win it from the backrooms. Then we have the Member for Watrous, no, I don't know . . . I don't think he knows. I tell you he doesn't know a daffodil from a tulip, so I don't know how he would know what constituency he runs in.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — Then the Minister of Highways had some disparaging remarks to make about the Member for Lumsden. He said, you know what he was carrying along the trenches wouldn't hold water. I think that he is probably an authority on that, being full of it, he should know. He went on about the tremendous highway program and how good the highways are, although there has been more criticism of the highways system in the last year than we have had in the last 20 years. But I really don't take exception to his remarks because I have to recognize that there was a period of time when he didn't have the privilege of travelling the highways of Saskatchewan and therefore he sort of lost count of what was going on, on the highway system of the province.

Then he made a safety speech. I found his safety speech was rather interesting from a man who said we are not going to reduce the speed limits in Saskatchewan, no way. I think the Minister of Highways had better go back to John Burton or Bill Knight or whoever it was who wrote his speech, tell him to write another one. Not only write another one in content but write another one in four-letter words he could read, that we wouldn't have to listen to him fumble through it the way we did the last 35 minutes this evening. I will tell you then he went on to the La Ronge airport and he says we are sharing it with Ottawa. I don't know whether the Press or whether the people of Saskatchewan know what the sharing is but I will tell you what it is. We are sharing it on the basis that the province is spending a few thousand dollars to clear the area, and Ottawa is spending a few million dollars building the airstrip. That's the sharing of the airstrip at La Ronge, yes, one horse and one rabbit. Otto is pulling a pretty heavy load when he has to pull the Minister of Highways behind, that's a pretty heavy load.

Then, he mentioned northern roads to Uranium City and I thought, Mr. Speaker, that he would never mention that in this House. There were near tragedies in the North this winter because of the Minister of Highways. For political expediency he announced the highway to Uranium City was completed and ready for travel as early as the end of November. Well everybody knows that you don't travel across Lake Athabasca at the end of November. But there were people in the south who didn't recognize the problems of northern transportation and they listened to the Minister of Highways. He said we have completed it, we have only got one more ridge to cross - it didn't matter whether that ridge was 40 miles of open water. We had near tragedies of people who tried to use that road because they believed the Minister of Highways. Not only didn't the Minister of Highways know whether it was open, he didn't even know what was happening to his own crews that were building that

road. If it hadn't been for some good citizens in Uranium City one of his camps on the south shore of Athabasca would have been in real difficulty. They were without fuel, they were without food, without propane, without a car or a vehicle to get out of there. People hired their own airplanes and came across from Uranium City to save the highway group because the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) didn't have any concern for them. He put them up there and said, you have to get this road built for political expediency. I'll tell you that road to Uranium City, this fall, was the biggest disaster under the present Minister that has ever been seen in this province. We all know that to build a road to Uranium City in the winter time is a hazardous job, but an honest government would recognize this, will admit it. The Minister would not take that position, he said, oh, no, we are building it. We have to finish it. The people tried to use it and as I say we had some near tragedies as a result of the advertising and political expediency of the Minister of Highways.

Well, I was going to go for an hour half tonight but after the Minister's speech, I am afraid that I am going to have to go for two hours and a half. However, we will leave the accident from North Battleford and proceed to some of the other issues that need to be commented on about the budget.

After listening to all the Members opposite, Ministers, the backbenchers, there is only one conclusion that I can draw from this budget and that that it is a budget of disaster for the people of Saskatchewan. Every speaker spent 25 minutes saying what they did in the last four years and then they spent five minutes saying what they are going to do in the next four years. They haven't any answers for the future. The Premier's option is out the door, it is gone, it is an option that the Saskatchewan people want no part of. I'll tell you, when they took five minutes to speak on what they would do in the future that is only because they were slow talkers. I could have given the same thing in 30 seconds.

**Mr. Messer:** — What's your answer . . .

**Mr. Guy:** — Well, I listened to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer), one of the biggest farmers in Saskatchewan, one of the wealthiest, one of the men who if they ever limited the size of the farms would be the first to scream. I should like to see the Minister of Agriculture be the first one to stand up in this House and say, I'll have my farm limited to two or three sections or even ten sections and throw in a construction company and a few others at the same time. No, I am afraid that if there is one man here on the Government benches who won't be back it will be the Minister of Agriculture. I am going to be sorry because I enjoy him, I enjoy the way that he manipulates the truth. I don't think there is a better manipulator of the truth in the Front Benches other than perhaps the Premier and the Attorney General. Oh, the Minister of hogs doesn't even come into the game, the Minister of Agriculture has it pretty well tied up!

You know the Opposition didn't say that the promises of the NDP were pie-in-the-sky, all they did say was that once this budget is taken to the people of Saskatchewan you are acing to end up with egg on your face, because your budget doesn't solve the problems of the people of rural Saskatchewan today. You stand up and say that this is the biggest budget that

Saskatchewan has ever had. I want to tell you tonight that size is no criterion as to whether budgets satisfy the needs of the Saskatchewan people. It is true that it is a big budget, largest in the history of the province, but what isn't true is that it is in the interest of the people of Saskatchewan.

It is hard to believe how easy the backbenchers have fallen into the pattern of mimicking what they hear in the front benches - that's why I suppose they never get into the front benches because they have no new ideas.

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Thanks, Al!

**Mr. Guy:** — Well, now there is just an example of what I was going to say in my next sentence, not only the backbenchers can't pronounce 1.1 million, they can't even count that far.

The other disappointing thing that we have to recognize - I didn't want to be political tonight, but I can't help but say it - I hope that the front benches continue the speeches they have been making for the last week, or two weeks, or three weeks, because I tell you that the misleading comments of the Ministers opposite will do more to elect the Liberal government on June 18th or 25th, than anything that we could do out in the country. Because I tell you that they are causing concern.

I am sorry that the Minister of Education (Mr. MacMurchy) isn't here because I always enjoy his speeches. Sometimes you can believe him and sometimes you can't, but at least he provides a little humour, he provides a little interest. He is always confused, but we expect that. But what I was disappointed in this time, because I have always had a great deal of admiration for him because I always believed that he tried to tell the truth. But this time he didn't even try to tell the truth. He said that the buoyant Saskatchewan economy was due to NDP policy. Yes, and you clapped then when he said it, but then he went on to say, "But we recognize that world shortages and demands for farm and resource products really created it." And you clapped again! That shows what the backbenchers are up against over there.

I found out one thing that the computer centre has done a good job. They programmed the backbenchers and when they say zip, you clap; when they say Crow's Nest rate you clap; when you say oil, you clap; when you say budget, you clap. The computer centre has done one job for the people of Saskatchewan, it's got the Government backbenchers all clapping together which never happened in the past.

You know as well as I do that the financial picture of Saskatchewan has nothing to do with what the NDP has done, it is the efforts of the Federal Liberal Government . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — Clap, Clap! Oh, pardon me, I didn't say Crow, so they don't clap.

And it is the world demand that has created the demand for our new raw materials that provided the economy of Saskatchewan with the buoyancy we have.



Then the Minister of Education went on to say, we are not really interested in money.

**Mr. Michayluk:** — Even George doesn't believe you!

**Mr. Guy:** — Oh, George does. George believes me very well. He saw you clap when the right word was said.

The Minister of Education went on to say, social prosperity is as important as economic prosperity. You know when I heard that I had to sit back and think because there was a Minister in charge of an agency that had the greatest potential of providing social justice to the people of Saskatchewan and that was the Human Resources Development Agency. What happened to that agency? He destroyed it! He fired the people, he cut the budget. This year they are really going to put it back on the track. So I looked at the budget and what did I find? The budget has been reduced by \$1.8 million. This came from a Minister who said he wanted to put the social aspect, the social prosperity ahead of the economic prosperity. He was the one man in all those benches; the Minister of Agriculture didn't have that opportunity; the Minister of Health had it but didn't accept it; but the Minister of Education had that possibility and that responsibility through that agency and he cut the budget \$2 million. He has taken away the possible dignity and the opportunity for the people who were involved by the actions of that government, they have now lost complete hope.

He then went on to say that the NDP believed that taxation is based on the ability to pay. They nearly gave \$100 deduction to those earning \$50,000; he gave \$100 deduction to those earning \$1,000 and he calls that justice. I call it political expediency, I don't know what the Member for Buena Vista would call it, but I think he would call it political expediency too.

I'll tell you what worries me more than anything about this \$100 and this worries me more than anything else. It hasn't been legislated. Now maybe they will legislate it before the end of this Session and I hope they will, in fact I encourage them. In fact I dare them to do that, because you know what this reminds me of? It reminds me of 1960, 1964 and 1956 - every year before the election they cut the hospital tax and then the year after they were elected, they raised it. Now they have abolished the premiums for which I give them full credit, but now they have found a new gimmick. Now they say, before the election we will give \$100 off your income tax, but wait until next year if they should ever be back, which they won't be, but what they have in their little minds is - we will give you \$100 now and we will take \$200 later on. The people of Saskatchewan have seen through this and you will never have that opportunity. Then they take the sales tax off the people who are dining and dancing, but they won't take them off the people who have to buy their clothes and their household utilities. They don't have any concern for them. And then they take the tax off those who are buying Penthouse, Playboy, and Playgirl, but I don't think that is going to help the families that are going to have to buy clothes and shoes for their children. You might even call it a pornography tax that they have taken off.

You know the thing that bothered me more than anything about the Minister of Education's speech . . .

**Mr. MacDonald** (Milestone): —His haircut?

**Mr. Guy:** — No, that didn't even bother me, but it was when he told a - oh, we have the Speaker in his Chair, I can't say it - I was going to say lie, but I can't refer to it in any other way than that. And the Premier can say, Oh, if he likes, I will come to his comments in just a couple of minutes too.

But he stood in this House and he said that the Liberal Government sold out to the potash companies to 1981. Well, now the Premier sitting in the seat that is more in keeping for his position than the one that he usually occupies - and the Minister of Education knows that this is a downright misrepresentation of the truth, Mr. Speaker. He knows absolutely that that agreement was made by T.C. Douglas and the CCF kept it; the Liberals kept it, but who broke it? The NDP broke it. Premier Blakeney broke it, that is who broke it.

And that is the most disappointing aspect of the speech made by the Minister of Education, that he told an absolute complete untruth.

Then I picked up the paper tonight and I was disappointed again and I was disappointed even more because this man who disappointed me is the Premier of the province.

The Premier was in Saskatoon last week and he heard Otto Lang say that the Crow's Nest rates would be protected for as long as the farmers wanted it. If the Press know it, the people of Saskatchewan know it, everybody in the Convention knows it, and then here is a man who is going to the people in probably six or eight weeks or whenever he gets up his courage, and he is going to tell the people of Saskatchewan, 'look I am a credible man, the things I say are true!' And what did he say last night up at Wakaw? Here is what he said.

**Mr. MacDonald** (Milestone): — What was he doing there?

**Mr. Guy:** — I don't know, but he did a pretty job. He got my friend nominated and I am glad of that. This is what the Premier said, "The Federal Government is determined to abolish the Crow's Nest Pass freight rates, Premier Allan Blakeney charged at the NDP meeting at Wakaw Wednesday night."

All right, Mr. Speaker, that is fine but I just hope that the Premier of Saskatchewan goes to every constituency in this province and makes that statement. I hope that the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) will do the same thing. I hope that the backbenchers will, and I think they will, if they have been programmed to clap, they can be programmed to make this statement. But I'll tell you that by election day if the Premier of Saskatchewan continues to carry on this complete absolute misrepresentation of statements made by the Minister in charge of the Wheat Board, we will sweep this province and there won't be one Member sitting on that side of the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, politics is politics and we all make the odd misrepresentation at times. I will tell you

one thing, there is a difference between weaselling on this issue and coming out and calling a Minister of the Federal Government a liar - a Minister who is held in the highest esteem in this province, probably of any Federal Minister - and that is what the Premier called him last night in Wakaw. He said that the Minister of Justice, the Minister in charge of the Wheat Board was a liar.

**An Hon. Member:** — He didn't say that!

**Mr. Guy:** — That was his intent. He said that the Minister wanted to destroy the Crow's Nest rates. The Minister, one week before, had categorically stated his position that he would not change the Crow's Nest rates under any circumstances as long as the farmers of Saskatchewan wanted them.

But as I say let the Premier who is trying to create the image of credibility by carrying to this whole province that story. Just let him try it! Let's let him try it! In fact I challenge you to carry this message through the whole campaign. I challenge you, Mr. Premier, on every platform that you stand on in Saskatchewan during the election campaign to say that Otto Lang is going to destroy the Crow's Nest rates. I will tell you that you won't be back and all these other images along the front row won't be back and there is no need to say what will happen to the flood of backbenchers who will be going out the back door.

I tell you that the people of Saskatchewan are not naive when it comes to what is the truth or what isn't. When a man of the stature of Otto Lang has made a statement in honesty, then to have the Premier of a province go out and say that he is a liar, I tell you that won't go over among the people of Saskatchewan. And there will be very few of them back after the next election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal more to say, but I am going to leave out some of it because I think that maybe the Government Member wouldn't understand it even if I did tell you about it. But there are a couple of things that I want to refer to.

One of the things is the way that they have handled this budget and I could go into the details of how much it was compared to the other budgets and so on. I think that there is one thing here that concerns the people of Saskatchewan more than anything else, the question of Supplementary Estimates. You know, Mr. Speaker, the basis of democracy is the Legislature having a right to approve the spending Estimates of the government in power; it dates back not to when the NDP were elected or the Liberals or the Conservatives, it dates back to the days of the Magna Carta. Kings were hung or executed or whatever they did with their neck because they didn't submit to putting their rights of taxation and so on before the people over which they ruled. And I'll tell you we are coming very close to that situation today in Saskatchewan. I would suggest that the present Treasurer isn't here tonight because he is afraid that he might get hung, because I'll tell you he has eroded and trampled on this basic right of parliament. You know, no one suggests that budgets will not be overspent by several million dollars, quite a number of million dollars some years, due mainly because of physical phenomena, floods, fires,

forest fires, you name it. There are always contingencies that come up. No one can estimate the cost of it. But I suggest that outside of these natural causes, that any responsible government should be able to produce Estimates close to the actual expenditures. The present NDP Government has failed to do so.

I want to look at the Liberal record on Supplementary Estimates. We had seven budgets and the Supplementary Estimates totalled \$107.1 million, an average of \$15.3 million a year. The highest was \$28 million. The NDP record, four budgets, totalled \$238 million of Supplementary Estimates, the average \$59.6, almost four times that of the Liberal years. The highest was last year of \$34.6 million and this year \$85.7 million. In other words in two years, the Minister, the present Minister of Finance has spent \$180 million without the consent of this Legislature. The Premier, I know, is going to get up and say, well you are going to have the opportunity to vote for that money after it has been spent. But that's not the principle of democracy, the principle of democracy is to approve the Estimates before it is spent. I'll tell you that this is a disgrace to the province and the people of Saskatchewan. It is contempt of this legislature to go out and deliberately spend in two years \$180 million without the consent of this legislature. Not only in contempt of this side of the House, it is contempt of the backbenchers. In fact, that is one area where you did get some programs, you had better get the computer working again. I'll tell you, you have gone too far, the people of Saskatchewan now say, the Government is spending without any authorization and it is true when you look at \$180 million spent without the authority of the legislature to back it up. It is the principle of a dictatorship, shows complete control over the people of this province.

You know, as I mentioned earlier, I could go through these supplementary Estimates and point out the ones that I consider as being unnecessary and I'll tell you where they all lie.

**Mr. Cody:** — Snow removal.

**Mr. Guy:** — No, they don't lie in snow removal. If there is increased snow removal I don't argue with that. I'll tell you where, I wasn't going to read it to you but the Member from what used to be Watrous wants to know. Most of it is in administration, that's where the overspending is, administration in Consumer Affairs \$224,000, the original estimate \$124,000. Well now, surely to goodness a government with the number of planners that they have across the way could come closer to what Consumer Affairs administration is going to spend than almost double the amount they estimated.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Guy:** — And this goes on and on. I don't know whether there is anything for Co-ops. Yes, Co-ops administration \$24,000 extra. Boy, here's a good one. Executive Council, who is in charge of the Executive Council, that wouldn't be the Premier and his staff I don't suppose? I'll tell you what they overspent, \$148,000. Well now, surely the Premier, even though he is from Nova Scotia, should be able to come closer to what he is going to spend in his Executive Council than he did in that one. An additional \$148,000, I wonder what those extra

people are for. I wonder if anybody would have any ideas. I don't suppose they would have any ideas of what that might be. Government Services.

Government Services, that's another one, that's one of the Ministers from Saskatoon who won't be back. Administration \$270,000 in Supplementary Estimates. There again surely to goodness in an area of administration there are no natural causes that would create an overexpenditure on the budget like that! You know, this goes on and on. It goes on and on. Mineral Resources, Administration, \$105,000. Labour, Executive Administration, \$130,000. I'll tell you the people of Saskatchewan are not prepared to pay that kind of extra money without having the legislature approve.

Oh, here's a good one, where is our Minister in charge of the Public Service Commission, he was here but he knew I was coming to him and he left. The Public Service Commission, I believe that is the agency that hired the 4,000 extra civil servants. Do you know what their Supplementary Estimates were for the third year? I'll tell you how much they budgeted, they budgeted \$368,000. But do you know what the Supplementary Estimate was, \$552,000. I'll tell you, maybe the cost of taking the blood samples to see whether they're NDP had gone up, because they sure increased their administration when it came to hiring people into the Civil Service. You know in all seriousness this has to be incredible, they vote \$368,000 for Administration, then come in with a Supplementary Estimate for \$552,000. The people of Saskatchewan are not going to buy that. They are going to say, you're nuts and they are going to have a lot of people agreeing with them. Unbelievable!

**Mr. Messer:** — What are you talking about?

**Mr. Guy:** — Well, I'll tell you I can go back to Agriculture. I'll tell you about the Minister of Agriculture. Do you know what his Estimates are, his supplementaries? Do you know what poor judgement he has, well, he is just out by \$19 million, that's all he was out.

**Mr. Messer:** — . . . buy a little more land.

**Mr. Guy:** — He bought a little more land than he anticipated!

Well, the Minister of Health, I am glad he is coming back in because I have a few comments I want to make to him. I'll tell you I've seen some Ministers of Health in this Legislature, but I have never seen one like we have today. He's a disaster for the people of Saskatchewan, he's the greatest failure that that Government has ever had. You know he talks about having abolished the deterrent fees nine times but he hasn't been able to open the Plains Hospital. He passes legislation for a drug plan 12 months ago and he hasn't got it on the road. He talks about hospitals we closed, talk about hospitals he can't open one after spending \$20 million. He fights the doctors, he fights the nurses, he fights the pharmacists. Then I pick up a paper the other day and he said, I'll tell you what I'm going to do about the nurse shortage, I'm going to have a study. And the Press ask him, well who are the members of the study board and he says, we haven't appointed them yet. Well, when is it going to get started. Well, we're not sure, but he is going to have a study. I'm telling you he's studied more things in Public Health and if he keeps on he'll be able to

be a doctor. I'll tell you there has only been one unfair plan devised by this Minister of Health, even though he tried to do others and that's the dental plan. He stands up in this House and says it is a tremendous plan, a tremendous plan. Do you call a tremendous plan one where you have for a six year old you get your expenses paid but if you are unfortunate enough to have a five and a seven year old, you pay the full shot. Do you call that justice to the people of Saskatchewan. Do you call it justice if a man from one side of the street has a six year old and he goes to the dentist and he has a \$200 dentist bill and Mr. Smishek picks it up. There's a man on the other side of the street who has a seven year old and he has a \$300 or \$400 dentist bill but he has to pay it all himself. Do you call that justice? Is that a fair plan? Is that a plan that you would go across the province bragging about like the Minister of Health? I say it isn't, I say that it is a disgrace. I say it is a disgrace to the people of Saskatchewan in trying to sell them a bill of goods. All you have to do is ask the people, ask the people who have children from one to five or from seven to seventy-seven and have been paying their own bills, and then you say, but, oh, well, we are paying for the six year olds. You'll get a lot of support for that one.

I was going to say a few words about the Minister of Labour but apparently he is in labour and not here this evening, so I'll leave that one out. In fact I think maybe I'll . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Why don't you sit down!

**Mr. Guy:** — Yes, I will, I think I will. But I'll tell you one thing whoever made that comment, I think I have pointed out enough tonight to show the people of Saskatchewan several things. First of all, you can't trust the Government. You can't trust the Minister of Education. You can't trust the Premier. They are just deliberately misleading the people of Saskatchewan. I think I have proved to you that the computer centre of the Government has done a good job in programming the backbenchers to talk when they are told to do so. But I will tell you one thing where this budget lacks imagination, fails to face the challenges of today, there is one area that you have failed to solve any of the problems, and that is local government. I am going to have more to say about that at a later date because I'll tell you that if there is one group of people in Saskatchewan today, it is the reeves and mayors and councillors of the towns and villages and rural municipalities. Do you know what you have given them as an increase? You have given them less than 8 per cent to carry on when inflation is 12 per cent and the cost of construction and supplies have gone up anywhere from 30 to 100 percent. We'll discuss that later on.

So all I can say, Mr. Speaker, is when you've got an NDP Premier in the government, they've got to go and you've got to replace them with a group of people who have courage, to look at the Saskatchewan option as one of opportunity and challenge rather than one of failure and defeat.

I will certainly support the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. B.M. Dyck** (Saskatoon City Park): — Well, Mr. Speaker, after listening to the Member for Athabasca for the last hour, what appeared like about five

hours, I thought perhaps we should add a bit of sanity and reason to the proceedings of this House, so I thought I would say a few words.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dyck:** — Mr. Speaker, our very capable Minister of Finance should be congratulated for a budget that can be described as nothing less than a fantastic document. It is a very responsible document yet provides for much needed social programs. It is a responsible budget, as it provides for much needed assistance to our senior citizens and as it does so it typifies the present government's approach over the last four years, responsibly responding to the needs of the people.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite understandable that the budget would be thus because it was prepared and brought down by a most responsible Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, during this term of office this Government has been able to accomplish what would appear almost to be impossible. During a time when we have seen costs rising very, very rapidly over a longer period of time than in any other time in living memory it has been possible to reduce some taxes, while at the same time expand old programs and develop an impressive list of new programs. New programs to assist those who need it the most, our senior people and others.

There are other reasons why this budget is an important document. The last year the Members opposite were in government they derived less than \$35 million from revenues from potash and oil. Now I recognize that these commodities were at a lower price than they are today, nevertheless they allowed the oil companies to rip the province off to the tune of millions of dollars a year to be invested elsewhere in the world, perhaps in luxury hotels in the United States or some fancy seaside real estate in the West Indies. The potash companies were given a virtual tax holiday during those Liberal years.

One of the main promises made to the electorate of this province in 1971, Mr. Speaker, was to shift taxes, to shift taxes off the individual who is least able to pay and on to the resource sector, the sector most able to pay. And, this, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what we have done. Well, what has been the effect of these new tax policies for the city of Saskatoon for example? While costs of education and urban government are rising at a cost of 10 and 15 per cent or more per year, there have only been marginal increases in the mill rate. Although the city budget has not yet been finalized there is some talk of a significant mill rate increase. If this happens I think it is a very serious matter. Certainly costs have gone up and some increase may be necessary, but in light of the large increases in grants to the city, a large mill rate increase at this time would be difficult for the taxpayers to understand. Why the mill rate in the last three years has not gone up dramatically is not difficult to understand.

The Government of Saskatchewan has not been unfair to the oil producing companies. Through Bill No. 42 their profits were guaranteed to be at least equal to those in 1973, which was a good year for the oil companies. But just as we have been fair to the oil companies, we also have a first responsibility to the people of this province who, after all, are the owners of the natural resources. About one-half of our total

production of oil in the province or 40 million barrels is exported annually. The total windfall profit to the oil companies would have been at least \$320 million as a result of the \$8.30 per barrel increase multiplied by the 40 million barrels we export annually. Now, not even the oil producers claim that they should have all of this increase. They agreed that it should be shared, and the Government of Saskatchewan bearing in mind that it traditionally has had control over its natural resources was prepared to devise a formula by which the province and the oil producing companies could share in the increased value of this resource. But, before this formula could be devised, the Federal Government entered the picture and declared that they too had a claim on the increased value of this resource.

In a very short period of time the export tax placed by the Federal Government on oil leaving the province rose to \$5.20 per barrel - almost two-thirds of the increased world price.

In one fell swoop the Trudeau Government grabbed the lions share of the increased value of our oil on export markets and the Federal Government's position in this regard was that the income from the \$5.20 per barrel tax on exported oil would be used to subsidize the people of eastern Canada who purchase their oil from overseas sellers at the world price.

Now let me emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that our royalty arrangements guarantee that the income of oil companies would, in 1974, be at least as great as it was in 1973 and in addition a number of incentives have been developed by the Department of Mineral Resources to ensure that marginal wells are kept operating.

The Government of Saskatchewan dealt honestly with the oil firms but everyone was shocked when the Turner budget disallowed royalty payments as an operating expense for income tax purposes. The result was to add a large new expense to the operating budget of the oil producing firms. In my view, Mr. Speaker, this refusal by the Federal Government to allow the oil producing companies to deduct royalty payments made to the province for income tax purposes is unjust and completely beyond reason.

And in my opinion, if there is not a reversal of the attitude of the Trudeau Government at the First Ministers Conference on April 8 and 9, then, this will be a major issue in the next provincial election. An issue that will not be made by this Government but an issue that will be made by the people of this province.

I want to return now to the tax shift that we promised in 1971. Nowhere is this tax shift more apparent than in this budget, Mr. Speaker. This budget is nothing less than a fantastic culmination to an already splendid record of this Government. For in this budget the people are obtaining over 200 millions of dollars from the resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, \$200 million, most of which, under a Liberal Government would have left this province to be invested elsewhere. But now, it is going to stay in this province to be used by and for the people of this great province.

In recent months the Liberals have mounted a very costly and a very 'Fancy Dan' advertising program against our party.



Who do you think is paying for these costly advertising programs? I know who is paying and so do the people of this province. And should, by some freak accident, the Liberals be returned to office, then they would have certain debts to be paid off to the people who are picking up the tab for these costs. These debts would be paid off at the expense of the individual taxpayer of this province.

Through the wise tax policy of shifting taxes off the individual it was possible for this Government to accomplish what was almost impossible, namely to reduce taxation during a period when all costs are going up dramatically. Allow me to list some of these tax deductions. Last May the gasoline tax was reduced from 19 cents to 12 cents a gallon - second lowest in Canada. Deterrent fees and medical care premiums were abolished at a cost of approximately \$20 million per year. The Property Improvement Grants have been raised sharply from approximately \$12 million under the Liberals to \$40 million under the New Democratic Party.

Second, we have been able in spite of rapid increases in costs to expand old programs and develop an imposing spectrum of new services all accomplished during a period of rapidly rising prices.

I don't have to spend the time of this House to list these new programs. Chiropractic services are ensured, a hearing aid program, Family Income Plan, kindergartens, community colleges and one can go on and on and on. When the Liberals were faced with rising costs in education and in health, they did a number of things. They increased the taxes by \$35 million in the spring of 1968. When that wasn't enough, they used some very strong-arm tactics, deterrent fees, student-teacher ratios, wage guidelines, area bargaining for teachers and finally the infamous Bill 2. Well, none of these worked.

What about the grants to schools and municipalities? School grants to the two systems in Saskatoon in 1971 totalled \$7.5 million. In 1976 these grants will be over \$17 million, an increase of over 100 percent.

In 1971 the grants to the City of Saskatoon were about \$300,000; in 1975 they will be well over \$4 million. It is not hard to visualize what would have happened to property taxes in this city had these grants not gone up.

I am pleased to point out here that Saskatchewan is going through its most prosperous period in its entire history - population up 6,000. While almost every other province in Canada is having trouble, Saskatchewan stands alone with the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and a rapidly growing economy. The labour force in 1974 grew by 17,000 workers, many of them 25 years of age and under.

The city of Saskatoon has seen a goodly number of new industries develop in recent years and business is good. I don't have to tell the people of Saskatoon about those years from 1969 to 1971 - when business firms were closing and people were leaving the province. This, Mr. Speaker, has been changed and I hope changed for a long time to come.

In light of these developments, it is hard to understand the Opposition's accusations about driving business out of the province. But, if there are difficulties in some of the

resource industries, then the fault must be laid squarely on the doorstep of the Federal Government. The Trudeau Government and, more specifically, the Turner budget of November 18 is, Mr. Speaker, the root cause of the difficulties. This budget says to the people of this province that they can no longer control their natural resource development. A right clearly given to the provinces. And, if I may reiterate, Mr. Speaker, unless the Trudeau Government reverses its position on the resource taxation it will be a major issue in the next election and it won't be an issue made by the NDP. It will be an issue made by the people of this province.

The people of Saskatchewan are sick and tired of constantly seeing the wealth of this province drained away to eastern Canada. Eastern Canada already has the industry. But that doesn't satisfy them. They want more. They want our oil for a song. For every barrel of oil produced in this province, the people are losing approximately \$5.40. But eastern Canada aided and abetted by the Trudeau Liberals says this just ain't good enough - they want more.

Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan have had enough. They are going to say Stop! to eastern Canada, and they are going to say it clearly and loudly with their vote in the next general election. They are going to say it in the ballot box where it really counts.

I want for a moment to review another area. Since 1971 a number of government offices have been decentralized in Saskatoon. We now have in the city a business representative from the Department of Industry and Commerce. We have a representative from the Department of Consumer Affairs. We have a representative from the Mediation Board. A new bus depot was recently opened in the city. Tenders have been let on a new SGIO building for the city. A new provincial office building will be constructed during the next few years. This is certainly needed in the city since presently we have government departments scattered all over the city. It will establish for the first time a provincial presence in the Hub City of this province. Mr. Speaker, this decentralization brings the services of the government to the people, right where they live. Like the budget itself, I think this is a step in the right direction. I, Mr. Speaker, will be supporting the motion and opposing the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. J.R. Kowalchuk** (Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate in this very important Budget Debate, I wish to congratulate my colleague, the Minister of Finance for bringing in this budget of fulfilment. At the same time, I want to congratulate this Government for bringing forward four balanced budgets in four years.

Before I proceed any further, Mr. Speaker, I think some comment should be made in regard to the speech that we just heard from the Member for Athabasca. I really don't think much could be said about his speech, except that I heard something about clapping here and clapping there. All I can say is that I have never heard so much 'clap-trap' packed into 30 minutes as I heard coming from the mouth of the Member for Athabasca.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kowalchuk:** — I just want to make mention of one point that he brought out and that is the statement about interpreting the things that have been said by the Minister in charge of the Wheat Board, Otto Lang, and what we are saying and what the Premier has said regarding these statements as being lies. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if anybody is a liar it has to be attributed to the Member - the Hon. Member in charge of the Wheat Board. When he stood up so bravely in Edmonton and made a statement that indeed, it may be a good thing to remove the Crow's Nest rates and substitute these rates with some other form of payment to the farmers. He indeed did say that! If he refutes that statement by saying another thing in Saskatoon, then, Mr. Speaker, if anybody has got to be a liar it has to be he and no one else. I say, Mr. Speaker, that we on this side of the House believe and the people of Saskatchewan believe, the statement that was made in Edmonton is the statement that is going to be believed by the people of Saskatchewan. I think in regard to the statement that they the people of Saskatchewan are going to say to themselves, "Which one are we to believe?" "Whom do we trust?" And I think that their trust and belief is going to be placed, not in Otto Lang but in Allan Blakeney, Mr. Speaker.

I had intentions of presenting a general overview of the positive action of the NDP Government for the last three years. A summary of what effect the fulfilment budget of 1975 just introduced last Friday will have on Saskatchewan, including the Melville constituency. But, Mr. Speaker, because the other Members have documented better than I am able, the benefits that the people of Saskatchewan have derived since the NDP were swept into power in 1971, and also the benefits that the new budget provides, I will not repeat what has already been said, except to say that, whether it is the farmer or the labourer, the young people or the elderly, those on earned income and those on fixed incomes, all will benefit to some degree from this budget. Yes, the Finance Minister could have called for a deficit budget and passed out political goodies as was the custom for the last number of years preceding elections by the Liberals, I am proud of the fact that we in this NDP Government stayed on an even and sensible keel. We provided the dollars where the need was evident, built programs that offered assistance to people who needed it, like FarmStart, housing and senior citizens repair programs and such, and generally provided the backing for the kinds of programs that people asked for and that people need. That, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion is responsible government. That is democracy exercised by people indicating beforehand what they want and need. That, Mr. Speaker, is evidence of a government which exercises responsibility, financial responsibility, of weighing and judging the cost of all the programs and making the responsible decisions as to what should be done and then proceed on the course to do it. The 1975 budget, Mr. Speaker, is a document that is evidence of that responsibility.

I might be accused of being somewhat prejudiced in my thinking, however, as I go on, I feel one of the most exciting departments is the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources. Since its inception less than one year ago, much has taken place and many new initiatives have been launched to complement and build up existing programs and policies. In the past the question has been raised as to why this integrated program was

taken with tourism and resources. The answer simply stated, it is our belief that the development of a viable tourism and travel industry should not take place at the expense or to the detriment of our renewable resource base and in the same sense, the development and management of our renewable resources should not be carried out at the expense of a viable travel industry. Neither one should receive priority over the other but rather be viewed as complementary to one another.

Saskatchewan boasts tremendous potential as far as developing a tourist and travel industry is concerned. The province boasts the necessary natural resources as well, to dramatically influence this sector of the economy.

Last year, tourism generated over \$250 million in revenues to the province, Mr. Speaker, ranking second in economic importance with our number one industry, agriculture. From this you can see the importance of and the benefits to be gained by further developing the industry.

With the work week diminishing, coupled with increased disposable income, the general public is beginning to demand more with respect to tourism and we are committed to developing the necessary programs, policies, and facilities to ensure that we are able to receive the maximum benefits from a viable travel industry.

Mr. Speaker, the integration process has now been completed and we are now intensifying our initiatives to ensure that our goals and objectives are met.

The general philosophical stance of this Government with respect to decentralization has real meaning within my department. In the past year my department established two new regional offices, one in Swift Current and the other in Melville. Wherever possible we will continue to encourage and promote decentralization of service as a meaningful and very desirable social and economic principle.

We have also emphasized the desirability of public involvement in the formulation of ideas and policies. I should like to make mention here, Mr. Speaker, of a release in the Prince Albert Daily Herald a couple of days ago. An article which appeared, entitled, "Thiessen Outlines Party's Proposed Measures." I think it is probably a good thing that someone in the Liberal Party is outlining some kind of Liberal measures, Mr. Speaker. This is what he said in part of that release.

A conservation and recreation authority will be established by a Liberal Government after independent assessments of the best use of renewable resources in the province.

They are always johnnies-come-lately, Mr. Speaker. They are at it again. The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources has indeed already established an overall authority for the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources in an advisory committee composed of members from all major social, municipal, and community bodies who appoint a member to this advisory committee. This commission has already been structured with a number of names still to come in. It will be operating shortly. This Committee will operate in an advisory capacity to the Minister, Mr. Speaker.

I say, once again the Liberals are always either one step one week, or one decade behind, Mr. Speaker.

I repeat what I said before that we have always emphasized the desirability of public involvement in the formulation of ideas and policies which will help to develop the establishment of new parks and recreational areas. This approach was reflected in the past year when public hearings were held at Meadow Lake and Loverin. We anticipate four new reports during the course of the next few months which will be introduced to the public. These relate to the development and expansion of the proposals from Moose Mountain, Cypress Hills, Green Water and Nipawin Provincial Parks.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that there is an ever-increasing heavy demand being placed on our resource lands. We have recognized this demand and have launched several initiatives in response to the developments which have taken place. Continued emphasis has been placed by my department on this vitally important issue and acceptable policy reflecting the concerns of agriculture, forestry, industry, mining, and conservation continue to receive priority and consideration.

The Wildlife Development Fund, Mr. Speaker, reflects one positive involvement with my department. The Fund has made a better than expected response. Statistics show that over 35,000 acres have been purchased at roughly a little better than over \$26.8 an acre, almost exhausting the \$1 million that was initially put into the fund.

Another vitally important resource is our timber and our initiative is consistent with my Government's policy to assure the full utilization of this resource as it is developed. A principle of allocation on the volume basis rather than using geographic areas is being accepted and favourable results are anticipated as a result of this policy change. We believe Mr. Speaker, the development initiative should reflect sound forest management practices by ensuring that the development more positively recognizes the advantage of not using all the timber for studs but rather using our good timber for higher value forest products such as plywood. This is resulting in a much more acceptable situation. We are receiving more money from this resource and at the same time producing more jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Timber contracts are being renegotiated and I anticipate an early agreement between my Government and Simpson Timber.

My Government will also continue to negotiate with other interests such as Prince Albert Pulp and Domtar to ensure that the agreements which are reached are consistent with the policy of this New Democratic Government.

During the last fiscal year the market value of our forest products rose from \$59.6 million in the previous year to the present year of \$74.7 million, an increase of over 25 percent.

Government continued to show leadership as our tree planting program saw our 2.8 million trees planted, over 3,350 acres compared with the industry's record of 1.4 million trees over 1,780 acres a year ago.

Our reforestation policy is to ensure that all cut over and burned over Crown land in Saskatchewan is reforested to standards suited to the capability of the land. I anticipate an intensification of our initiative in this respect in the future.

With respect to satellite nurseries, a program has been developed to have small satellite nurseries established in provincial forest areas adjacent to communities where employment opportunities are limited. Developmental work will be initiated in two sites this year, as a goal of establishing production capacities for tree planting stock of approximately 500,000 at each location.

We will also increase our capacity to protect our forests from fires through the use of water bombers. More than \$2.7 million has been provided in this budget for the purchase of aircraft and the construction of air strips.

Mr. Speaker, the level of spending in terms of capital development and new facilities within our parks and recreation sites and for tourism will be somewhat modified in the next year due to the escalating construction costs. And we propose to defer such major construction projects for the future when the employment opportunities and special needs warrant.

Capital spending projected in this budget for my department will be in excess of \$2.8 million. This will be directed largely to expansion and improvement of existing facilities providing for a number of new campgrounds as well as resolving environmental concerns in these areas. For example, increased funding will be available for sewer and water projects. The new golf course at The Battlefords Provincial Park will be complete this summer and we have started to effect redevelopment of the core area at Cypress Hills Provincial Park to allow for increased public use.

Mr. Speaker, we have also directed our efforts towards expanding our winter recreation development. As an example we are installing a T-bar at Cypress Hills for use beginning next winter. We acquired a snow vehicle rendezvous area near Regina and are negotiating for a similar installation near Saskatoon. We are expanding our cross-country ski and snow vehicle trails within provincial parks to round out the utilization within these areas.

We have also stepped up activity to provide for improved understanding of our historic and natural heritage through the adoption of an historic sites preservation program. We have hired park naturalists in the provincial park system and developed an increasing number of interpretive displays for parks and recreation sites. One such right in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, is an area made possible by the donation of a section of land by one of the oldest pioneer families, the Battersbys just a few miles from where I live. I sincerely hope that more people will contribute their old homesteads as historical heritages. Wherever possible these will be made into sanctuaries for wild life.

Our lifetime angling licence for senior citizens is proving to be extremely popular, with over 10,000 such licences now issued. Our Camp Call program to better inform residents and others on the availability of camping opportunities within the province is continuing to receive priority as well.

This budget also makes provision for an additional \$50,000 grants to regional parks. I am confident our decision to allow maintenance costs and allow for increased assistance in terms of operating costs, will receive wide general support.

My department continues to have a major involvement in terms of the Qu'Appelle Basin Study. Our major emphasis relates to tourism and recreational planning and we will be providing substantial spending in the Qu'Appelle Valley over the next few years.

The Qu'Appelle Valley study reflects the inter-departmental co-operation and coordination which is taking place. While the majority of our initiatives are positive in scope, there are also problems and there are forces which impede our efforts at times.

My department continues to have much concern over the Federal Government's lack of assistance in terms of helping us develop our historic resources, Mr. Speaker. When you consider their involvement in the Maritimes and Quebec, the deficiency shows very clearly and I sincerely hope that an early breakthrough will enable us to take full advantage of the programs we have launched.

In the field of tourism, the lack of a north-south air link between Regina and Saskatoon to bolster tourism needs continues to place us at a disadvantage. When subsequent air route agreements are negotiated it is our intention to press, very forcefully, for a more favourable consideration from the Federal Government.

Another issue of public concern relates to the question of a compulsory hunter safety program. I can only say at this time that any future action is dependent upon the final resolve of the current controversy relating to gun laws and a federal position is needed before we are in a position to consider action.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few minutes I have attempted to give this Assembly a brief overview of the involvements of my department. We are faced with many challenges, however I feel we have succeeded in responding positively to ensure that our efforts reflect the majority viewpoint.

Public co-operation is essential when new programs are contemplated and we will continue to encourage public participation in the articulation of future policies and programs. In the future we will be addressing ourselves to many matters.

The adoption of a comprehensive program for wildlife damage beyond that is already in effect, is receiving study. The program will be similar to one currently operational in Manitoba, I am sure. Such a program would allow for payment of compensation for predator losses and damages sustained from big game, such as deer and elk.

We are studying the advisability and practicality of establishing recreation reserves to ensure that undeveloped recreation resources will be available to the public in the future and we are also evaluating the development of new types of parks. These would be comparable to the Parkway principle suggested federally. We envisage these as provincial trailways through various parts of Saskatchewan and the adoption of urban oriented parks to provide recreational opportunities to high concentrations of populations for short duration use as well as for educational purposes. The adoption of subsidized public transportation to existing park and recreational installations is also being studied by my department. This is being carried

out in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Transportation Company and is geared primarily for senior citizens and students.

Mr. Speaker, this budget enables new directions to be launched. It enables the various departments and agencies to deliver the vast goods and services required by the general public.

Our initiative is consistent with our overall philosophical approach to this province and its people. This latest budget is further proof of our commitment to Saskatchewan. We have come a long way in less than four years and I have every confidence that the people of Saskatchewan, not only recognize the extent of our accomplishment, but are prepared to give us an extended mandate which will enable us further to develop the economic and social potential of this great province.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride and privilege that I offer my unqualified support to this budget and I will not support the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wiebe** (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, allow me to say a few brief words this evening prior to adjourning the debate and carrying on tomorrow.

First of all I should like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Dave Steuart, for a very excellent speech.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wiebe:** — One can certainly see that from the comments in the press and from the letters and phone calls which we have received it has certainly proved to be an excellent speech. One of the major key points of whether that speech was good or not was the reaction which we have received from 43 Members on that side of the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wiebe:** — You know it seems strange that if something is bad they won't criticize it; if something is good like the speech that the Leader of the Opposition made, the Members opposite each and every time they have spoken have attempted to discredit that speech. That, Mr. Speaker, is a clear indication that it was a good speech.

Before I go on to speak about the budget I should like to talk for a few minutes about a very interesting Sessional Paper, which was laid on my desk yesterday afternoon. Sessional Paper No. 114 - dealing with a question which I asked prior to the adjournment of the House last fall, regarding the allocation of hogs to Intercontinental Packers and to Burns Foods Limited.

I am sure that all of us are aware of what is happening to the packing industry in Saskatchewan. We know that the Provincial Government now owns a fair share of Intercontinental Packers. We also know that Burns Food Limited have had to close down their operation in Regina and are now in the process of laying off 300 men in Prince Albert. We have to ask ourselves,



why is this happening? What is happening to Burns?

Burns was certainly a healthy and viable company before the Hog Marketing Commission was established. How come, Mr. Speaker, that since that Commission has been established, that Burns now finds itself in difficulty? We have to ask ourselves a couple of questions and I think the people of Saskatchewan have to ask these questions. First of all, could it be that Burns' problem is because of an unfair allocation of hogs by the Hog Marketing Commission? Or could it be that this Government is trying to remove any competition in the packing industry in this province from Intercontinental Packers?

Let's just go back and see what has happened during the past year. Last year I contracted to have some hogs hauled to Regina. We haul them regularly about once every week. It is a requirement that prior to taking those hogs to any packing plant that we have to phone the Hog Marketing Commission and ask permission if we can do so. We have the option of stating which packing plant we wish to haul those hogs to. Now, normally they say, go ahead and take the hogs where you want them. On this occasion and on other occasions it was our preference to haul to Burns. Why do we haul to Burns? Because the unloading facilities there were much better, because they had the facilities to clean the trucks after we were unloaded. So on this particular occasion, as has happened on future ones since that date, we asked to have our hogs allocated to Burns. The Hog Marketing Commission told us, "I'm sorry, Burns is filled up for this week. Their yards are full, appointments have been made and they cannot accept any more hogs. There is room at Intercontinental Packers and we would ask that you take your hogs there." So while the trucker was driving into Regina, he was coming in early, it was in the morning and it was the only load he had to take that day, so he said, "Look, I prefer delivering to Burns, I'll try there first anyway." So he stopped in at Burns about 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon and there wasn't one hog in that yard, there wasn't one truck unloaded in that yard. Burns Packers said that it was the easiest day that they had ever had and yet the Hog Marketing Commission told our trucker to take them to Intercontinental Packers and said that Burns was filled up.

**An Hon. Member:** — What happened at Prince Albert, it's cheaper there?

**Mr. Wiebe:** — Certainly it's cheap. And then another aspect we have to look at is the allocation of hogs. Let's look at Sessional Paper No. 144. I asked the Minister of Agriculture how many hogs were allocated to Intercontinental Packers and to Burns Foods Ltd., from August 1, 1973, to January 31, 1974, a short period of time after the Hog Marketing Commission was in operation. Intercontinental Packers received 257,000 hogs in that period. Burns Foods Ltd., received 137,000 hogs during that period of time. As well, I asked the Minister of Agriculture how many hogs were allocated to Burns and Intercontinental Packers from June 1, 1974 until December 1, 1974, a time at which Burns made the announcement they were going to decrease or lay off 300 men. It's surprising, has the allocation stayed the same? No Intercontinental Packers has increased by 50,000 hogs to 310,000 hogs allocated to Intercontinental Packers. How about Burns, did they stay at 137,000? No, Mr. Speaker, they dropped down to a measly 95,000 hogs.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wiebe:** — No wonder they are in trouble. I don't want to go on too much further tonight, Mr. Speaker, but what I must say is that if what is happening, is an indication of this Government trying to steer business in this province through a government-controlled marketing commission to a government owned packing plant, then, I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is time for a change in this province and I and the people of Saskatchewan welcome the opportunity to make that change available.

I have more remarks to say and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:42 o'clock p.m.