

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Eighteenth Legislature
6th Day

November 25, 1976.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. W.J.G. Allen (Regina Rosemont): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to the Legislature this afternoon a gentleman sitting in the west gallery, Harry Mullen, who is chairman of the Senior Citizen's Council in the province. Mr. Mullen is a former constituent of mine when he was Minister of Rosemont United Church. I am sure all of us would like to welcome him to the Legislature this afternoon and thank him for the tremendous job that he is doing on behalf of the elderly in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear

QUESTIONS

FLOODING AT POPLAR RIVER POWER PROJECT

Mr. R.E. Nelson (Assiniboia-Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister in charge of Sask Power Corporation. In the run-off into the empty basin of the reservoir at the Poplar River Power Project in the spring of 1976, the water flooded both the railroad and the highway, cutting off the wheat shipments from East Poplar and Big Beaver, as well as the traffic. The highway and railroad which was to be rerouted this summer was not done, what are the intentions of the Minister in the spring of 1977 when this service will be cut off again?

Hon. J.R. Messer (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Member is assuming that the service will be cut off again. I am sure he is aware that even the citizens of the area recognize that the run-off last year was higher than normal. It is expected that that will not occur again. It was impossible to undertake to carry through with the construction to give complete total assurance that there may not be disruption this spring, but everything within the power of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation will be undertaken to give confidence that service will be maintained whenever possible.

Mr. Nelson: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister not aware that there is only a 48 inch culvert to drain that entire area and that the water level would have to rise 19 feet from the present level to reach the spillway and that the highway will be under many feet of water before that is reached? Would the Minister not agree that the planning of the entire project has been bad and that it would have been easier and cheaper to build a causeway before the water was in that area?

Mr. Messer: — Mr. Speaker, my answer is, no, I would not agree that the planning for the entire project has been bad and I again say that the Saskatchewan Power Corporation engineers will do everything possible to give assurance to those of the community that they will not have serious disruption.

IMC POTASH MINE AT ESTERHAZY - EARTHQUAKE

Mr. R.A. Larte: (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier, but in his absence a question to the Minister in charge of potash. As a result of the earthquake of November 7, 1976, affecting the IMC potash mine at Esterhazy, is the Government now prepared to study implications of this very serious matter before purchasing any more potash mines?

Hon. E.L. Cowley (Provincial Secretary): — Well, Mr. Speaker, I missed the earthquake. Certainly the evaluators who have been evaluating potash mines for the Government of Saskatchewan are cognizant of the problems that one can encounter in any underground mining venture and attempt to take into account the risks and associated factors like that in making an evaluation.

Mr. Larter: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Is the Minister aware that the earthquake in Saskatchewan, registering in excess of six on the Richter Scale could completely flood some or all of the potash mines in Saskatchewan and could, in fact, cause the collapse of some of the mine shafts, thereby making the investment totally worthless?

Mr. Cowley: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that is true and I would suspect that there are other kinds of natural events and perhaps unnatural events that could make many investments of the Government of Saskatchewan and of individuals in Saskatchewan worth very little. Meteorites, that's a good one, might hit Boundary Dam. It is entirely possible that we could have, oh, I don't know, the ozone layer might disappear. The Member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane): is concerned about that as we all should be concerned about it. Icecaps, the Member for Arm River mentions icecaps. If they all melted it would have very serious implications for the Maritimes and I am sure the Conservative Governments there are taking that into account.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I am not impressed with the gravity of this situation. Member for Saskatoon-Eastview.

GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING IN SASKATOON

Mr. G.H. Penner (Saskatoon-Eastview): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister in charge of Government Services. When the Government office building in Saskatoon was announced I think the price on that building was in the neighborhood of \$12 million. At the present time the building is beginning to show itself coming out of the ground and the building permits to date total

something over \$9 million, not including electrical or mechanical or finishing work. I wonder if you could tell me what your department projects the final cost of that building to be? Is it going to be \$20 million, \$25 million or \$30 million?

Hon. E.B. Shillington (Minister of Government Services): — Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think that is the type of detailed question which should be put on the Order Paper. You are asking for some fairly detailed figures. We will be glad to supply them, but I am sure you don't expect me to have all those figures on hand in the House.

Mr. Penner: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if I may. I recognize that that would be too much to expect. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, in addressing himself to an answer to that question would the Minister also give us an indication of the kind of cost control that his department is using with regard to the building of that office structure in Saskatoon?

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, certainly.

IMC POTASH MINE AT ESTERHAZY - EARTHQUAKE

Mr. R.L. Collver (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — In the light of the rather unconcerned approach of the Minister responsible for Saskatchewan potash to a very serious question, the implications of which could be serious for the future of this province, will the Government of Saskatchewan table in this Assembly a copy of any such studies made pertaining to the seriousness of the earthquake problem in Saskatchewan as it relates to potash mines prior to any further potash mine purchases, so that all Members of this Assembly and the general public will be informed as to the risk involved?

Hon. A.E. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I believe the question was addressed to me. If the Hon. Member wishes something to be tabled, I wish he would follow the procedures called for and put a Notice of Motion for Return on the Order Paper. We would be happy to attempt to deal with it and debate it in the proper way if that appeared to be appropriate.

COST SHARING OF RCMP SERVICES

Mr. J.G. Lane (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Attorney General. Would the Attorney General please advise this Assembly of the status of the negotiations between Saskatchewan and Ottawa with regard to the cost sharing of RCM Police services?

Hon. R. Romanow: (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, the negotiations have been on-going for quite some time and the contract has officially run out. Quite frankly, there are two or three issues which are still outstanding and issues which we are not fully satisfied with. One issue relates to the cost sharing formula. One issue relates to the term of the contract and another issue relates to some of the aspects of the RCMP work which they have been doing and they want to pull out of doing now. I don't know whether we can achieve much more by any further negotiations, but I have taken the position that I

won't sign the agreement first; that we will work in concert with the provinces of western Canada and I believe that further representations are now in the process of being made among the four western Canadian provinces to the Federal Government and we will see the outcome of those.

Mr. Lane: — Would the Attorney General admit that in fact the main item of dispute is the cost shared formula itself and that, in fact, there has been, all of the provinces using the RCMP services are in fact acting in concert, either openly or informally, and that the real item of dispute in the cost shared formula?

Mr. Romanow: — I think that that certainly is one of the major concerns. I don't want to categorize it as the most major concern. One thing that does bother me is the fact that it is a proposed five year term only that the Federal Government is offering. I think one of the things we must be concerned about is what happens at the end of that five year term. I would like to see a clause in there for example which, in effect, allows us to maintain that five year contract that we negotiated for a certain period until subsequent negotiations work out satisfactorily to all parties. I think that is a very major concern as well. I can't categorize it as the most major concern but those two together make the contract negotiations very, very difficult and very, very awkward.

Mr. Lane: — In light of your statement that you will not sign the agreement as it is, and the matters of dispute are those which both of us have stated. In the light of the dramatically increasing crime rate in the Province of Saskatchewan, and in particular, certain areas of the Province of Saskatchewan, would you be prepared to give an assurance that our RCM Police services will be maintained at least at the present level; and if necessary to protect the citizens of this province the Government of Saskatchewan will ensure that adequate funds are available to give adequate and responsible police services to the people of this province?

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the RCMP have been providing service notwithstanding the contract has run out and will continue to do so, I think very admirably with a very adequate complement level. Quite to the contrary about the crime rate, while it is never satisfactory, certainly in the last little while it has shown either a stabilization or a decrease and in Canadian terms, Saskatchewan on a provincial-wide basis is nowhere near the top. We do have some problems in some isolated areas, no doubt about that. I think on balance the quality of policing is unparalleled as well. I shall take my chair by simply saying, as the Hon. Member knows, about two years ago the Provincial Government instituted for the first time ever a very massive funding program for local governments to assist them in policing matters.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

CLEAR CUTTING SASKATCHEWAN FORESTS

Mr. A.N. McMillan (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Saskatchewan Forest Products. I should

like to ask the Minister if he is aware that contract loggers or those private individuals who are responsible for handling logging operations for the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation are required by their contract to clear cut our Saskatchewan forests?

Hon. J.R. Messer (Minister of Mineral Resources): — No, I am not, Mr. Speaker, but I will take the question as notice.

Mr. McMillan: — A further supplementary that may help the Minister responsible in his search for truth and wisdom. Would he also check to see if it is not a fact that these loggers are requested by the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation to ship all spruce logs, white spruce logs, ten inch in diameter and less to the Prince Albert Pulp Mill to be pulped, rather than one of the saw mills capable of handling them to be sawed into usable lumber?

Mr. Messer: — Mr. Speaker, I will also take the supplementary into consideration. I should like to say that I suspect that it is not Sask Forest Products that undertakes to give that kind of guidance or recommendation as to utilization of logs, it is quite possibly the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources. But we are aware that we would like to get better utilization out of such timber and it is for that very reason that we are trying under better management, to structure the forest harvesting and utilization of timber in the Province of Saskatchewan, so that we do get maximum utilization out of all the wood products including the by-products that are now wasted.

PRAIRIE AGRICULTURE MACHINERY INSTITUTE

Mr. L.W. Birkbeck (Moosomin): — In light of the Government's spending of \$1 million for the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Testing Institute is the Minister aware that during the past six months almost no results have been forthcoming from this institute and in fact, that practically no research is presently being carried on by the institute and is the Government moving to close the institute?

Hon. E. Kaeding (Minister of Agriculture): — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think you will recognize the institute is just getting under way and that we wouldn't expect to have a large flood of reports from that institute at this time. I can assure you that there is no intent whatsoever of shutting down the institute.

Mr. Birkbeck: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It has been under way for about two years. I would say that in light of reports from local residents that in fact very little if any research has been done. Is the Minister now prepared to admit that this institute has become an empty political showcase costing about \$1 million a year and 1.5 million to construct?

Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the Member has that impression of the institute. I know a lot of people who have had an opportunity to deal with the institute or already are dealing

with some of the technicians there, asking for help with regard to new designs which they want to develop. I know there is a lot of testing going on in the institute. If there are no reports available at this time, of course, you can understand it, they haven't completed their evaluations.

AMENDMENTS TO CRIMINAL LAW

Mr. S.J. Cameron (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, a question for the Attorney General. The Attorney General will be aware, I think, of Section 15 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act passed recently providing for tighter measures of enforcement dealing with drinking and driving. I am wondering why the delay in its implementation in Saskatchewan?

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good question. We are very seriously thinking of implementing it as soon as we can. Up to now we have had two or three minor quarrels with the proposal as regards Saskatchewan. First, as I understand it that particular amendment requires the use of one particular type of breathalyser, roadside testing machine, which costs we are advised, \$1,500 per machine. As the Member knows, we do have the Mobat which has been in operation in Saskatchewan for quite some time, costing much less. And we think that should be an improved machine, thereby allowing us to move under that section, from negotiations going on in that area.

A second concern relates to, and I don't see this as a major problem, what might be argued as a licensing power conflict with the Provincial Government. Out of this roadside section, a magistrate may give back the licence, virtually immediately, because it is Criminal Code procedure. As the Hon. Member knows under The Vehicles Act, we do have a mandatory six month suspension on a first time conviction. There is a question whether this is in effect interfering with the licensing power of drivers for the Province of Saskatchewan. I don't think that's a major problem but we have been trying to work our way around that. I am hopeful that within the next little while we can get this particular matter implemented in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Cameron: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Attorney General may be aware that Ontario and Alberta had that section of the Act proclaimed in those two provinces on September 15. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories likewise now have the Act proclaimed there as to those tighter enforcement measures. Roadside screening now applies in those jurisdictions. I want to ask the Attorney General to assure us that the hassle that he is again having in this area with the Federal Government over rather minor matters which are standing in the way of the proclamation of that section in Saskatchewan is not going to long delay the time when we will here have roadside screening as they now have in these other areas in the country?

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say quite clearly, I don't view this as any political or philosophical or constitutional hassle as between the Provincial and the Federal Governments. I quite frankly believe that the Ontario implementation is more a showcase than reality. They have very little, if any, facilities for example for drive-while-impaired centres, which is another aspect of that particular section, allowing a magistrate to do it. We have also some of these difficulties. It is not a matter

of trying to be partisan or being political. It is a matter of making sure that if we do have that law applied in Saskatchewan it can be applied with some meaning, that it is not just a matter of saying, okay, we are going to apply it, period. So I can assure the Member that as soon as we can get these problems resolved we will indeed have the law apply here.

Mr. Cameron: — A last supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Attorney General give us some date by which roadside screening will in fact be in effect in the province?

Mr. Romanow: — I would not hazard a prediction. Just as soon as I can.

COMMITMENTS TO HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr. D.M. Ham (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Highways. Did the Minister of Highways recently make a statement on a radio talk show to the effect that all commitments had made been made in 1976 highway construction programs, fulfilled or met, I should say?

Hon. E. Kramer (Minister of Highways) — I would like you to repeat that question. Either there is something wrong with my ears or the acoustics.

Mr. Ham: — Did the Minister on a recent radio talk show, CKCK, state that all commitments had been met in the 1976 highways construction program?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! I would ask the Members to phrase the question as a question and not ask the Minister to comment on a radio show or press report. Member for Maple Creek.

BOARD AND ROOM FOR RETARDED CHILDREN

Mr. W.H. Stodalka (Maple Creek): — I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Social Services. In the past I believe it has been your policy to provide the necessary funds for the board and room of retarded children, whether they are staying in the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw, in foster homes, or in group centres. I understand that there has been a change in your policy, under Section 8 for those children who are staying in foster homes and group homes. Their parents are being asked, as of this December 1st, to provide a sum of \$50 for board and room for those retarded children. Is that correct?

Hon. H.H. Rolfes (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, there is no change in policy. That particular regulation has been in existence since 1973 and from time to time the Government has exercised its right in putting that into effect. It is true that we are asking families to make a small contribution to help in defraying the exorbitant costs. That is correct.

Mr. Stodalka: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Why the change then? Why the effective date the 1st of December?

Mr. Rolfes: — I have indicated there has been no effective change. This always was in existence.

Mr. Stodalka: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Then we have a situation where parents of retarded children who stay in the Valley View Centre at Moose Jaw will pay nothing; you have the situation where those in group homes and foster homes will pay \$50; and then you have a situation where the retarded child who is older than 16, whose parents will pay nothing. It seems to me this is a little bit of what I might call discrimination against this group of parents.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The Member is making a speech.

Mr. Stodalka: — Mr. Speaker, I wish that the Minister might comment on the fact that, would this not have a tendency then to have parents keep their children in the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw rather than have them removed and put in these other schools?

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. The Member for Maple Creek is doing exactly what his colleague did yesterday. He is making a statement and assuming that that statement is correct. His statement is false.

Mr. G.H. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview): — A supplementary to the Minister. You are suggesting because a family must or is putting their child in a foster home rather than an institution and is going to be charged \$50 a month to do so, that that is no deterrent to that family putting the child into a foster home. Would the Minister not agree that it in fact is a deterrent to families who are having to pay to put their child in a home, particularly when there is absolutely no educational evidence anywhere that institutionalizing a mentally ill child is worthwhile? Instead we ought to be encouraging families to put their children into these homes.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, for the Member for Saskatoon Eastview to say that, if he only would remember what was in effect in 1969 and 1970 when the then government refused to make available for mentally retarded children facilities in the community. We have taken out of Valley View, at least 500 mentally retarded people whom you people kept there for seven years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — And it simply, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! I will agree that the last two comments have been speeches, the question and the answer.

Mr. E.C. Malone (Regina Lakeview): — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister you indicated that prior to December 1, of this year the sum of \$50 per month was not being charged, although it was possible to charge it according to legislation. Now, you are going to start charging the \$50 per month. Would you please tell us why you have changed your position? Why you are now starting to make this charge to the parents of these children?

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated before, there has been no change in policy.

REVENUES TO CABLE COMPANIES

Mr. E.F.A. Merchant (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Government Services. Is it a fact that you yesterday said that your fight with the Federal Government is really a purely economic fight and the Premier implied as much in the comments that he made, is this solely a question of what will happen to the revenues that flow from the ownership of the heads and amps and so on?

Hon. E.B. Shillington (Minister of Government Services): — Mr. Speaker, I think I said that. It is simply a question of who is going to reap the benefits of cable television, private eastern operators or the people of Saskatchewan. We say the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I wonder since the Minister has indicated that it is purely an economic battle and the justification so-called of the Government is that they are going to give service to the smaller centres whether to be consistent the Government will be giving a different rate to the Regina cable company than, for instance the North Battleford Co-op which is in a far smaller centre?

Mr. Shillington: — No, the tariffs which were accepted by the CRTC are the same for all centres.

Mr. Merchant: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder since the Minister has indicated that the purpose is to sustain the smaller areas, if the Minister is aware that in Canada today, there are 46 cable companies operating economically with a 1,000 or fewer subscribers and 24 operating economically with 500 or fewer subscribers?

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, not in communities of a 1,000 or less and not in communities of 500 or less. They may have that few subscribers, but they are operating in larger communities.

Mr. Merchant: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. May we then assume that if a cable company went into Nipawin or Prince Albert or Kindersley, one of the smaller areas, that they would have a markedly cheaper rate from Sask Tel, that the rate would be much cheaper and secondly, will the companies now getting the rate be guaranteed a

20 to 25 year term so that they can plan in the future based on the rate that you are going to give to them?

Mr. Shillington: — The answer to your first question is, No, and that's the answer to your second question. I think in view of the fact that you asked two questions at once that's probably all you deserve, but I will expand a bit.

The first question you asked, will the rates be different? No they won't, they will be the same. And frankly, if Sask Tel charged on a cost basis you would pay a lot more in Nipawin than you would in Regina, but they are the same and I suppose in that sense there is a built in subsidy.

We are not going to give 20 to 25 year leases because I don't think they ever asked for that. Sask Tel has negotiated with the companies for a five year lease. That is satisfactory to Sask Tel and it is satisfactory to the cable operators and it is satisfactory to CRTC.

BOARD AND ROOM FOR RETARDED CHILDREN

Mr. Cameron: — A question to the Minister of Social Services. Can he give us an assurance that parents of retarded children who are not today paying \$50 a month, will not henceforth have to pay \$50 a month?

Mr. Rolfes: — No, Mr. Speaker, there will be no such assurance given. I am not certain what effect the new social services legislation will have. The Hon. Marc Lalonde is presenting it to the Parliament sometime this winter. It may well be that a user charge may have to be charged under the new Social Services Act in order to get cost sharing.

Mr. Cameron: — A supplementary. Will the Department of Social Services or the Government of Saskatchewan be making any charge after December 1 to a parent of a retarded child that it is not now making?

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, as I said before there has been no change in policy.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. D. H. Lange (Bengough-Milestone): and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse), for an Address-in-Reply.

Hon. W.A. Robbins (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, when I adjourned the debate on the Speech from the Throne last evening, I suggested that I would be talking today about our personal and provincial responsibilities for good health.

Saskatchewan takes pride in its pioneering achievements in the health field and rightfully so. There is no doubt that we shall need to continue to adequately sustain traditional hospital and medical services, mental health and public health services and a great many other essential health programs. I will discuss the Government's strong commitments to all health services shortly.

First, I wish to comment on the need for a change of emphasis in the health care system. Across Canada there has been an increasing recognition that major improvements in the status of health of most Canadians will likely be found by adopting different life styles and by improving the environment in which we live. There may well be additional technological advances in medical science which will need to be incorporated into our health system. But it is my belief that most of our new initiatives and resources ought to be directed to community programs and to other activities which will inform and help people to adopt more healthy life styles which will keep us out of institutions.

This need to redirect the attention of Saskatchewan citizens to those things which they can do for themselves to improve their health status should be our highest priority. Personally, I would be urging people to adopt more healthy life styles even if we were not facing a period of fiscal restraint. Like others, I am hopeful that active preventive measures will eventually reduce the pressure and the demand on traditional hospital and medical services. Over time I would like to think that the rate of escalation of hospital and medical care costs will be slowed as a result of the success of preventive health and social measures are taken.

While this slowing down of pressure on the hospital and medical services may take some time, we are reluctant to expand the hospital and medical sector and stack on more services in these areas, particularly, when we are not convinced that more beds and more physician services will actually improve the health of Saskatchewan residents. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we want to follow a rather simple dictum, no slavish adherence to health dependency upon medical technocrats but self-administered good health. A sort of 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away', approach. I commend that to the Opposition Members and particularly to the Hon. Member for Nipawin.

In order to build the community programs that we require in Saskatchewan, in order to develop the programs to inform ourselves of better life styles and habits, we obviously must find some additional dollars. These new resources must be found, at least in part, by restraint on those existing health programs which consume ever-increasing amounts of provincial revenues. We must continue to exercise restraint on financing our established health programs as we develop the ideas and programs which are directed to reducing pressure on institutions and our doctors. We must all make a greater effort to draw health consumers into this current thrust in health programming. Consumers of health care must become more knowledgeable and more selective in their demands for service.

An interesting study was undertaken by the Federal Government regarding the attitudes of healthy people. The study concerned an examination of people who have not seen a doctor in recent years. The study concluded that how people feel about themselves has a major effect upon their health. Individuals

involved in that survey had the same aches and pains as the rest of us, but somehow those people managed without requiring direct medical attention. It was the assessment of the study that these healthy people had a great deal of self-control and a willingness to accept responsibility for their own good health.

There can be considerable improvement in the intelligent utilization of health services. This is one way we can make it possible to continue in this province to be leaders with new programs, at the same time not short-changing established programs whose continued viability is important to all of us.

Long before we took office in 1971 it was quite apparent, Mr. Speaker, that the previous administration had neglected the legitimate health needs of many groups in our society. As a government we responded with innovative and necessary health programs designed to reduce direct health care costs. We continued the tradition of leadership originated by the CCF in 1948. One of the Members makes a comment about cutting beds, we'll have something to say about that shortly.

We developed a Prescription Drug Plan which assures high quality and effective drugs. The greatest benefits go to the elderly and the chronically ill. I am interested that the Member for Saskatoon Eastview says it is a waste of money. I have confidence that our drug plan will ultimately serve as a model for the rest of Canada, as have our other health initiatives in the past.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — We developed a children's dental plan which is already being copied in other parts of Canada. The Dental Plan provides a service which was simply not available to many children before the Plan's introduction. Our dental nurses have a capability of which we may well be proud. Once again we in Saskatchewan have shown an ability to plan and implement a progressive model for the rest of this country.

We developed a Hearing Aid Plan which guarantees the highest quality of audiological services for Saskatchewan people. The chief beneficiaries are our senior citizens. High quality hearing aids are provided at cost and fitted by professionals. I suggest the Member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake consult them!

We developed a Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living Program in response to the previously neglected needs of handicapped people. The demand for this program speaks for itself. It is clear that the needs of the handicapped had been largely ignored by the former administration. As we developed new programs, we were also able to remove deterrent fees which discriminated against the poor segments of our population. As funds become available we will continue to develop responsive new health programs. We will give particular emphasis to the development of lower cost alternatives to institutional care.

The Opposition states that we are cutting back on our hospital beds and reducing hospital services, and I notice the Member for Saskatoon Eastview made such a statement a minute ago. This must be regarded as a deliberate attempt to confuse the issues. An attempt to cover up the inadequacies of the Liberals and the Tories. I suggest the Members opposite and particularly the Member for Saskatoon Eastview review our expenditures in hospital services and face facts.

Since 1971, the year of the last Liberal Government, hospital costs have risen from \$88 million to the current year's estimate of \$193 million, and the expenditures will, in all probability, exceed \$200 million. That is an increase of 127 per cent. During that same period, the cost of living went up 49.2 per cent. It is of equal importance to note that in the 1971-72 budget, 53.2 per cent of the provincial health budget was spent on hospital care. I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for Saskatoon Eastview take particular note of these statistics. By 1975-76 that percentage had risen to 58.9 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Members to take note that during the same period, that Members opposite accuse us of neglecting hospital care and squandering money on new programs, we have increased the portion of the health budgets spent on hospital services. The facts serve only to demonstrate the inadequacy of Liberal and the Tory arguments.

New programs have been developed concurrently with an ever-increasing financial contribution to hospital care. This year alone hospital costs are expected to rise by some 25 per cent. Last year hospital costs rose by over 21 per cent. The numbers emphasize this Government's commitment to hospital and health care. To say that we are withholding health services from people who need care is clearly not true. The five per cent reduction in hospital beds was initiated after careful study revealed that Saskatchewan residents used hospital beds at a rate 40 per cent higher than the national average. If Saskatchewan's bed availability was limited to national standards, 40,000 less people would be hospitalized in this province this year than current estimates indicate.

As an alternative, the Government shows responsible restraint which should only result in shorter lengths of stay in hospital for some people.

We should look, Mr. Speaker, at some comparisons with other provinces and this would be quite useful, particularly to the Member for Saskatoon Eastview. British Columbia has increased its hospital premium by 50 per cent, up to \$225 per family and has put a daily charge of \$4 on acute care beds. Conservative Alberta did not provide a 25 per cent increase in hospital costs this year. Hospitals in that province were limited to 11 per cent. Premiums were also increased. Ontario, another province with a Conservative Government, charges premiums of \$384 per family. Hospitals in Ontario received a ten per cent increase this year, and some of their hospitals have been closed.

Mr. Speaker, I leave it to your imagination what either of these Conservative Governments would have done with a hospital bed utilization rate exceeding the national average by 40 per cent.

The former Liberal Government, and I ask the Member for Saskatoon Eastview to take note of this one, the former Liberal Government in Quebec limited hospitals to nine per cent increase in 1975, ours was 21 per cent. In 1976, that government allowed only seven-tenths of one per cent increase in its hospitals budgets. In Saskatchewan we have not closed any hospitals and we do not intend to close any.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — We have no premiums and we have allowed reasonable increases in hospitals budgets. We have no intention of assigning reduced priority to health care in the future any more than we have in the past. We want to change the emphasis, the real challenge lies in our ability to maintain the present system's basic components and at the same time create new programs to meet existing shortcomings and finally, to achieve all these without creating a health system which the people of this province will find impossible to sustain or finance.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to use a specific example related to our senior citizens. Saskatchewan like all developed areas of the world is experiencing a population explosion amongst its elderly people. In 1965 there were 88,000 people aged 65 and over in our province and they formed 9.3 per cent of the population; ten years later in 1975, the number of people over the age of 65 has risen to over 100,000 and make up approximately 11 per cent of the population. Moreover, if projections prove to be correct, by 1985, people age 65 and over in this province may well exceed 13 per cent of the total population. As one would expect, our elderly people use proportionately more hospital service, more medical and other health services than do any other age group. For example, in 1975, approximately 11 per cent of our population of 65 and over used over 40 per cent of our total hospital days and about 24 per cent of our physician services. These facts have far-reaching human and economic implications for all of us. In human terms we need to define more clearly our responsibilities as a society towards senior citizens. As individuals and as a society, we must now provide for our senior citizens in a meaningful and dignified way.

In economic terms, a shrinking proportion of working people will be increasingly called upon to finance through their taxes more services to more elderly people. Our Government has constantly sought to learn of new and better ways to improve programs and services to elderly citizens. Some of our accomplishments in this field as previously mentioned are the Drug Plan, the SAIL program, the Hearing Aid Program. All those programs are particularly beneficial to senior citizens because they use the various services offered much more than younger people do.

The ten community health and social centres in Saskatchewan were established to meet the needs of the elderly from a community base and they have proved successful. The number of Level IV beds in the province has increased from 531 to 1,126 since this Government took office. For some time we have been anxious to have a direct assessment of some of the senior citizens' programs in other countries, particularly in western Europe. If there are ideas in these countries which could usefully be tried in Saskatchewan we want to capture them for this province.

Accordingly when the former Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Skoll, asked to study the provisions of services and facilities for the elderly in these European countries, the Government agreed and granted the necessary leave of absence. While overseas, Dr. Skoll studies not only the various aspects of health services to the elderly, but also, social, housing, community and voluntary services to them. Dr. Skoll has now committed to paper his observations and some suggestions for this province. It gives me great pleasure to table before the House, Dr. Skoll's report, which is titled, "Adding Life to Years". I believe the report will be of great interest to

Members on both sides of the House. In placing it before the House, I wish to make it clear that this is a personal account of Dr. Skoll's experience and as such, represents his personal and professional opinions. The report is not government policy, the ideas contained in that report will make a significant contribution to the policies which our Government is developing to help senior citizens.

In addition, our Government is determined to see that his policies for senior citizens are especially tuned to the needs, wishes and priorities of those citizens. Therefore, we encourage senior citizens to distribute this document widely and to comment and criticize it so that these additional viewpoints are immediately made known to the Government and included in our policies and programs.

I would like to tell you that the report emphasizes that in all countries visited by Dr. Skoll the growing proportion of elderly citizens is exerting increasing pressure on limited health and social care resources. This is forcing all nations, regardless of political philosophy to face up to this 20th Century phenomenon. The report also suggests ways social attitudes to the elderly can be changed for the better. It stresses that there is much the elderly can do for themselves to maintain their health and vitality. Because the report deals with the whole spectrum of services to the elderly, I intend to offer this report to my colleague, Hon. H. Rolfes, the Minister of Social Services. He intends to ask the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council to seek the views of the elderly in the province on the issues raised in this report. The council will also be asked to co-ordinate the public discussion which will result from the report's release.

Finally the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council will be asked to advise governments on priorities for programs and services. You will note that the report has been printed in a special large clear type which will make it easier for senior citizens to read. We hope that many senior citizens will read this document and let us have their reactions so that policies which we construct will be tuned to their needs and their wishes.

Mr. Speaker, I support the motion and will vote against the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. R.L. Collver (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back again. May I first take this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for his 14 years in the Legislature and the last five years as Leader of the Opposition. I join with all Members of this Assembly in wishing his wife Eunice a speedy recovery. A very sincere and gracious lady, we wish her well.

All of us in this Assembly have come to admire the Member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake for his devotion to what he believes in and his sincerity in presenting those beliefs. Furthermore, I should like to congratulate him for his announcement the other day that he was going to stand by his party through thick or thin. The stand is in keeping with his sincerity and devotion to his principles. I know that he and the Members of his caucus and in fact all of the Members of this Legislature will equally respect the principles of another individual who sincerely

believes in perhaps a greater principle, and that is that the people of Saskatchewan must be served before the interests of one's party. I welcome the Member for Qu'Appelle, Mr. Gary Lane, to our caucus. His decision to join with us in creating a party of unity, a party devoted to the principles of freedom and individual initiative, a party dedicated to the fostering of positive relationships between all of the people of Saskatchewan is in keeping with his high principles and dedication not only to his constituents, but to all of the people of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the last time a Member of this Assembly changed his party affiliation was in 1962 when Walter Erb, a former CCF Minister of Health, joined the Liberal opposition under Ross Thatcher. Erb announced his decision on November 5, 1962 and the next day the Leader-Post reported that the Liberal Party caucus and executive had unanimously welcomed him. He was called by them, "a man of principle". There was a by-election campaign going on in Prince Albert at the time. The Liberal candidate in that election who is now the Leader of the Opposition was so excited and happy to have Mr. Erb in his party that he told the Prince Albert Daily Herald on November 6th, that he had personally invited Mr. Erb to take part in the campaign rally that very week. Mr. Speaker, at no time did the Liberal Party or the Leader of the Opposition hoot and holler for Mr. Erb to resign. No one suggested that he should give up his seat in the Assembly; on the contrary, at the very first opportunity in the Legislature Mr. Thatcher welcomed Erb to the Liberal Party and two days later on February 19, 1963, the very day that the present Leader of the Opposition gave his maiden speech in this Assembly, two more Liberal MLAs welcomed Erb into their caucus.

But in their view now it is different. It is different when a Liberal leaves them on principle. Now, Mr. Speaker, they are glad to be rid of the Member for Qu'Appelle. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the Liberal Party that it is too late to punt after you have fumbled. I suggest to everyone concerned that in our political system a man or a woman is elected, not the party that they are affiliated with. Our tradition of parliament allows him or her as an individual to represent all constituents regardless of their party affiliation or of his or hers.

Furthermore, it has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition and, in fact, by the Premier and by other Members of this Legislative Assembly that the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan today is a collection of disgruntled Liberals, disgruntled NDPs, disgruntled former CCFs, former supporters of the Social Credit Party and even some long time Conservatives. Today I can agree totally with that concept. We welcome anyone who supports the principles for which we stand and I today invite any other Members of this Legislative Assembly who want Saskatchewan to go forward, who want to end the bickering and arguing and divvying up of the spoils that has been going on in Saskatchewan for many years, to join with us in our sincerely held vision of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Before I get to the main body of the address that I want to give today I want to comment briefly on a few statements made during the last couple of days by the Leader of the Opposition and by the Premier.

We are proud that in his address the other day, the Leader of the Opposition now accepts the principles of decentralization, the principles of strong, local municipal government and

individual rights which the Progressive Conservative Party has been espousing for the last number of years. At this rate soon perhaps, but I doubt it, the Liberal Party will even totally come around to all of our positions. The people, however, want the real thing not some pale imitation. Both the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier mentioned that the Government of 1929 to 1935 was incompetent. And I agree that this Government faced with the horrendous problems created by the depression and faced with the need to do something concrete about the serious and, in fact, dire situation faced by the people of Saskatchewan in the thirties, failed in many ways to live up to its responsibilities. But surely neither the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition are suggesting that I am responsible for something that happened before I was born or that happened before most of the Members of the Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan were born, and that is more than can be said for the NDP, because that kind of dirty linen doesn't wash in Saskatchewan.

The Premier in his remarks yesterday and the day before linked Progressive Conservatives and Liberals in a vain attempt to join us with the Liberal Party positions, knowing full well that those positions are not coincidental. And I would like to clarify some of those statements here and now. The Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan is opposed to any tampering with the Crow's Nest rates. The Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan is opposed to wholesale rail line abandonment and we have repeated that opposition before the Hall Commission. Let me say again for the benefit of other Members who have attempted to misrepresent our position throughout the Province of Saskatchewan; the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan is opposed to tampering with Crow's Nest rates, the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan is opposed to wholesale rail line abandonment.

Let me clarify another statement made by the Premier as it refers to windfall revenues taken by the Government of Saskatchewan for our oil revenues. We have never suggested, never, that windfall revenues should be spent on current government expenditures. What we have said is that oil revenues should be spent on long-term capital projects of lasting benefit to the people of this province, real lasting benefits: new highways, new roads to the North, new potash mines, new oil wells, new nursing homes, new hospitals, not new pieces of paper for the Minister responsible for the Potash Company. Because that is all that the Government of Saskatchewan has got for its \$120 million or \$130 million, a piece of paper. A piece of paper that says that the Government of Saskatchewan owns the Duval potash mine. Evidence of ownership when in fact the mine is here now. It benefits the people of Saskatchewan now and did before that piece of paper changed hands. Reasonable regulations and reasonable taxation would insure long-term benefits for all without the risk and without the capital investment.

Mr. Speaker, I was surprised and shocked but not amazed when the Premier of Saskatchewan outlined what he considered to be the basis of good life in Saskatchewan. First of all he said he wouldn't take credit for the good crops, then he proceeded in every single statement to do exactly that. The truth is that any economic indicators that have improved in Saskatchewan in the last two or three years have done so as a direct result of good crops. Speaking of economic indicators he suggested that public and private investment has increased tenfold in the last number of years and I agree, but his department refuses to release what portion of the investment is private and what portion of the

investment is public. The Premier knows full well that private investment in Saskatchewan is dropping and the only thing that has held us afloat is public sector investment, the people's money, the people's taxes and high taxation.

Mr. Speaker, I said I was shocked, but I was not amazed. The Premier outlined four or five bases for the good life in our province. The agriculture industry, mineral resources, our social institutions, these he described as organizations to run our affairs, and national and federal-provincial relations. Important as these vital questions are to the essence of our society, absolutely basic to the essence of our society is individual freedom and individual responsibility, preserving and maintaining the spirit of individualism that built this country. And that the Premier did not even mention.

Equally vital to the preservation of a free society is keeping our towns and our villages and our cities and our streets safe for individuals to walk the streets. I will have more to say on that later.

Mr. Speaker, may I first offer my congratulations to the mover and to the seconder. I understand it is an honor to be called into the Premier's office and be asked to move and second the Address-in-Reply. Undoubtedly they were thrilled. What a shock they must have felt when they heard the Throne Speech. They must have wondered how they could possibly give any honor to that speech. They tried, they talked about everything and they said nothing. It was a most commendable job. Fifteen minutes attacking Cargill and John Deere. Fifteen minutes attacking multinational corporations. Fifteen minutes attacking inland terminals. Fifteen minutes attacking me personally. Fifteen minutes boasting about deteriorating health care. Fifteen minutes talking about Alberta, about Ontario, about Quebec. Five minutes playing with dolls and not one minute discussing the Throne Speech or the real problems facing the people of Saskatchewan. After this Throne Speech the Premier or whoever decides over there may have great difficulty in getting a mover and a seconder in the next session.

May I also take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to the latest additions to the Cabinet. To the Member for Melfort (Mr. Vickar): and the Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris). We now have a Cabinet that is half of the entire NDP caucus. The Premier likes that type of control. He seeks controlling interests in businesses, in farm lands, in municipalities, in school boards. I recall, Mr. Speaker, how Mr. Smallwood, the former Premier of Newfoundland always kept his Cabinet at about half of his caucus. That way he felt safe. He's gone, it didn't work for him and I doubt if it will work for the NDP. The new Ministers won narrow victories in the last provincial election. They may feel safer now under the wing of the NDP and under the wing of the Premier, but I advise them not to get too comfortable. It didn't help Mr. Thorson, it didn't help Mr. Taylor and it didn't help Mr. Cody.

Mr. Speaker, may I also say that it is good to have the Premier back with us. He has travelled a great deal these last few months. When I heard that he walked on the Great Wall of China I was afraid that he might fall. He didn't, obviously he is saving his fall for 1979 and I can assure the Members opposite that we will help. The Premier has been to New York and he has been to other places since we last met. He has been almost everywhere, even in the great constituency of Nipawin. The

Premier along with his Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer): has often tried to tell us about the great roads and highways in Saskatchewan. I believe the Premier is a sincere man and he believed that his Minister was telling the truth when he said that our highways and roads were in top condition. But, the Premier only sees a small portion of Saskatchewan regularly. I suppose he doesn't have to travel much of the highway system. The Premier was in the Nipawin constituency this past summer and he travelled by bus and he probably became upset at his Minister of Highways because the Premier's bus slid off the road and into the ditch on the way to Arborfield.

Mr. Messer: — Was it a highway?

Mr. Collver: — No, it was one of your new roads. Fortunately the Premier was not hurt and that made all of us happy. I understand the bus was not damaged and that made the Minister of Highways happy. I am sure that the Premier found that the people in Nipawin are among the friendliest in the province. They are a tough and industrious people. They have to be to navigate some of the roads in the area as the Premier found out. The people of the Nipawin constituency have that spirit that opened up and developed Saskatchewan. They believe in helping those in trouble and they helped the Premier. They pulled his bus out of the ditch, the Premier was charged a nominal fee which was only fair. I am told that the young man who pulled the Premier's bus out of the ditch is a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. And I am told that the payment went directly into our party funds, so the summer was not a total waste for the Premier. He saw that our roads are deteriorating, he learned that Conservatives can rescue him from some of his difficulties and he helped us financially. That's co-operation, that's the spirit that made this province great. I pledge to continue to offer that spirit of co-operation to the Premier and to his Government because it is clear from the Throne Speech that they are all in the ditch. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that those Members to my right will also offer their co-operation to the Premier. Some of them have their problems, some are slated for other Chambers, some of them believe they should be slated for other things. I can assure them they are, but possibly not what they want.

It's been an interesting summer. I have travelled to many areas of this province meeting people in all walks of life and of all political faiths. I learned, as I had long believed, that Saskatchewan citizens are upset about many things. They don't think too highly of the Prime Minister and his arrogance, they don't think too highly of the Government here and its mixed up priorities and dedication to centralization. There is a feeling of alienation throughout Saskatchewan today, not just a feeling of alienation from events in Ottawa but a feeling of alienation from the Provincial Government and in fact some of our local governments. These alienations foster frustration and even defeatism. People are saying, what's the use. The Government does anything it wants, it is not interested in me. It wasn't the feeling during the early days of the CCF. Many of their Members believed in the spirit of the Saskatchewan people, but things have changed. We no longer have a co-operative government in power, we have a confrontation and a centralist government in power. Saskatchewan people want dynamic and enthusiastic leadership and they get a Throne Speech that says nothing, promises nothing, yet it refers to rough times ahead. That's not leadership. The Government should inspire the aspirations of the Saskatchewan people. Instead it weakens the

spirit through legislation that dwarfs the higher values that makes Saskatchewan great.

I have listened to the speeches of Government Members, in fact Members to my right and I wondered. I wondered why they seem to believe that the history of the Province of Saskatchewan started on a day that they won a particular election. People want an end to such partisan nonsense, they want a government that unites, not divides. They want a government that will bring together the hearts and souls of all the people in order to build a great province, a province in which all people will have an opportunity to fulfil their dreams and their aspirations.

What a disappointment the Throne Speech was to our people, no vitality, no leadership. Only a promise of more legislation to try to get the Government out of the mess that it got itself into. The Speech referred to a bumper crop and for that we are all truly thankful. I dread to think what the state of affairs would be in Saskatchewan if the good Lord had not blessed us in that way. Saskatchewan people want to be optimistic, they want to be confident. They were looking for a Throne Speech that would give them reason to be. Instead they are told that there are troubled times ahead. We are only supposed to have modest confidence in our future. That isn't the leadership that inspires people. Confidence means faith, trust, being certain. That is what people want to see in their government. Modest means placing a moderate estimate on one's ability. That is the understatement of the year when applied to the Government Members opposite and to the NDP. What the Government really is saying is this, things haven't been too bad, we had a bumper crop but with the mess we have created we are not too sure about the future. That isn't going to give our young people the exciting encouragement they need and want to help build Saskatchewan. That isn't encouragement to the senior citizens who face difficult times due to inflation. We should be expressing complete faith and trust in Saskatchewan to encourage business investment and expansion.

We need a government of strong faith to create trust and harmony in labor and management relations. Mr. Speaker, this nation is at its most critical crossroads. The world is questioning our future. It is not a pleasant thought. But we cannot ignore what has recently happened in the Province of Quebec. The Parti Quebecois has caused great uncertainty in the Province of Quebec. But that uncertainty is not confined to one province. It has placed the future of all provinces in question. Therefore, each province has a responsibility to examine, why Canada has reached this critical crossroad. However, the Throne Speech completely ignores this crucial issue. While most would agree that the Liberal Government in Quebec deserved defeat, we cannot ignore that the new government is dedicated to a separate and independent nation of Quebec.

The Federal Government with its philosophy of centralization and its determination to directly control all provinces, is largely responsible for the crisis that Canada is in at the moment. This crisis will have a serious effect on capital investment during the next two years. That caution by investors will be felt as much in Saskatchewan as it will be in Quebec. The last few days the Premier of Saskatchewan has added to the uncertainty. He has allied himself with the Parti Quebecois. And the fact remains that regardless of other programs the PQ will implement, its prime objective, its only reason for existence, is the breakup of Canada.

We view Canada as one nation made of differing regions. Regions which must be allowed to establish their own priorities within our constitution. All provinces must be treated as equal partners of Confederation. They must be equal to each other and allowed to govern within provincial jurisdictions without interference by Ottawa.

Does the NDP of Saskatchewan favor special status for Quebec, as does its federal wing? Is the Government of Saskatchewan going to agree to patriation of the constitution without a guarantee that Saskatchewan will always be able to maintain control over our natural resources? That is the impression.

They are going to look for the optimums of effective control over the areas of provincial jurisdiction that we should have and are written in our constitutions, such as health, education, welfare. Equalization from a money point of view is important for the maintenance of national unity and resources. But of equal importance is the creation of programs by the province, within the province, without strings leading to Ottawa. Burying our heads in the sand won't make our future secure.

The Federal Government has contributed to national disunity the likes of which has never been seen before. If Canada is to survive as a nation, we must see leadership on the part of provincial governments. It is the responsibility of the provinces to hold Canada together because Ottawa is failing. Unfortunately we see nothing in this Throne Speech. There is no place for waffling in the future of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, last spring during the Budget Debate, we suggested to this Government that estimating revenues on the high side, while hiding anticipated expenditures would result in a huge deficit. We pointed out to the Government that absolute restraint and clear spending priorities should be established, for it was known at that time that federal transfer payments to Saskatchewan would be substantially reduced.

This Government was also made aware of the likelihood that farm receipts could be significantly lower this year than they were last. The result, Mr. Speaker, is that this Government will have to get the money somewhere. And, of course, the first place they look is in the pockets of Saskatchewan taxpayers.

In the Throne Speech the Government complains about reduced revenue from the Federal Government as if it were caught suddenly and unaware of that possibility. The Throne Speech talks about clouds on the horizon. That farm cash receipts and net farm income are expected to decline this year.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this Government feigns surprise. It is unfortunate that the people of Saskatchewan have to pay for this NDP mistake. Or perhaps we should say the budgetary irresponsibility of this Government. For they were warned by every economic forecast that was available. In the Throne Speech the Government subtly admits that it will likely be necessary to increase personal income taxes by perhaps as much as five tax points. We are told, Mr. Speaker, that we can approach 1977 with modest confidence. The people of Saskatchewan caught up in the inflationary spiral who now face tax increases will approach 1977 with modesty indeed. But not with much confidence in this Government.

We are told that the NDP effort against inflation in this Session will consist of amendments to The Residential Tenancies Act. Since this Act was amended only last year we can assume that the new amendments will be an effort to clean up the mess that exists throughout the entire sphere of rental accommodation in Saskatchewan. We look forward to these amendments with the hope that they will be of such a nature as to tranquilize the hostility and bring about an acceptable state of affairs between tenants and landlords.

There was no promise in the Throne Speech that this Government is really serious about controlling inflation. It talks only about rent control which we have in some areas only. But it doesn't talk about rising local taxes for homeowners. Oh, that is not our problem they say. I wonder how the Member for Regina Victoria (Mr. Baker) feels about the Government's anti-inflation program. Property taxes don't seem to be under any controls in Regina. It is not his fault, he tries. He even drastically cut the cost for opening his city hall. The fact is that the NDP have told municipalities to reduce spending. They told municipalities to fight inflation and watch increases in the cost of services.

Well, we have watched the Government increases in the cost of services. Gas rates, telephone rates, power rates, no controls there. As a matter of fact prices have been rising so rapidly in Saskatchewan that last month, Regina topped the list in the consumer price index increase in our country.

We agree that much is wrong with Ottawa's anti-inflation program, but it is clear that Saskatchewan's program is even worse. It simply attempts to pass the buck to a lower level of government. What it really does is to force the wage earner and the homeowner to carry the fight against inflation. Real inflation fighting starts with control of government spending.

We had hoped that the Throne Speech would give an indication that the Government would attempt to streamline its operations. Obviously no hope is forthcoming. Bureaucracy is allowed to continue to expand and further tax increases are forecast to pay for this expansion.

People of this province need tax relief. The Government should take immediate steps to eliminate waste and inefficiency. If this was done we could begin to lower taxes, not raise them. This would provide a stimulus to the economy, which the Premier himself warns is headed for a slump.

We are already one of the highest taxes provinces in Canada. More is to come we are promised. People of Saskatchewan realize that it is their money the Government uses to nationalize existing industry. People in this province realize that it is their tax money that the Government spends in advertising on television and newspapers, to educate us all about the wonders of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Throne Speech where it referred to resources. A state of war has existed for several years between the Government of Saskatchewan and the resource industry.

British parliamentarian Lloyd George once stated, no quarrel ought ever to be converted into a policy. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this Government has converted its quarrels with

the entire resource industry into government policy. Failing to come to a reasonable understanding, this Government has instituted a policy of crushing the resource industry beneath its heel with legislation. Bill 42 sent the oil industry reeling. It has not yet, and maybe never will recover from that blow. Oil exploration is at a standstill at a time when demand is ever increasing.

All of this because three years ago this Government proclaimed oil was in a special category, and therefore reserves could be seized by a government pen.

One year ago this Government proclaimed potash as a special category and again the stroke of a pen could seize any operation it chose.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that any industry or working group that this Government attacks is in a special category, the out of luck, out of rights and out of Saskatchewan category.

Further assured that all Saskatchewan residents are deeply concerned at the legal mess this Government has got us into. It could prove most costly to us. Hopefully we can all pull together to ensure that Saskatchewan residents do not suffer because of the inept approach this Government has followed. Nobody wants to see the Government of Saskatchewan lose a court decision involving millions and millions of dollars. Saskatchewan taxpayers can't afford that. The Alberta Government isn't in the same mess. Yet it has taken steps to ensure substantial benefits to Albertans from their oil resources. Certainly Alberta has about 85 per cent of its oil in Crown rights with the remainder in freehold rights, whereas Saskatchewan has about 50-50. That shouldn't make any difference. The difference is in the approach of the two governments.

The Alberta tax for freehold rights is independent of production and price. It is more like a property tax. On Crown mineral rights the Alberta Government changed the royalty formula after consultation, while our Government added a surcharge to the royalty without consultation.

Alberta's right to ensure financial benefits to its citizens has not been challenged because they held consultation with the industry to start with and because they considered fully the legal question before implementing the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am concerned about the mess our Government is in. How do we correct it if the Supreme Court rules against Saskatchewan? The possibility of retroactive legislation has been raised. Other methods can and must be found because retroactive legislation is dangerous. It is a threat to the very basis of our legal system, and makes a mockery of our judicial process. If the Government in dealing with corporations can change the law after losing its case then it can do so for individuals. Where then is the guarantee of equality before the law for all? We will then have governments with their vast resources fighting legal battles over and over again until they win. No one, no government, no company, no citizen, no one is above the law.

When Saskatchewan wins the Grey Cup in a few days we don't expect Ottawa to say, Oh, we want to play the game over. But first we are going to change the rules. You have to do the job properly to begin with. What the Government is saying is I know

you heard what I said, and I know you think you understand what I meant but what you don't know is that what you heard is not what I meant. Or, in case you didn't understand what I meant, I am going to change everything I said and make it retroactive so that what you heard will be what I thought that I meant.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that in many ways it also sounds like the contendership for the leadership of the group to my right. I have been informed that even today, even today, at this moment in time, negotiations with the oil industry for legislation and regulations on a similar basis to that enacted in Alberta could be implemented and as far as the organizations are concerned, back dated.

The Attorney General should consider this, the Premier should consider this. I am advised that the oil industry is willing to discuss the question even today of fair taxation. Possibly now is the time for consultation in order to end confrontation.

The Throne Speech contained a brief reference to heavy crude in the Lloydminster area. It seems that the Premier and a couple of the Prime Minister's fellows discovered the potential of the Lloydminster field was not being realized. Maybe the Premier got up there on his bus. Maybe Otto Lang in flying over the area noticed many of the wells weren't pumping, although that is doubtful. Because Otto flies too high to be concerned with the problems on the ground in western Canada. The Federal and Provincial Governments got together to research recovery techniques for heavy crude, and that is good. They made a big announcement and that is good. We hoped that there was an improvement in federal-provincial relations. But what a disappointment. The research is little more than a drop in the bucket. It will amount to about \$3 million annually for the next five years. That is a lot less than the tax money that the Government lost in a few months on its Family Income Plan. Apparently our governments still place little importance on heavy oil. They still see little need to expand production to its full potential. Mr. Speaker, there is a great urgency to increase the recovery potential of our heavy oil industry.

Within four years the demand in eastern Canada for western oil will outstrip our production. While the United States seeks to become self-sufficient in oil production, our governments seek to become dependent on others. When this agreement was announced it was said that perhaps recovery in the Lloydminster area could be raised from four per cent to 15 per cent. That would mean increasing the oil recovery at Lloydminster from 68 million barrels to one and one-half billion barrels. And that is a significant increase in the assets of Saskatchewan, and good. But the governments were talking in terms of a decade. No urgency. Oil people have suggested to me that with sufficient research, a recovery technique could possibly be achieved in much shorter time.

Ottawa and the oil producing provinces have a responsibility for research to ensure maximum recovery of our oil resource. The oil companies also have a responsibility, but governments must ensure that adequate research is done.

As Canadians we will all benefit. That is how we maximize the financial benefit to Saskatchewan people from one of our major resources. Not nationalizing existing companies.

I'd hoped that the Throne Speech would have held greater promise for the development of our energy industry. Ottawa's policy through the National Energy Board has not benefited western oil production. And in particular the heavy oil industry. We have needed a special export quota for heavy crude, the lack of such a quota certainly curtailed activity in the heavy oil field. There has to be greater consultation between governments and the energy industry and less confrontation. The Throne Speech held out little hope for that.

There was also mentioned the increasing need for electrical energy. When I see all the lights left on in government buildings at night and Regina's new city hall, I agree that that need will increase.

I am pleased that engineering designs are proceeding for the proposed hydro electric project at Nipawin. I hope, however, before too long the Government will give assurances that Nipawin and the surrounding communities will be fully consulted prior to the starting of construction. I can only hope that the Government has learned something from the confrontation it has had with the people living near the Poplar River Project.

A re-examination of expropriation procedures is warranted in the light of the Poplar River episode. The rights of private property owners should not be trampled on by any government, regardless of the reasons. Many small farmers faced heavy legal costs in protecting their rights when faced with a kind of heavy handed expropriation measures that have been taken by the Government. That is unfair, that is unjust. The same situation faces many citizens in our cities and in our towns. Mr. Speaker, it is time that the Government paid its fair share to rural and urban municipalities for the land that it uses. When the Provincial Government constructs a hydro dam or erects a new office building, it supposedly does so for the benefit of all the citizens of the province. However under the present system those municipalities which have government buildings on their land to not realize full taxation benefits. The taxpayers of those communities are in fact subsidizing the Provincial Government. That's not fair and that's not proper. Furthermore, it helps to hide the true costs of government operations in our mushrooming bureaucracy. It is true that the government employees generate some revenue within these municipalities, but the municipalities must meet an increase in demand for services. The revenues to the municipalities from the government lands and buildings is far short of what is needed to meet that demand. The Leader of the Opposition knows, he is a former mayor and alderman of Prince Albert, where there are a number of government buildings and institutions. The Liberals could have done something about it when they were in power, but they didn't.

I listened with interest to the mention of urban affairs in the Throne Speech. You had to listen closely or you would have missed it. Municipal affairs is a high priority of our party. We believe local government must have greater authority and autonomy in administering local affairs. Municipalities must be given access to revenues now available only to the province. Not more grants with strings attached. Wait until the local councillors read the fine print on the latest attempt by the NDP to appear to be countering this need.

We propose to negotiate with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, to reach a formula whereby a municipality

would be guaranteed a fair share of revenue available to the province. Legislative changes are also needed to give municipalities greater decision-making powers. Locally elected and responsible people know what is best for their communities. The NDP doesn't plan to relinquish any of its power over local governments. All real decision-making is centralized in the Department of Municipal Affairs. The Minister and his executive assistants exercise that power over our municipalities. This centralization was very clear regarding the Regina downtown development plan. That was almost scuttled. Fortunately the Premier stepped in and I give him full credit for that. But usually the department has its own way. If municipalities are at the total mercy of provincial officials it takes months and months and months for municipalities to have subdivisions or zoning changes approved. Recently community planning branch officials said they needed more staff. That's a typical NDP reply.

We suggest less control at the provincial level and more authority at the municipal level might help to meet the problem. Even the Deputy Minister, Dr. Dyck said recently that there is no vehicle for decentralization of planning in this province. The Provincial Government shouldn't be telling our cities what is or isn't good planning. The cities have sufficient expertise to decide for themselves. Smaller centres in the surrounding rural municipalities must be allowed to work together to plan and develop their region. The Provincial Government must provide assistance and expertise to municipalities where necessary, but where requested, not where forced by the Provincial Government.

We believe that the Provincial Government must view municipalities as a level of government and not as puppets on a string. Municipalities must be able to set their own priorities. No assurance of change is seen in provincial-municipal relations in Saskatchewan under the present government. It is only through such changes that Saskatchewan citizens will be able to have a meaningful input into the governing of their daily lives. It is only through strong and viable local government bodies that citizens will have their faith restored in our democratic institutions. The elimination of the feelings of alienation and frustration with big government can only be brought about through a rejuvenation of local government.

Mr. Speaker, I was most interested to hear the comments today by the Minister of Health and his suggestion that the Government of Saskatchewan was going to place its entire emphasis on preventive medicine, preventive measures.

Mr. Robbins: — I didn't say that.

Mr. Colver: — The words that I heard were, "We are going to emphasize this part of our health care program." Preventive medicine, preventive measures. Some of the new steps taken by the Government of Saskatchewan regarding preventive measures are good. The Aware Program, for example, is phenomenally commendable and we commend the Government of Saskatchewan for its introduction and we hope for its continued success. Certainly there are areas of concern in preventive medicine that can be improved but sick people do not have time to wait for the development of preventive measures. Sick people have got to be cured and treated at the time that they are sick.

Now what are the criteria for a health care delivery system as it works out with active illness? Let's not talk for a minute about preventive medicine because I agree with the Government emphasizing that and moving in that direction, let's talk about the treatment for active illness.

What are the criteria one can use?

1. Well first of all are qualifications, expertise and desire to serve of the health care professional.
2. Ease of access to the system by the individual citizen.
3. Quality of the equipment and plant.
4. Access to modern techniques and modern drugs.
5. The cost of the health care, relative to the overall income of the province and relative to the services that are provided.
6. The quality of the preventive health measures which I have already commented on.
7. Measurable improvement, if any, of the overall health of the population.

Now, in answer to the last point, that is a difficult yardstick to measure. That is almost impossible for any health care professional to assess. However, there are some areas. How do we stack up as it relates to these other areas. Well, let's look at the first item. We are losing highly qualified professionals and we are not replacing them. Speak to the Registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Saskatchewan and he will tell you that the number of inquiries from areas outside the Province of Saskatchewan has increased dramatically to the point where they are getting ten inquiries approximately per month at this point.

Are we having access to the system, ease of access? The access that we have to drugs is a formulary list, not an access to the best possible drugs, an access to a list, something that some planner decides on. Certainly the individual citizen can buy afterwards or can buy outside the scope of the plan, but there is no easy access to the best possible drugs.

High demand for services of professionals, for services less than needed, coupled with the high cost of providing service means that there are long waiting lists for needed hospital service. This isn't an arguable point. Unless anyone wants to take statistics to show otherwise you might think about this particular change that has recently been made in bookkeeping technique in which the people who are placed on the list, who used to be placed on hospital waiting lists, are now told, well you can have a date four months or five months, six months hence and you will be taken off the waiting lists. So hospitals have reported, some of them, that the waiting lists have shrunk, but in fact they haven't, it is a change in bookkeeping technique.

How do we stack up? Many rural communities are not served by dentists. Many rural communities have less than adequate services by a doctor. Many have no health care professionals at all. We have far less than adequate ambulance service for some communities. They are very expensive, therefore, those people in those communities have no easy access to the system. We also have the time of health care professionals taken up because of the new drug plan and because of the many policies in the Department of Health, taken up with an inordinate quantity of paper work and bookkeeping and during this time they are not providing the service for which they are trained or for which they are best qualified.

How do we stack up as a result of the policies of the Department of Health? Lab and x-ray facilities have been taken out of many of our communities and now we have inconvenient hopping by the patient from the doctor's office to the x-ray department or lab which could be across town and then having to go back to the doctor's office again to review results. We have an insufficient allocation of resources with regard to the most modern techniques, such as ultrasound diagnostic equipment in which there is only one unit in the Province of Saskatchewan, in Regina. Such as a computerized axial tomogram (CAT): scanner x-ray for brain tumors where the closest possible one is in Edmonton which the citizens of Saskatchewan have to use.

Furthermore, we have been told by our hospitals that infectious cases have to be put in open wards with children because of insufficient hospital budget. During this past summer hundreds, no thousands of Saskatchewan citizens had to travel to Alberta and elsewhere for needed hospital attention. Check your own records, Mr. Minister, and you will find how many had to travel outside the province to be treated.

How do we stack up? Poorly. The Minister found it out himself. The Government tried to blame Ottawa for this deterioration. The fact remains that health services are a provincial responsibility and the Government must completely set its priorities in this field. The Health Minister says there is no deterioration, there is no concern. I suggest to him that he discovered differently at the recent convention of his party. You have heard Members to my right complain about this. You have heard your own party complain about it and now you are hearing us complain about it. Even the executive secretary of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour told the Minister to stop fiddling with words, that over 13 per cent of health care workers are unemployed. Now either there is a deterioration of health care service or the Government for a number of years wasted a lot of tax money on needless employees. You won't find anyone in Saskatchewan who will suggest that hospitals are totally meeting the needs of our citizens except the authors of this Throne Speech. We have heard Government Members, including the Minister of Health, when he introduced the budget last year, talk about national averages and returning to the national average. We don't care about the national average and I am pleased to see that the Minister is off that point today and starting to recognize the real statistics.

Mr. Speaker, the facts indicate that there is a greater need for health services in our province than there are in other regions of Canada. Almost 16 per cent of our population is over the age of 60.

Mr. Robbins: — No . . .

Mr. Collver: — 65 you said, Mr. Minister, I am saying over the age of 60, 16 per cent. That is higher than the national average. It is a higher percentage than any other province in Canada. The ratio of our citizens over 60 is about 25 per cent higher than the national average and has been steadily rising. I am concurring with the Minister's own figures. Most would agree that many of our senior citizens will have a greater demand for health care. The Minister himself admitted it. There is greater need for hospital services in Saskatchewan and it has long been apparent.

Here are some interesting statistics that the Minister didn't mention. In 1961 before medicare, hospital utilization in Saskatchewan was 42.8 per cent higher than the national average. In 1971 it was 34 per cent higher than the national average and last year it was 28.5 per cent higher than the national average. Approximately the same percentage last year as the number of our citizens over the age of 60 was in excess of the national average. Seemingly an approximation that would say last year's expenditures were rational. Yet drastic cuts in our hospital system were made in 1976. By the Minister's own statistics and by the evidence of the population figures in Saskatchewan we need approximately, not money, Mr. Minister, we need extra hospital care, 25 per cent more hospital care. And that cost, if you are wasting it in other areas, then you should re-examine your priorities. Those are the facts, Mr. Minister, that reject setting our health priorities on the national average.

Government briefly mentioned community services in its Throne Speech. However, the Minister of Health has cut regional hospital councils. They talk about community social services knowing full well that everything is controlled in Regina. Health and social service programs should meet the needs of individual communities. But this Government with its centralist view decides what is best for communities.

A year ago there were two studies undertaken on health and social services in one of our cities. One was an assessment of the need for community health services among the elderly. The other was a community health and social services study. These studies were undertaken only after heavy pressure by local people on the Government and we haven't heard anything about it. The Government isn't interested in the communities becoming involved in planning local health and social service programs. You remove some of their power then to dictate to the people of Saskatchewan. The Government would discover that its health and social service programs are not meeting the needs of our elderly. It is not meeting the needs of our youth and it is not meeting the needs of our disadvantaged. He would much rather talk about averages, statistics, expand the bureaucracy and control citizens and impose more regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I note that the Churchill River Project is still very much alive. No one seems to want it in the North. We've had studies and evaluations of studies. Special grants were given to the northern Municipal Councils to further study the evaluation of the study. Now we are to have a board of inquiry. The next session we will probably have a royal commission. A large hydro project is the only answer. It would be possible to develop smaller generating stations throughout the province, an aspect which must be considered. Churchill River is one of the few unpolluted fresh water bodies left in the world. While electrical energy is vital to our province so is fresh water. Let us not be afraid to speculate that the Churchill River may be a future source of fresh water for our towns and cities. In some places in Saskatchewan today fresh water from the taps would be most welcome. Biologists are concerned about the future of fresh water, especially as the algae problem expands. We must be prepared to listen to that concern.

The Government has had a program for the responsible use of alcohol and it is a good program. Hopefully it will have some good results. But we also need a program for the responsible use of water. The Throne Speech mentioned flooding. It is to

have a high priority. For decades it has had a high priority. We still have drainage problems throughout the province. We have very serious drainage problems in Nipawin. The Premier is fortunate that the ditch wasn't filled with water when his bus slid off the road. RM councillors in my constituency tell me that they have been told for years that the Government is studying the matter. They also point out that it is government departments, primarily Highways, which cause many of the drainage problems. Now it is a high priority. Hopefully the citizens in my constituency can keep treading water until the Government takes some concrete action. The problem is increasing each year and it is becoming urgent. It was raised at the recent SARM Land Use Conference.

Flood control and drainage must be reviewed as part of the whole area of soil conservation. We cannot expect our farmers to pay the total cost of this conservation, society as a whole has a responsibility and it is society which benefits through the most efficient production of food.

Agriculture is our most important industry. Unfortunately the Throne Speech said very little about food production in our agricultural industry. Oh, it paid lip service and referred to past things, other spokesmen will dwell at some length on this essential topic. But what about the future of agriculture? Regardless of our attempts to diversify our economy, with few results by the NDP I might add, let us recognize that our primary economic base is the agricultural sector. NDP Government policies don't help such expansion, they just lead to closures, such as Burns Food in Prince Albert and Intercontinental in Regina.

Our farming industry requires a great deal more assistance through research. About 80 per cent of our snowfall is lost through spring runoff, this causes soil erosion, and contributes to flooding. This requires study, requires research and it requires action.

What about the future of the South Saskatchewan Irrigation Project. Our food production capacity could be greatly diversified through this project, yet your Government stalls and discourages this expansion. Assistance for such diversification is needed, and a much greater emphasis on agricultural research is needed. Unfortunately, this Government is more interested in owning farm land than assisting individual farmers to make the best possible use of their land. Restrictive theoretical policies are not the solution for Saskatchewan agriculture, and I emphasize that the comments made recently by the Minister of Agriculture pertaining to land ownership is not the solution to the problems of Saskatchewan agriculture either.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great concerns of citizens in Saskatchewan and of all Canadians is the continuing increase in crime. Some recognition of this growing problem was given in the Throne Speech. There was no indication that the Government was prepared to deal with it. Another study is promised, before even a hope of action can be forthcoming. What use is another study? We have had all types of studies and commissions in the past few years, involving the criminal justice system. Crime still increases, our citizens are afraid to walk the streets at night, especially in some of our cities. Businessmen hire private security guards, parents have to set up special programs to protect their children, prisons are wrecked by inmates, guards are threatened and taken hostage, police officers are frustrated and often inadequately equipped to protect the public; yet we

have more studies and enquiries at all levels of government, but the increase in crime continues. Perhaps common sense is the answer, perhaps we should listen to the people, they want the criminals punished. This does not mean that we should stop rehabilitation attempts. These could be encouraged with sufficient resources to make them more effective. However, the concern over the rising crime rate clearly indicates that people are sick and tired of criminal repeaters being given a slap on the wrist and sent on their way. It is time governments realize this, and it is time our courts realize this.

Mr. Speaker, I question the value of a further provincial study of the criminal justice system. To be truly effective, it would have to involve federal authorities. In 1971 we had the Saskatchewan Corrections Study Committee Report, it put forth many concepts and recommendations. However, little change has been seen in the penal system in this province. Last year a Corrections Co-ordinating Committee brought forth a report entitled "A Correction Proposal for Saskatchewan", it reiterated some of the concepts of the 1971 report and offered some new proposals. Where is the Government policy regarding that proposal? Is the report shelved indefinitely? There are many people in the corrections field in Saskatchewan who would like to know, the staffs of the Provincial Correctional Centres would like to know, what is the future of the Regina Correctional Centre? What is to happen to the old Prince Albert Correctional Centre? What is the future of probation services, community training, and diversification experiments? The Government must bring forth answers to these questions, rather than to just announce another study. Even though it may be wider in scope, these are not partisan political issues. I believe every Member of this Assembly is sincerely concerned about the criminal justice system. It is a complex area. We don't expect the Government to have all the answers, no government will. The lack of any answers should not be hidden behind more studies. Some of the answers lie in streamlining our courts, yes, they should. Strengthening probation supervision; increasing resources to municipalities for policing; and harsher sentences for criminal repeaters, that's where some of the answers are.

Those who wish to break the law must be held responsible for their actions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Collver: — I agree. For the benefit of the Members opposite . . . I see, Mr. Speaker, the Government plan to emphasize traffic safety in the year ahead. The traffic record on our streets and highways is something that could cause all of us concern. It is a costly record, not only in dollars, but in human suffering. The Premier has mentioned an expansion of the Driving While Impaired Program, hopefully such expansion will allow community input at the local level, as it was a community group in Prince Albert which initiated the DWI Program in this province. That program is an indication that communities can come to grips with many of today's social problems. They don't need large government bureaucracies dictating to them. I believe the seriousness of drinking drivers was clearly outlined a year ago by an official of the Attorney General's Department. He stated that the drinking driver in Canada on an annual basis kills more people, injures more people, cripples more people for life and destroys more property than all other kinds combined, multiplied by ten.

Mr. Speaker, I offer co-operation to the Government for any real measures to reduce the carnage in our streets and highways. However, in some areas of Saskatchewan the most dangerous traffic hazard is the road itself. The Premier learned that this summer. He should drive to Sandy Bay some time, as I did a couple of months ago, it would be a real experience for the Premier, and take along the Minister of Highways. The Member for Cumberland (Mr. MacAuley): was invited to attend the same meeting that I did. I am told he declined, I don't blame him. How could he tell the people of Sandy Bay the Government doesn't care about that particular road.

Mr. Speaker, I was amazed that the Throne Speech ignored northern Saskatchewan totally. I guess it doesn't want to remind us of the bureaucratic nightmare that it has created up there. There are new jobs, but they are filled by people from the South and from Winnipeg and from Vancouver, or Victoria. The people in northern Saskatchewan want economic development so that jobs will be available for northerners. They don't need more civil servants to tell them about the good life under the NDP. Development of northern Saskatchewan will only come about through a reasonable transportation system consisting of all modes of travel and priorities being set to accomplish this quickly. Development of the North will only come about when northerners are encouraged to solve their own problems, establish their own priorities, there is still no real local government in the North. The DNS runs everything. While the Throne Speech failed everyone in Saskatchewan it totally failed to recognize the potential of our great northland.

Mr. Speaker, in the field of labour, we welcome the increase in the minimum wage to \$3.00, as a measure to assist the low income earners in Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, judging by this Government's past performance in labor relations we have great reservations about any proposed revision in The Labour Standards Act or any amendments to The Occupational Health and Safety Act. We will be examining such legislation with great care to ensure that the rights of Saskatchewan workers and employers will not be further encroached upon. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that this Government can no longer communicate with the rank and file of organized labor, a group which has up until now largely supported the NDP. Oh, you communicate well with the bosses, the rank and file are starting to defect, by your seeking to assert absolute control over the affairs of our working people. Your Government has shown that its appetite for power knows no bounds.

We believe that individual trade union members have the right to secret democratically constituted ballots for all major issues facing them as trade union members and that this right must be protected by legislation. We believe that individual trade union members have the right to financial statements for the money that is deducted from their pay and the right to expect no less than the moneys that are entrusted to their trade union than they could expect from the money they entrust to their bank or to their credit union or any other trustee.

The party that once stood by the principle of free collective bargaining is out to destroy that freedom. I remind this NDP Government perhaps descendants of a nobler breed of politics, something a former CCF Premier once said in his farewell address to the party. Tommy Douglas said:

Canadians do not want to escape from the tyranny of

big business, to fall into the clutches of big governments.

That's a warning that you should heed, it's a warning that we all should heed. He warned about the government which seeks to control everything. The Progressive Conservative Party is committed to the principle of free collective bargaining. Mr. Speaker, I fear that we are the only party that is. We see in our province, our country today an NDP Government in Regina, a Liberal Government in Ottawa attempting to usurp this right through permanent wage and price controls. All the protestations in the world don't change the fact that neither government has or will give any indication when controls are going to be lifted, when they are going to end. No indication, so you can protest all you want, they haven't said when they are going to end.

We in the Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan are dedicated to preserving the rights of the working people as individuals. We believe that all people in Saskatchewan must be masters of their own destinies and we are committed to seeing that they have that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, there are serious issues and problems facing this province and this nation, problems which people are looking to their governments to solve, looking for them for leadership. We don't see it here. You see no attempt to decentralize decision-making authorities and make local government more meaningful. Why not?

Canada is at a crucial stage in its history. Provincial governments have a responsibility to ensure our future that is totally ignored by the Provincial Government and by the Federal Government. Instead the NDP Government waffles on the vital issues, it doesn't express concern that Ottawa's centralist policy is destroying Confederation, instead it pursues a similar philosophy then blames Ottawa for its own mixed up spending priorities. The Government has grown so big, it has lost touch with the individual citizens, but you don't care. The NDP want control over everyone, they have no plans to cut the bureaucracy, no plans to make the operations more efficient and above all accountable to the people.

In Parliament this week we heard the Federal Government has lost almost total control of its bureaucracy. We are close to being in the same state of affairs in Saskatchewan. That's the danger of centralization of power, it is a threat to the very basis of our democratic system. It destroys individual initiative and individual responsibility. Our British political legacy places emphasis on three main items: the dignity and worth of the individual citizen, regardless of his calling, race or creed; a passionate concern for individual liberty, tempered by a sense of social responsibility; the supremacy of the rule of law in the sense that every person is subject to the law.

This Government centralizes more and more power in the hands of the Cabinet and of the bureaucracy, that legacy is endangered for example in Crown corporations. We then see confrontation as the order of the day. That's what we have seen developing. We are seeing confrontation as the method of dealing with the differing interests of various groups of our society. It is narrowing relationships to that of the adversary system, between management and labor, labor and government, government and business, business and consumer and so on. This confrontation

harms us all, but the poor, the unorganized and the senior citizens will suffer most.

We need government leadership that inspires trust and consultation, not one that creates and welcomes confrontation. The Throne Speech emphasized that this Government has lost all ability to lead and to inspire. It emphasized only that the NDP pursues only a path of confrontation and power. The Speech failed to come to grips with the concerns of the people of Saskatchewan. It reflected weakness in the past and held no strength for the future. The Government is not a substitute for people, but simply the instrument through which they act. How do people today act through the NDP Government, when their local governments are left incapable of acting independently on behalf of the people in their communities.

The Throne Speech reveals more regulations, more government control and further loss of individual freedom. I remind Members of the Government that you can protect your liberties only by protecting mine. Individual liberty has not been acquired easily and if it is lost, it will not be recovered. The Government is throwing away its mandate to lead Saskatchewan to a greater destiny. It ignores the concerns and problems of many of our citizens, it neglects many of our working men and women in this province. We have faith in the people of this province, we have faith that they can decide on the future of their cities and their towns and their villages and their rural municipalities. Yes, indeed, they can even decide for themselves as individuals.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve much better than this Government offered in the Throne Speech, therefore, I will not support the motion. The amendment, however, fails to mention some of the more important issues facing our province and our nation. Therefore, my colleague and deskmate, the Member for Estevan will be proposing a subamendment.

Mr. Romanow: — Would the Hon. Member permit a question?

Mr. Collier: — I would answer the Member by suggesting that he put it on the Order Paper as he suggested to me this afternoon.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. The Member obviously knows that the Order Paper only applies to the Government. I'm, therefore, asking specifically whether the Member will permit an oral question as a result of his remarks? Pardon me. What did he say? I didn't hear what he said.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! Apparently the Hon. Member says, no. Before we move on to the next speaker, might I impose on the House for a moment or two to clear off the Motions for Return not debatable. It will only take a second and this will facilitate the paper work.

Mr. E. Anderson (Shaunavon): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate barring earthquakes, floods, typhoon, I intend to speak in this debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — Mind you, Mr. Speaker, I must say that during the last hour and a half I was sort of hoping for an earthquake. I felt it more of a groan speech than a Throne Speech.

As I was sitting, I suppose it was the thoughts of earthquakes and floods and fires, got me thinking of things a bit biblical and what not and . . .

An Hon. Member: — And alligators.

Mr. Anderson: — And alligators, yes, too. I got go thinking, as I viewed the new seating arrangement on our Members to the left, I recalled a famous painting I saw once. I don't know if any of you have seen it, I believe it was by Leonardo da Vinci and it was called "The Last Supper". I might be wrong on that, but it does make me recall that.

An Hon. Member: — Did they answer questions at that time?

Mr. Anderson: — Yes, I believe some people did and later they kissed each other.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my sorrow that this Government has grown to lacking in understanding of the needs of the people of this province. A good example of the lack of understanding this Government has is in its reaction that was given to the plight of the cattle industry. In the face of a very disastrous situation for this industry, this Government took very little action, in fact, no action of any meaning.

If we look back on the actions that have been proposed and have been enacted by this Government, we find the cow-calf advance was put forward, and now we find that between the month of December 1, 1976 and January 31, 1977 a number of inspectors will travel this province to check the honesty of our farmers. I dare say the cost of the inspection will be much greater in dollars than whatever benefit will ever accrue to the farm operator.

The only benefit if you look at the cash advance, that it gave to a cow-calf man in reality was the free interest on \$6,000 which really amounts to a great gift of \$600 a year to the cow man. Not much of a gift. I would imagine it would cost that to count these herds now. The operator who got the original advance will receive no benefit from this because the original advance is deducted from this advance and he ends up not getting one red cent. Not much help really to our cow-calf operators.

We now find in the Throne Speech debate, or in the Throne Speech, that a very much touted \$50 per cow grant is offered to the cattle operator. This in theory would give a farmer \$3,500 to help him through these difficult times.

The NDP says that this will give \$32 million to the cattle industry. I doubt if it will give a tenth of that.

This statement is a terrible disservice and an insult to the farmers of this province. When we look closer at this grant, that if the net income of a producer is \$8,000 including the grant, he cannot receive the grant. This means that if a farmer has a net income of \$4,500 he cannot receive this grant. Anyone who tried to keep his head above water by taking an extra job off the farm, or is in a mixed farming position, so he is selling some grain, he's penalized. This seems to follow the NDP policy that penalizes those who have initiative and those who try to help themselves. It tears them down and rewards those who will sit back and ask for something for nothing. Why not tie these grants to the cattle portion of the industry? Why penalize a fellow who takes a bus job? Why penalize a fellow who works out in the city? He's trying to keep his head above water. You say to him, no you won't get the grant, but if you sit back and whine we'll certainly help you.

True to the NDP attitude, we find we're going to hire a bunch of bureaucrats now, they are just in the process of being trained, to go out and to count the farmers' cattle. Most guys can count their own cattle where I come from. I suppose there might be areas where they can't, but then they could count them twice and come pretty close.

Mr. Allen: — Rumor has it . . .

Mr. Anderson: — I don't know if he'd dare go out in case of flood or earthquake.

I predict again that more money will return to the civil service for cattle counters, than will ever be given to the guy that's raising those cattle.

We see again that the outstanding amounts of any cash advance will be deducted from these grant payments. The net result will be again that the farmer won't receive a penny.

This program shows the lack of understanding and complete disregard that this Government has for the rural areas of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — This grant system gives no practical help to the farmer and especially the small farmer who is in debt. Rather than put a moratorium on his payments, the young farmer and the small farmer is the guy with the payments, an action that would give real and actual needed assistance to our farmers, this Government puts in a program that only builds our civil service even larger and wastes our tax money by building a growing bureaucracy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — Another portion of the Throne Speech that I found interesting and I'd like to examine is the NDP claim that they applied modest restraints to the health spending and no hospitals have closed their doors. No doors may have been closed, but beds certainly have.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — And a hospital without beds could just as well not be there.

I will give you an example of what the NDP calls modest restraints. An example right from the city of Regina and one hospital in particular. It is strange to see where the NDP hold their priorities, with millions for potash mines and government offices, while helpless children become the victims of mismanagement.

Let me tell you the sad story of the children's ward in the General Hospital of the city of Regina.

First closure this spring was of a 30 bed isolation unit. They said it was outdated, it should be closed. No suggestion of upgrading or no replacement was suggested. It was closed. This meant that isolation cases had to be put in special rooms throughout other wards. The next and very recent cutback was for 40 beds and this is in the children's ward of the General Hospital in the city of Regina. One specific ward, not thousands or millions.

The next and very recent bed cutback was for 41 beds or one-sixth of the children's ward. This closure necessitated that individual rooms had to be cut out and now cases that should be isolated such as chicken pox, measles, spinal meningitis, etc. are all in one public ward.

Mr. Allen: — No, that isn't true.

Mr. Anderson: — That's a fact. Go down and check it.

Surgical patients are mixed with communicable diseases and this is a real threat to children.

While recovering from surgery a child may contract some communicable disease and the two combined can cause him to lose his life. There is a definite need for isolation.

I'll tell you another thing that's a fact, if you're interested, that in this city of Regina at this very moment there is not one isolation unit for children. Not even for newborn children. That's a modest cutback. The children's wards of this city and other centres throughout this province are in desperate need of more beds. Ask any parent with a child in a hospital.

The NDP with their bed closure, are the direct reason why there is no isolation for children in hospitals in this city. Therefore, they are directly responsible for many of the communicable illnesses that the children in the hospitals are exposed to right now.

Just because children's wards are not completely filled at certain times of the year does not mean that they are not needed. Children are not like adults.

If a flu virus hits an area, many adults do not become ill because they have built up a resistance through exposure to similar diseases. They weather the storm better if they get it. However, children have not built up these immunities, so they all have a tendency to get sick at once in great groups and many need specialized hospital care, which isn't there.

Another very interesting thing that happened just two days ago in the city of Regina. There's one case, because I'd rather speak of one case, one case becomes multiplied into many, is that because of the cutback in beds at the General Hospital, in children's wards, there is no room for admitting. An example was that last Tuesday evening one doctor tried to admit a child with infectious diarrhoea at two hospitals, the Pasqua and the General. Neither hospital had one bed available. Finally a child was discharged from the General Hospital that was not ready, but had to be moved for the child who was worse. This took from five in the afternoon until 2:00 a.m. while the mother sat in the waiting room holding her child. Very modest cutback, very modest cutback.

The public is making its voice heard. A five hour waiting period to get admitted is not uncommon and this is in the city of Regina not . . .

Mr. Mostoway: — It's always been like that.

Mr. Anderson: — Always been like that, certainly. The reason, bed shortage. Anyone who has a sick child in Regina is acutely aware of this reason for confusion in hospital care. They are the cutbacks instigated by the NDP.

The NDP are making innocent children suffer so that they can continue taking over every facet of our lives.

Mr. Mostoway: — That's sickening, nauseating.

Mr. Anderson: — Oh certainly not. It's the truth. The truth always does sicken the guilty.

They can spend untold millions on potash, but they cut corners by jeopardizing the health of our children.

This is the very lowest that any government can stoop. It goes without saying that the people of this province will not tolerate this kind of humanity. The NDP have rung their death knell by their inhuman tactics in the field of health care. The NDP will whine and blame the Federal Government and blame high costs and ignore the real cause of this disaster.

The real cause is the NDPs intense desire to socialize every aspect of our lives. They will spend millions to gain political power, but when it comes to people they just don't care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — Better get ready for the hospital, it will take five hours to get in.

An Hon. Member: — . . . mentally ill . . .

Mr. Anderson: — No, no. Cost you \$50 then. They also say that we will have the people doctor themselves at home. A step backwards to the early part of our century. A suggestion that is so ridiculous that it's hard to believe it is meant seriously. Let us explore this latest NDP brainchild. Their answer, treat at home.

This is the very reason why the homesteaders and pioneers built hospitals, because they couldn't treat their sick at home. The original reason was that they needed trained personnel to take care of their ill.

The NDP Government is suggesting that we take a step backward and treat at home when 90 per cent of the people are certainly not capable of diagnosing the problem, much less treating it properly. To expect doctors to diagnose and then send them home to untrained care is ridiculous. Wrong treatment can be disastrous.

For example, if you have a pain in your stomach and put a hot compress on it and it happens to be a ruptured appendix, you'll die within a maximum of six hours. But I suppose this doesn't matter as long as we have a few potash mines, maybe afterwards we can put the bodies down.

Hospital delivery of babies is essential. It's suggested now we get a mid-wife and do it at home. My God, I was born at home, with a mid-wife and it wasn't a very practical idea at that time and I don't think it's a very practical idea now.

If you have complications in childbirth, you can't treat them at home. This is why we built hospitals.

An Hon. Member: — A ludicrous situation.

Mr. Anderson: — A ludicrous situation, but they want us to go back to homestead days and treat at home. Sit, oh my gosh, when you look at, in most of the homes in this province, you would find that the wife is quite often working and the husband is working. Who in God's name is going to take care of the child at home or the sick person?

An Hon. Member: — Certainly not the hospital.

Mr. Anderson: — No, certainly not the hospitals, no beds. I agree with you.

Miss Clifford: — Who's saying that over there?

Mr. Anderson: — The only guy with brains over there I guess, the Member for Turtleford (Mr. Johnson). He agrees that certainly not the hospitals aren't either under the NDP.

We can go on further into what the NDP left out of their Throne Speech.

Their lack of capital spending to improve our highway systems. The highways in this province have deteriorated so they are unsafe to drive over.

These highways are the lifeblood of our rural areas; they take children to school; take people to hospitals; they are needed by our farmers to get repairs; they are needed to take products to market. But the NDP ignored the highway system. They are allowed to deteriorate. Shows their total misunderstanding and lack of concern for the rural areas of this province.

They will spend millions in the cities to build office buildings. They say they want to keep the rural areas alive and yet they cut back on grants to municipalities, grants to school districts, rent to hospital boards and nursing homes, while the highways deteriorate and say they are a party that wants to help the rural areas.

As these services disappear in the rural areas, the people, especially older people must move into the overcrowded cities to be near these services and in doing this the rural areas deteriorate, they die.

What does the NDP do in the face of these facts? They announce that 26 million will be spent for cultural facilities. This is a slap in the face to the pioneers of this province. The very people who suffered and toiled to build this great province.

Mr. Allen: — Are you opposed to the program?

Mr. Anderson: — I certainly am when you have no hospital beds. I'm very opposed to it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — I'll tell you why. It's small comfort to an aged person to know he is going to have a recreational facility when there is no hospital bed. It's small comfort to an aged person to know he has no nursing home, it's small comfort to him. I'm certainly opposed when you cut back in children's hospitals. I would say that it's darn hard for an old person to get cultural activities in the grave and that's where you are going to drive them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: — The NDP would be wise to look at their record. They only come out . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! Could we have a little bit of order and allow the Member to be heard. I'm having trouble hearing the Member.

Mr. Anderson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP would be wise to look at their record. They only come out well when they compare themselves to the depression years of the thirties or the depressed market conditions of the sixties.

The people of this province aren't that stupid, they compare the NDP record with the incompetent government of the seventies, the buoyant times of the seventies. They see that in this time of record prosperity in Saskatchewan their needed services are falling badly behind. They see and wonder what disaster will occur further in health care, highways, schools, if the agriculture economy falls again into a slump.

Because of the NDP's dismal record of the last few years and because of the problems they have created are not even offered a

solution in this Throne Speech, I cannot support the motion, but will support the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. M.J. Koskie (Quill Lakes): — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to once again, have the opportunity of participating in the Throne Speech, to speak in favor of those proposals outlined, that continue to provide this province with outstanding leadership.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I want also, Mr. Speaker, at this time to congratulate the Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris): on his appointment to the Cabinet. I am sure that he will make a major contribution to the political life and education of this province. I should also like to congratulate the Member for Melfort (Mr. Vickar): on his appointment to the Cabinet.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I am sure that his business experience will add much. I want also to congratulate the Leader of the Conservative Party. I want to congratulate him on the fact that he was able to stand up and use his time up this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Last year he was only able to stand up for 20 minutes and say nothing, this year he stood up for an hour and a half and said less.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — There have been some changes in the House since we last sat. There has been a minor shuffle in the composition of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. One of the chief defenders of the rights of the foreign corporations to exploit the people of this province, has now become one of the chief defenders of the rights of the foreign corporations to exploit the people of this province. Only the name of the party has changed to confuse the innocent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — But the parting, Mr. Speaker, was not one of sweet sorrow, in fact one is reminded when one listens to Mr. Steuart and Mr. Lane's conversation, it sort of reminds you of Lady Astor and Winston Churchill. That distinguished lady having heard of Winston's conversion said that if she were his wife you would put arsenic in his milk, and Winston answered, "If you were my wife I would drink it."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leadership race reminds me of a remake of the film 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly'

starring Tony Merchant, Ted Malone, and unfortunately they can't finish the casting, they couldn't find a third Liberal, he joined the Tories.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I want to turn to a couple of areas of real concern in my constituency.

An Hon. Member: — Are there some?

Mr. Koskie: — Not really. One area of concern is the small businessman. Any businessman entering the manufacturing industry in this province is confronted with the problem of obtaining much of his raw materials from Eastern Canada or outside the province and because of the inequitable freight rates to western Canada his costs immediately rise. Moreover in a province like Saskatchewan with its relatively small population the work force from which he can draw is relatively small. Thirdly, most often his product once produced must be shipped to markets outside the province.

This Government has attempted and has done much to assist businessmen by the establishment of SEDCO, and the broadening of the scope of the loans; business counsellors; promotion of the sale of Saskatchewan products and market surveys and a number of other programs. However, I feel that we must give special attention to our business community. I feel we must communicate as a government with the business community, to learn from them their problems and to relate our programs to best assist them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — This is the challenge to the Department of Industry and Commerce. And I am confident that our new Minister will meet that challenge.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I just want to say that most business failures do not result because of the quality of the product or the performance of the job, but rather because inadequate, inexperienced, or poor management, is one of the essential areas of concern. It seems to me that we should in conjunction with SEDCO provide further expertise in management and make it available to our business community.

I don't think that it can be done by hiring theoreticians and adding them to the public payroll. Rather I feel we must use the practical expertise in the field, the business community. We can seek out our most experienced chartered accountants, our most reputable lawyers . . .

Mr. Allen: — Are there any?

Mr. Koskie: — . . . our most successful businessmen and I am sure that with this human resource that we can provide needed management to many of the floundering establishments.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I want to say that during the course of this year, in my constituency that I am going to establish a businessman's seminar. I am going to ask my business community to tell me what we as a government should be doing.

It seems to me the New Democratic Party has emphasized the need of rural Saskatchewan, to maintain our family farm, to decentralize our industry into our smaller communities to continue the growth and viability of towns and villages. I believe that this is a worthwhile goal. But I also believe that in achieving this goal while important to our party is of vital importance to our small businessman, in the Watsons, the LeRoys and Muensters, the Englefelts.

We have a common purpose, for our party, the preservation of a way of life, for the small businessman, his very existence. I think that with this mutual concern and with a mutual respect for each other we can work together.

I want to turn to the area of agriculture. Recently I read a remark which states:

A developing crisis in long term financing of the family farms has placed in doubt the future of private land ownership in Canada.

Think of the significance of that. These are not my words but are the words of H. D. McRorie, The Director of Agricultural Services for the Royal Bank of Canada.

It is encouraging to see that members of the financial community are beginning to appreciate the land transfer problems that my colleagues in the New Democratic Party recognized years ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Sadly enough, I don't believe that the parties opposite have yet recognized the problems to any great extent. This becomes somewhat difficult to understand for the circumstances creating such a problem are very evident.

Over the past number of years we have seen a rapidly rising cost of land. This is evidenced by the fact that land which cost \$90,000 or \$150 per acre in 1971 is now selling for \$167,000 or \$261 per acre in 1976. In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a substantial increase in the size of farm units, which in effect will require greater investment. This can be easily seen in the fact that the average prairie farm has grown in size from 617 acres in 1971 to 853 acres in 1976.

Mr. Speaker, I earlier made reference to comments made by Mr. McRorie. At the time of making those comments I believe it was to the 4th Annual Agricultural Credit Conference. Mr. McRorie projected that the value of land and building investment by 1980 will reach \$45 billion at the present rate of growth.

While at first glance the significance of this projection may appear to be the size of the investment, I would suggest that its significance is more appropriately that it represents

the future pool of funds which must be effectively transferred from one generation to another if we are to retain our present land tenure system.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. McRorie goes on to say that by 1980, whereas we require now credit of \$425 million, by 1980 we are going to need \$1.4 billion a year for the annual transfer capital. When analysing the figure it is easy to see that under such transfer capital needs, it would take 32 years to transfer the land from one generation to the next. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that when the average age of Saskatchewan farmers is now approximately 55 years, it will be impossible to satisfy that need for land transfer. The farmers will become just too old before the land can be satisfactorily transferred.

Accepting those facts that 32 years is too long for a transfer of all the land from one generation to another, it seems much more reasonable, from an average age of farmer point of view, that 15 years would be a more realistic period of time for such a transfer to take place. If this were the case, we would require \$3 billion a year rather than \$1.4 billion a year for annual transfer capital.

It is important to note that all Mr. McRorie's figures pertain to western Canada. When relating this to Saskatchewan using the same method of calculation, we would find that we would need approximately \$1.943 billion a year for investment return and replacement capital in Saskatchewan. Remember this is on a 15 year basis.

The latest figures available to me indicate that the approximate total gross agricultural income for 1975 was \$3 billion. The need of \$1.943 billion for investment return and replacement capital represents almost 60 per cent of that total income.

Traditionally, Mr. Speaker, the total agricultural income has been divided in the following manner: one-third for land and investment; one-third for cash costs (such as machinery and fertilizer); one-third for labor return.

We can see from this distribution of approximately 60 per cent if things continue on the total agricultural income is too high, especially when the remaining 39 per cent has to be spread over cash costs and labor returns. We all know very well that the cash costs are fairly well fixed and in fact are increasing dramatically. The rising cost of machinery can serve as an excellent example of this.

Therefore, we can see that land and investment is taking a greater share of the agricultural income. In addition the cash costs are taking a greater share. There is no conclusion that one can come to other than the fact that there is going to be a significant reduction in return to the laborer. If this continues we will see the labor return continuously reducing until such a point that the farmer cannot economically continue a viable farm operation. We will then see a greater concentration of farm operations in the hand of a corporate few and eventually the destruction of the Saskatchewan rural way of life.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that there are few alternatives

to this problem. We could lower interest rates on money borrowed to farmers. We could lower the interest rates in order to reduce investment costs. But there is some question as to whether or not this would be reflected down to the farmer. We could increase the financial return to farmers by either providing higher prices for products or increasing productivity. However, this would be very difficult to control, when one has to consider world markets, external price constraints, weather and so on.

The third alternative, which I believe is the best and the only one, is to undertake and encourage a land transfer program such as it set up under the Land Bank Program. The benefits are many and I should like to list a couple.

First of all in using the Land Bank scheme, what it does is it removes the problem people have being able to obtain capital in order to farm. This is evidenced by the fact that this program has enabled 1,650 people to become involved in agriculture who otherwise would not have been able to.

Secondly, it allows for stopping the inflation rate of land. For the amount of land that the Land Bank is able to purchase, it can fix it at the '72, '73, '74 or '75 levels providing it remains in the Land Bank. In other words it is not continually turned over. In addition, it shares with the lessee through the five and one-half per cent rental rate, the capital gains that have accrued on the land.

It is important, at this point, to deviate for a moment to a brief discussion of other avenues of assistance. For informational purposes, the Farm Credit Corporation has been loaning approximately \$100 million per year for the last three years in Saskatchewan. All loans have not been specifically for land, but mostly.

The interest rates for loans from the Farm Credit Corporation are lower than that of any other financial institution. In many cases such a lower interest rate is considered a subsidy by farmers. Because of this, it becomes capitalized in the purchase price of the land with the end result of this 'apparent subsidy' of funds going to the seller rather than to the purchaser. I believe that any subsidized loaning program of this nature would result in this happening. That is, the seller realizing that money is available at a lower rate of interest and subsequently has a greater repayment capacity and is therefore prepared to bid more competitively for the land.

If this be the case, we can see that such an interest rate would add to the price of land being sold. This will not happen with the Land Bank for the prices of the Land Bank are determined by outside factors and by a complicated assessment appraisal value.

Also, I want to indicate that the Land Bank is an advantage in that it can, in fact, average out its costs of purchasing land. It may be purchasing some land at a relatively high price, but it also purchases land at a lower price. So it has an averaging effect. If you take an individual farmer who goes out to buy and set up farming, the land prices are very high. He has no averaging benefit. He is stuck with high priced land. But the Land Bank has that averaging capacity.

Another shortcoming of the Farm Credit Corporation is that

they take the traditional approach to loaning, that of requiring security without some means of determining the actual earning capacity to see whether it is sufficient for a viable farm operation. The only exception to this within the Farm Credit Corporation is in respect to the program that they have set up to assist the young farmer. In this instance they will loan \$150,000 to a young person beginning to farm without security. However, in deciding what amount of money he is going to be able to obtain they do relate the loan and its provision to the earning capacity of that land. So as a consequence there is a relationship to the value of the land.

It seems to me that when granting loans the financial institutions make little effort to determine the person's real earning capacity to see whether or not the farm unit is economically viable. It may be that it is viable, but if not, a loan should not be granted. This may seem harsh, but it is in the best interests of the purchasing farmer. Hopefully, this could at least provide some incentive to have the seller lower the price to a more realistic level.

It seems to me that it could be argued that this would not provide an incentive to lower the price, or it could be argued that it wouldn't but would just allow the larger farmer with cash, the corporate farmer, to purchase the land. This point may be valid but I submit that the farmer is better off not purchasing land if the farm unit itself cannot economically be viable. Some measures would have, in the long run, to be introduced that would regulate farm size so that we do not have the concentration of large amounts of land with very few.

It is my feeling that the New Democratic Party Government has recognized and taken steps to alleviate the problem of land transfer five years before it became recognized by the financial institutions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — The Saskatchewan Government is to be commended for its foresight and innovation in its approach to a new land transfer basis.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I believe that the Land Bank system is a good approach to solving many of the problems in this area and I think that it should be investigated by the Federal Government. Then perhaps some cost shared program could be developed with the provincial governments. I am sure that if the same \$100 million loaned by the Farm Credit Corporation were used in a manner similar to the Saskatchewan Land Bank Program, a much greater dent would occur in the problems that exist at present.

The Land Bank program, I want to make clear, is not a goal in itself, nor is the public ownership of land alone. The Land Bank is a mechanism towards a goal, a goal of maximizing the number of viable farmers, of a more equitable use of the distribution of land, and maintaining of our rural way of life.

It seems to me there is a need for changing the way that we think about land. Land is a resource, not a commodity. We should have an environment which fosters incentive for creativity

in production, not the making of a profit through capital gains. It seems to me that's our task in agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by an observation of the election that took place in Quebec. For some, Rene Levesque has been portrayed as the fifth horseman of the Apocalypse, and I think that some politicians are already attempting to exploit the issue.

Mr. Speaker, as politicians and as Canadians, we have a responsibility to do more than express our disapproval of recent events in Quebec. What we have to do is ask, why did the people of Quebec opt for a political party that has separatism as a major part of their program and philosophy in spite of the fact that all the polls showed that separatism has the support of only a minority of Quebec people. The answer, I suggest, is that the federalist political parties in Quebec failed to offer a comprehensive program that would meet the real needs of Quebec people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, we saw a campaign based on fear, and it was rejected by the people of Quebec. We saw a campaign that said that the Liberals were the only alternative to chaos, it was rejected. We saw a campaign in which a federalist party campaigned only on the monetary benefits of Confederation and it was rejected. We saw a campaign that attacked the rights of working people, and that was rejected. We saw industrialists threaten to leave the province and their threat was accepted, but they have scuttled back.

Mr. Speaker, if that campaign sounds familiar, I would suggest that the architect of that campaign has previous experience in Saskatchewan in 1971. Surely, Mr. Speaker, political parties have a greater responsibility than merely to pass meaningless slogans and to campaign on fear.

Mr. Speaker, I hope sincerely that whoever wins the leadership of the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan will develop principles and programs and will debate the issues on the basis of ideas and ideology. I hope that the Leader of the Conservative Party will also see the need to abandon his pious platitudes and will explain carefully and lucidly to the people of Saskatchewan what changes he would make if the people elected him Premier.

All of us, as politicians, it seems to me, have a responsibility to this critical period to provide real leadership. We have to change the attitude of cynicism expressed by so many about the political process. We have to re-define that which is Canada; we have to involve the people in a meaningful discussion as to the future of this country; we have to approach this discussion in an atmosphere of goodwill, not of rancour.

I think that the people of Quebec voted in the main for many things - for decent housing; government insurance; honest government; for civil rights and full employment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Surely separation is not necessary to achieve those ends. Surely those aspirations are shared by all Canadians. Surely, working together we can achieve those ends and make our country a better place in which to live.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to conclude on the words of J. S. Woodsworth, first said many years ago and I suggest still relevant today.

May our faces be toward the future. May we be the children of the brighter and better day which even now is beginning to dawn. May we not impede, but rather co-operate with the great spiritual forces which we believe are impelling the world onward and upward. For our supreme task is to make our dreams come true and to transform our earthy city into the Holy City - to make this land in reality, "God's own country".

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I will, Mr. Speaker, be supporting the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. R.A. Larter (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, I intend to be very nice, I'm a very mild man.

Mr. Speaker, with the Estevan constituency being blessed with certain natural resources I should like to comment on happenings which affect these resources and industries. I should like to talk a little about a promise of a rebuilding of Highway 47, north of Estevan.

Just before the election in 1975 this Government had committed themselves to having this stretch of road built by a private contractor. But, feeling that their candidate was in trouble, felt they should move in the Department of Highways' equipment, as a show to the voters just what they were going to do for them. This is all history now. Two years they were down there to build 4.92 miles of road on Highway 18 and it is still not finished - 4.92 miles. During this period the Department also built three miles of road on Highway 47, and I might mention, a very good three miles of highway. A very good job.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larter: — However, a very far cry from the 21 miles that were originally promised to the people of that area.

An Hon. Member: — Did they make a promise?

Mr. Larter: — A promise that was broken. The rebuilding of Highways 18 and 47 have been election promises for Liberal and NDP Governments for many years in that area and they have never been fulfilled. The people of Estevan, as have many districts of Saskatchewan, always thought that when a government was elected it was elected for all of the people of Saskatchewan. Not so, not so. Surely the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer): is not naïve enough to believe that his action with regard to this road will do anything more than eliminate the supporters that they

might have originally had in the Estevan area. I would like to ask the Minister of Highways, when is he going to honor the commitment made to this area of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Nelson (Assiniboia-Gravelbourg): — Ask him first when he is going to be in the House to hear your question. You've got to get him in the House.

Mr. Larter: — I know that. I should like to comment briefly on the Government's entry into the coal mining.

We can see the Government's attitude towards this operation in the Hart Butte venture as the Crown does own much of the mineral rights in this area. We cannot, however, see why this Government would not have stayed out of the mining of coal in the Boundary Dam area, as this has been mined efficiently for many years by the private sector. Certainly the private companies involved would have gladly brought extra drag lines and coal hauling units into play in order to handle Unit 6. Instead, you are going to spend millions more of the taxpayers' dollars and create more government jobs at the expense of the private sector and again at the expense of our taxpayers. Incidentally, the Government has announced the building of this Unit 6 about ten times over the past one and one half years. Makes good publicity every time they do it. Everybody down there thinks they've got 26 units going now. We certainly do sympathize with the people of the Hart Butte area. The sloppy way that the Government has treated their rights on confiscation of land, unsatisfactory settlement, total lack of understanding for the problems being created by this power project.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larter: — Again, it proves beyond a doubt that this Government does not know how to negotiate, and this has been proven many times.

This situation is of great concern, of course, in the Estevan area because the more the Government gets involved and the less private industry can function in the coal fields spells only one thing, an erosion of our tax base in the Estevan area.

Mr. Speaker, we do not feel that the RMs in our area, or the communities involved in our area, Estevan, Bienfait, receive ample return from the Saskatchewan Government in providing services and conveniences to support this huge industry. We feel there must be a more equitable method of taxation, possibly based on assessment instead of grants.

I must mention the Government's full involvement in the potash industry, very briefly.

Now that it has indeed become a fact, we urge you to use all caution, as you are gambling with the taxpayers' money as never before in the history of this great province. There are so many 'ifs' involved and even though we hold such a large portion of the world's potash reserves we do depend almost entirely on world markets and more particularly the United States market. I would hate to think of being involved to the tune of one-half billion dollars, with more mines coming onstream, and a soft world potash market and possibly an embargo. You could

face a three or four year embargo by the U.S. market. I hope that for all of the people of Saskatchewan you have not led the people of this province down the road to disaster.

Mr. Speaker, I feel I must make a few comments on the flooding in the Souris Basin. As you know, the escalation of the amounts of water being drained from upstream has caused extreme hardships to a number of people in our area. We, in a sense, are the dumping basis of all waters from the West. The people in this basin, as well as the people upstream, really need help. We realize that the three year study will not be completed until next year and that actions taken from this study will not be implemented until after the Qu'Appelle Basin project. But you can realize that these people, having been flooded six out of seven years, are running very thin on patience. We are particularly concerned that the people on agricultural land have been driven to almost ruin, without any compensation by the Government, or any positive moves to help them. Under the terms of the Flood Damage Settlement it has been just so-so, but now what concerns our people even more than ever after confirming to the RM and EMO agreement is assistance on flood prevention, or the building of permanent dikes. The Government has not lived up to the cost sharing promises. Indeed, no settlements have been made with the RMs regarding the repairs to roads, culverts and bridges, or to the people who have spent thousands of dollars on dikes. The RMs have spent many thousands of dollars on the go-ahead given by this NDP Government. Many contractors have not been paid. Now, Mr. Speaker, this Government tells the RMs that they may only get 40 per cent of the amounts promised. And, Mr. Speaker, in a letter from the Saskatchewan Government Insurance, they are now informed that no individual will be reimbursed for money spent on permanent dikes, which were promised. This is contrary to what the director of the EMO told the people of the Souris Valley during the flood of 1976.

We resent the discriminatory actions this Government has taken against the trucking industry in this province. I predict this arrogant attitude will be just one more notch in voting this socialist Government out of existence in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct the attention of the Members now to the oil industry, which in spite of the incentives provided under the terms of Bill 42, still remain essentially in a depressed condition. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are aware that a few companies - Shell, Gulf and Mobile, for instance, are spending some of their production credits in limited drilling for new oil. But, the drilling statistics in this province still remain completely unsatisfactory. Let us consider, Mr. Speaker, that in 1973, prior to Bill 42, there were 118 exploratory wells drilled and 536 development wells. Compare this with the 1975 figure of 52 exploratory wells and 116 development wells and it becomes very apparent that Bill 42 and the Act that was passed subsequent to that Bill have done very little to encourage exploration activities in this province. It has stifled exploration. The 1976 figures are no more encouraging.

Mr. Speaker, up to the end of the third quarter of 1976 only 90 exploratory wells were spudded and over one-half of these were drilled by the Crown corporations, SaskOil and Sask Power.

Mr. Speaker, the policies laid down by the present administration with respect to the development of oil and gas simply are not working. They are not producing the industry activity

which we must have if the province and the country is to prolong its position of energy near self-sufficiency. We would point out also that the contribution to the provincial treasury from the sale of oil and gas has been very significant through the years. The provincial reserves are diminishing each year, Mr. Speaker, and in spite of the favorable geological environment in which there appears to be more additional reserves they have not been found in any significant quantity. The eventual result of this, Mr. Speaker, is very clear. If we continue to produce from our existing wells without replacing this production we will soon be in a position where the return to the treasury from the sale of oil will be virtually non-existent.

Mr. Speaker, we look at our neighboring province to the West, the province of Alberta and to our neighboring state to the South, the state of North Dakota. We see that exploratory drilling is being carried out in these areas at an unprecedented rate. One might argue, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta has a more favorable geological climate and that is the reason for activity in this area, but if this is the reason for the activity in Alberta, how does one explain the increasing activity in North Dakota? After all the geological prospects in that state are exactly the same as Saskatchewan, but are more expensive to explore due to the deeper position within the Williston Basin. No, Mr. Speaker, the reason for the lack of exploratory activities in Saskatchewan has nothing to do with the geological prospects or the expense involved in evaluating those prospects, but relates back to the economic and other considerations which the industry reads into the provisions of Bill 42.

Economically, the provisions of Bill 42 reduce the cash flow generated out of a barrel of oil for the operating company. And in spite of numerous regulatory changes the operator still realizes less out of a barrel of oil than he did in 1973 when a barrel of oil sold for less than \$2.50. Oh, those multinationals!

Mr. Speaker, I realize my remarks today are going to result in accusation from some quarters that my colleagues and I are taking the part of the oil industry in this matter at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Our party is now and always has been sympathetic to the aims of Bill 42 which amounts in the main to the best possible return from the industry to the people of Saskatchewan. We disagree, however, with the manner in which the Government is attempting to achieve this end. Bill 42 in the first instance was conceived solely by the Government economic planners and prior consultation with the industry was not sought. It is like sending one of my John Deere mechanics up to the hospital to help to deliver a baby. Consequently when the contents of the Bill became known there was great confusion and uncertainty through the industry. Chaos in the oil industry. Some of the Members present will recall that several drilling programs were immediately cancelled and, Mr. Speaker, most of these programs have never been resumed. It is probably safe to assume, Mr. Speaker, that the industry even prior to Bill 42 was aware that the policies of this Government militated against business, not only their own but any business that had the temerity to make a capital investment in the province and attempt to realize a profit. Profit, what a dirty word! Anyone who had any doubts about this prior to Bill 42 were certainly convinced after the Bill came down.

The oil industry, Mr. Speaker, like all other facets of business in Saskatchewan has become a part of what Mr. Blakeney refers to as his 'planned economy'. My colleagues and I would substitute the word 'controlled' for 'plan', and would add that the control as envisaged by Mr. Blakeney and his colleagues is planned to be very tight indeed. And so, Mr. Speaker, it emerges there are two main reasons why Saskatchewan lags behind other areas in oil exploration and development.

The first reason, bluntly stated, is that the industry, and I can lump all the resource industries in this attitude, simply do not trust this present administration to create just and lasting policies with respect to exploration, exploitation and taxation.

The second reason is that the present rate of taxation on royalties is higher than in any other area of Canada or the United States and the risking of capital in light of the probable returns cannot be justified.

With respect to the first point we doubt if the present administration can do anything to regain the trust of the industry or business any more and in light of the Government's attitude toward business in some recent instances, it would appear that the Government is not even interested in creating any kind of a rapport with the business community. Certainly the Government has lost its credibility as a business partner and it is not likely that this attitude will change until the Government changes.

As far as the second point is concerned a relaxation in taxes on royalties no doubt would be welcomed by industry and it could result in some increased activity. There again, however, with the discontent of the business community with this present administration it is unlikely that there would be a substantial upswing in activity unless such relaxation was also accompanied by a change in administration.

That, Mr. Speaker, leaves the people of Saskatchewan with only two alternatives. The first and most obvious one is to change the Government at the first opportunity. The second is to live with the certainty of more state involvement in the resource industry either through Crown corporations or with very tight industry regulations as dictated by Mr. Blakeney and his 'controlled economy'.

We, in the Progressive Conservative Party are convinced that the people of this province have had quite enough of this latter alternative and we await with great anticipation for the day when the people of Saskatchewan can make a choice.

With regard to agriculture, the Hon. Minister stood up in the House last Friday and told the people of this province that they have already had their vote on the Hog Marketing Board. We want the hog producers of this province to know that they have already had their vote on this board and they didn't even know it. What a boom this board has brought to the hog industry. It broke more young farmers, lost thousands for SEDCO and other institutions and cut our hog production by 45 per cent. It was wonderful. This board helped to eliminate approximately 600 jobs in Saskatchewan through the closure of packing plants and created another bureaucratic monster. Mr. Speaker, how could this Government have the nerve and gall to call for a Cattle Marketing Board?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larter: — You fellows are making too much noise over there.

Mr. Speaker, under federal-provincial relations as was stated in the Throne Speech, it is interesting to note that the Government calls, and I quote:

The Federal Government proposes to make changes in the method of calculating the revenue guarantee retroactive to 1974 and 1975. This establishes a most undesirable precedent.

It is interesting that this Government condemns the Federal Government for setting such a precedent yet feels by setting their own on the resource industry that this is okay.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this Government for the timely increase in the minimum wage to \$3 an hour. Isn't that nice, I'm telling you fellows something nice. But I condemn you for eliminating every student job in this province. Your policies have eliminated any part time jobs for high school and university students in this province. We used to hire four every summer, you've built it right beyond our reach right now.

We commend the Government for their plans on the child protection program and for placing more responsibility on people operating snow machines and less on land owners. We can commend you for that. If the statistics prove out on safety belts and if they do indeed save lives, then we will look with interest on Safety 77.

However, Mr. Speaker, this Government has done more to introduce multiples of bills that by and large infringe on someone's individual rights in this province.

I regret that this Government has not put forward any positive programs to assist those unfortunate people on fixed incomes. The people in senior citizens' lodges and nursing homes, you are killing them. Much more could be done to help these people grow old with dignity instead of having them reach out their hands for help, that's what this Government is doing.

This Government doesn't seem to be doing anything to fight inflation, no positive programs to reduce the bureaucracy. Confrontation is a by-word with this Government, they don't know anything about negotiations. And, of course, this negative incompetence is being recognized not only by the people of Saskatchewan but in Canada and the world as well.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this Throne Speech but I do propose the following beautiful amendment: I move, seconded by Mr. R. H. Bailey (Rosetown-Elrose):

That all the words following Clause "(1)" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

(2) Condemn the policies of centralization of power in Ottawa arrogantly practised by the Federal Liberal Government for the last number of years which have so divided our country and contributed to a fundamental deterioration of National unity.

(3) Recognize the importance of locally elected and responsible officials by materially increasing their power to make decisions and by guaranteeing them the revenue necessary for them to make those decisions at the local level without strings attached.

(4) Introduce the modern budgetary and management controls necessary to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Government of Saskatchewan thereby eliminating waste.

(5) Provide leadership in the fight against a rising crime rate by insisting the protection of the public must become a higher priority than the protection of the convicted criminal.

(6) Provide protection of the rights of individual trade union members.

(7) Improve our health services by recognizing that the needs of Saskatchewan are different from those in other regions of Canada.

(8) Recognize the importance of the development of Northern Saskatchewan:

and further condemn the Government for suggesting the raising of taxes when economic and other indicators point toward a downturn in economic conditions.

I would like to thank the Members for their wonderful attention.

The debate continued on the amendment and the subamendment.

Mr. R.N. Nelson (Yorkton): — Mr. Speaker, I am honored once again to rise in this Legislature and speak on behalf of the people of the Yorkton constituency.

I too would like to congratulate two of my colleagues, the Hon. Member for Melfort and the Hon. Member for Arm River for their appointment to the Cabinet. I have enjoyed working with them in the past year and I look forward to working with them in their new positions.

Congratulations are also in order to the Hon. Member for Bengough-Milestone, for his masterful presentation in moving the Speech from the Throne; and also to the Hon. Member for Regina Rosemont, for the excellent job that he did in seconding the motion. Both Members presented a great deal of information that all citizens of Saskatchewan should know.

Now in offering congratulations, it's not too often that I offer congratulations to members opposite, but this time I feel that I should. The only trouble, Mr. Speaker, is that I just don't know which group to congratulate. You see, Mr. Speaker, the two groups opposite, in their vehicles of state, have just had a change of lane.

I see quite a change too, differing a bit with my friend and colleague for Quill Lakes (Mr. Koskie), I do see quite a change. The Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane): sits like a good little boy, hands folded, and that is a great change from last year. We even saw him getting a lesson in bowing the other

day. I can't help wondering how he enjoys the change to the quiet life.

Now I'm not just sure if the Members opposite could tell me which group should be congratulated either, Mr. Speaker. I'll let them decide.

Changing lanes, Mr. Speaker, can be a very dangerous business. You'll notice that the Hon. Member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson): got a boost upstairs to the back benches. And let's hear about the Hon. Member for Regina Wascana (Mr. Merchant): a Liberal leadership hopeful. I should like to read a little quote from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix of Friday, November 19, 1976. It says in the headlines:

Merchant considers co-operation with PCs.

Mr. Speaker, it is just possible the Hon. Member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver): could have another merchant to manage also.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — I'll leave it to the people of this province to decide what it says about the Liberal management of their affairs, when one of their Members leaves their ranks to join forces with a political leader who can manage motels, hotels and gas stations so well that they go deeply into debt.

To the Conservative Leader, and to the Conservatives also, I might remind them that the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle was highly touted as a Liberal leadership candidate before he so gallantly departed from their ranks. I would advise the Member for Nipawin to keep a sharp eye over his left shoulder.

At any rate, for the consideration of both parties opposite, I should like to sort of quote from Shakespeare to give them the parting words of the man for Prince Albert-Duck Lake (Mr. Steuart): as the man for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane): left the ranks. It goes something like this:

Good-bye, good-bye,
Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I could say good-bye,
Till it be morrow.

Mr. Speaker, to continue with more serious matters, I was pleased to hear the Hon. Member for Bengough-Milestone speak on the theme of freedom . . . freedom won from the corporate giants by collective action, by intelligent government and co-operative action.

The Member for Regina Rosemont talked about medicare costs in Saskatchewan as compared to other provinces. Those figures, Mr. Speaker, must be repeated often and loud to the people of this province and to the people of this nation. Let us just look at those figures again. Let us look again at the medicare fees in oil-rich Conservative Alberta, \$153 per family, Mr. Speaker. Not only that, but in the Edmonton Journal of October 1, 1976 the Alberta hospital Minister, the Hon. Gordon Miniely talked about a hospital users' fee. I think we remember something about a hospital user's fee in this province before. Just like the Saskatchewan Liberals the Alberta Conservatives are ready for deterrent fees. Besides that

Mr. Miniely talked of having local municipal governments pay a part of the costs to run the local hospitals. In other words, Mr. Speaker, that's a tax on the property. Conservatives, using the same old Liberal trick that was used in Saskatchewan, shifting the taxes to those who can least afford to pay.

Let us look again at the medicare fees in a resource and industry rich Conservative Ontario. A family of four must pay \$384 per year for a significantly lower level of health care than we have in Saskatchewan. Formerly Liberal Quebec doesn't even bear mentioning, it's too disastrous.

Now, Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the CCF-NDP dragged medicare into Saskatchewan over the screaming bodies of Conservatives and Liberals who fought viciously to obstruct it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — As the Member for Bengough-Milestone said, "collective action through governments and co-operatives brings freedom." Government action brought freedom for our citizens to go to the doctor and to the hospital. Government action is bringing freedom for our children to have their teeth repaired. Government action has brought freedom to get prescription drugs at a nominal cost. I can take you to dozens of people who tell me that they save hundreds of dollars every year through our Pharmacare Plan.

Now the Hon. Member for Nipawin comes out with gobbledegook about some bogeyman of government that controls every aspect of life in Saskatchewan. Let's look at the grants of this Provincial Government that have been given to the municipalities that have given greater freedom to those municipalities to manage their own affairs. Let us again compare Saskatchewan with oil rich Alberta. Oil rich Alberta talks of imposing hospital financing on the property taxpayers of Alberta. The Saskatchewan NDP Government makes grants to its municipalities of a \$20 per year per person grant, no strings attached. That's \$300,000 a year to the city of Yorkton, Mr. Speaker. Besides that, there is a \$75 per person capital works grant. That's \$1,700,000 plus to the city of Yorkton. Besides that, a \$25 per person grant for recreational and cultural purposes has just been announced. That's another \$375,000 to the city of Yorkton. And nearly \$425,000 if some rural municipalities see fit to come in and work with the city. Compare that, Mr. Speaker, to the last year of the Liberal rule in Saskatchewan. Yorkton got \$23,000 in police and snow removal grants. The Liberals are just like the Alberta Conservatives, all talk and no action.

Mr. Penner: — Give us a chance.

Mr. Nelson: — We did. I was pleased to hear, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Nipawin talk about his great concern for the autonomy of the rural municipalities. And again, Mr. Speaker, I should like to read from the Edmonton Journal. The headline, Mr. Speaker, reads:

Clark Criticizes Provincial Attitudes to Municipalities.

That couldn't be a Conservative Government could it? I would like to read a little bit:

Social Credit Leader Bob Clark charged Friday that Premier Lougheed is breaking the golden rule.

That would never do here.

Or at least he is breaking the political version of it. An amended version might read, he said, "The provincial government should treat communities as it would be treated by Ottawa". This is not happening Mr. Clark told the Legislature. Instead, municipalities throughout the province are being denied the freedom to manage their own affairs.

Mr. Speaker, in Tory Alberta the municipalities are being denied freedom. This is what the Hon. Member for Nipawin has been talking about. Conservative Alberta denying freedom of the municipalities to manage their own affairs, while their Premier tells Ottawa and the provinces that Alberta must have freedom to manage its own resources.

I should like to read a little bit more:

Mr. Clark said that 93 per cent of government grants to municipalities have strings attached. He said, this shows that government doesn't trust the local authorities.

It very much looks as if the Conservatives of Alberta have no trust in the municipalities of Alberta to plan their future.

We have heard the Hon. Member for Nipawin talking in glib terms of the horrible bureaucracy in Saskatchewan. Big government, terrible civil service. He implies that we must fire lots of those people, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad that the Member for Nipawin talks about controlling the provincial government purse and bureaucracy. Again, let's have a look at Conservative Alberta. Quoting from the same article in the Edmonton Journal:

Mr. Clark held up pages from Saturday's Journal where 20 government jobs were advertised for Edmonton. 13 of them for posts paying more than \$20,000. He produced a government memo which he said shows that in October alone the government expected to fill 200 positions in Edmonton within 20 days.

Ten positions a day, Mr. Speaker. How much bigger does big have to get? Liberals and Conservatives, Mr. Speaker; they are the same crew, when they sit in Saskatchewan's Legislature in Opposition. We see the Liberals sitting and talking liberally about what should be done. But the Liberal crew in Ottawa, they act completely contrary to what they say. They glibly say, oh, but that's not us. We're different. Conservatives in Saskatchewan, the same thing. Glibly talking about what they would do; the great things they would do for the people of Saskatchewan, but when they are in power in Alberta, they do exactly the opposite to what they say.

Just as in every election for 100 years throughout this country, 100 years and plus, Mr. Speaker, they appear on their platforms on the hustings and the elections with great promises. When they get into power it's usually the contrary of what they have proposed.

Let's take one example. Today they are coming out and shouting, 'we're all for the worker'. We have taken up the workers' cause, Mr. Speaker. But let's just think back to the last federal election. Who was on the hustings demanding wage and price control? The Federal Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. Oh, but that's not the Conservatives here. They deny the Federal Conservatives. The people of Saskatchewan will judge the Conservatives here. The people of Saskatchewan have judged the old political line parties and have said no for the greatest part of the time since 1944. Manitoba has judged the old line parties and has said no. And B.C., with the super Tories there, they have learned and they also say no.

I should like to take one more little gem. The Member opposite is sitting there talking, which he shouldn't be doing, because he read us such a severe lecture to us last year. The Member for Nipawin said that we are being taxed so highly. I would invite you to listen, Hon. Member for Nipawin. He says that we are the highest taxed in the country, certainly. I should like to read some comments on taxes, and these taxes include personal income tax, all tax credits, all surtaxes, sales tax, medicare premiums, and property improvement grants.

With an income of \$5,000, Mr. Speaker, a single Saskatchewan resident after taxes, retains \$4,845. In Ontario, Conservative Ontario, he retains \$4,551. In other words, the poor people in Ontario, the \$5,000 earner, is \$294 poorer than he is in Saskatchewan. Let's jump a little higher. In the \$7,500 income bracket, what's left for the Saskatchewan person after taxes? \$6,596. In Conservative Ontario, \$6,288. The poor person, again, in Ontario is down \$306 when compared to Saskatchewan. The same thing can be said for the \$10,000 bracket. He is down \$317 in Conservative Ontario as compared to Saskatchewan. But let's do a little jump, Mr. Speaker. Let's jump to the \$50,000 bracket. That's when it becomes interesting. The \$50,000 earner in Saskatchewan retains \$27,621. In Ontario, in Conservative Ontario, that is all the concern shown for the poor people that the Hon. Member for Nipawin talks about, in Conservative Ontario they retain \$28,814. \$707 more than they retain in Saskatchewan. It climbs again for someone who earns \$100,000. In Saskatchewan they retain \$42,093; in Conservative Ontario, good old Conservative Ontario, they retain \$46,039. In other words they retain \$3,946 more than they would in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I rest my case as to who gets taxed, the rich or the poor, under the Conservatives.

Judging from the medicare charges imposed by monopoly enterprise, Conservative and Liberal Governments in Alberta, Ontario and formerly in Quebec, it is obvious that both old line parties firmly believe in the user pay policy so ably espoused by an Hon. Member for Saskatoon in Ottawa whose name I won't mention, but who is their friend in Ottawa.

In Conservative and Liberal provinces, the user of the medical services must pay dearly to get his medical insurance card. When they need prescription drugs, or crutches, or wheelchairs, or dental services for their children, they pay again.

So if you are a user, or a possible user of a health delivery system in Saskatchewan, remember that it is a Liberal and Conservative philosophy together that says that the user shall pay.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — Whether it is in transporting our grain, or delivering our health system, the user shall pay and pay and pay and pay.

But I look through the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to see that our Government is still forging ahead, we are not content to sit idly by with the progress that we have made. Plans are being set in motion for a preventive program in the Department of Social Services.

I see the expansion of the Child Protection Program and I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker.

Turning to the field of education, I see our Government once again providing for freedom of action to local authorities. Students, school boards and teachers are free from the crippling pupil/teacher ratios that caused over-crowded classrooms under the Liberal administration in Saskatchewan. School boards are now free to levy extra taxes if they see the need. Formerly, they were not allowed under the old Liberal Government. And now with the presentation of the White Paper on school law that will be coming, school boards, parents and teachers will be free to influence the development of the laws they must work under. Adults, all over Saskatchewan are able to attend community colleges to take the classes of their choice. Our community college system is one of the most popular programs that our Government has ever brought in.

Classes are where the people are, Mr. Speaker. In existing buildings in their cities, towns and villages. Compare our community college system to that of Conservative Alberta, where their community college students must travel long distances to go to classes that are held in institutions and that are more of a technical variety or university variety. Little regard is given to classes that the local people want. And the Hon. Member for Nipawin can sit with his back turned and talk and will not listen to the greater flexibility that is given to the people of Saskatchewan.

But it is in the field of resource management where I have the greatest pride in the Blakeney Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — Whether it is managing our oil, our potash or other resources, this NDP Government has got a fair return for the use of the resources that belong to the people of this province. They have courageously stood up to the multinational corporations.

Mr. Mostoway: — And Tories and Liberals.

Mr. Nelson: — And Tories and Liberals. When the potash mining cartels defied the duly elected government of this province that government acted. The people of this province now own one of those potash mines and they'll soon own over 50 per cent of the potash production capacity of this province. Mr. Speaker, in defiance of those powerful companies who had the money to buy up hours and hours of radio and television time to explain their case; in defiance of those powerful companies who set themselves above the law and who are so staunchly defended by Conservatives

and Liberals opposite, the Blakeney Government acted to ensure that the people of this province would control their own resources. Mr. Speaker, that took guts.

I noted today, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Nipawin came down solidly on behalf of those potash companies. He attacked this Government for revamping the tax legislation to keep the tax money collected from those corporations in Saskatchewan. In effect he was saying to the people of this province, let those large corporations keep that tax money, let the people of this province pay and pay and pay.

Again let us compare the actions of NDP governments with the actions of the Alberta Conservatives.

The T. C. Douglas government in Saskatchewan in the 1950s moved to prohibit the export of our natural gas, we needed it for ourselves. The NDP government of British Columbia cut back on its sales of natural gas to the United States and they increased the prices.

Senator Mansfield, the retiring majority House leader in the United States Senate recently said that his country really didn't need Canadian natural gas. They have reserves of their own. Senator Mansfield said that the United States is rapidly using up the easily accessible cheap sources of Canadian gas. Once that Alberta gas is gone then we Canadians must turn to expensive natural gas in northern Canada.

And what are the Alberta Conservatives doing about the export of natural gas to the United States? They are doing the same thing as the federal Liberals, nothing. The gas continues to flow south in huge quantities.

The Alberta Conservatives had a motto for their Ontario counterparts, let the so-and-so's freeze in the dark. It looks as if we can freeze in the dark too. If the Alberta gas, going to the United States, were shut off soon, Canada could have enough gas to last until the year 2000. Time enough to develop other energy sources that would be safe and reliable. But as I said before it looks as if Canadians can freeze in the dark for all the Alberta Conservatives care. Just as long as their corporate friends south of the border are well looked after.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I should like to turn to the results of the Quebec election just for a few moments.

One of the results of that election was to have a resolution brought onto the Order Paper of this House. A resolution by the Leader of the Opposition that is a blatant attempt to isolate and interfere with a free election in another Canadian province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — The typical reaction of a bitter and degenerate political party that has just lost an election. Mr. Speaker, that resolution is a disgrace to free people everywhere and it should be withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker, there are divisions and divisive forces at work in Canada, but the divisions within this country rest squarely on the shoulders of both old line political parties.

Throughout the history of our country those two parties have ruled Canada and have done little, if anything, to bring harmony between the two major language groups in Canada, the English and the French.

In Switzerland, there are four official languages and we never hear of language problems there. Why are there problems here? Because the two old political parties have used Quebec people as pawns in an attempt to retain or regain power. And now the chickens have come home to roost.

No one will deny the possibility of a break-up of our nation. We may prevent that by offering a hand of friendship, not a mailed fist that would isolate them until they prove they are good little boys.

M. L'Orateur je veux dire quelques mots en Français à nos compatriotes dans la Province de Québec.

Je veux offrir à M. Levesque et son nouveau gouvernement nos sincères félicitations. Dans l'Avenir nous, dans la Province de Saskatchewan, nous comptons avoir beaucoup de réunions où nous pouvons discuter beaucoup de problèmes communes. Nous espérons que nous pouvons travailler ensemble pour faire un Canada fort et uni. Nous espérons que nous pouvons travailler ensemble pour apporter la vraie justice aux habitants de nos deux provinces et à tout le Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — In closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say once again, that I am proud to be a part of the government that manages a good and diligent civil service to bring needed services to our people of Saskatchewan at prices that we can all afford.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Nelson: — I am pleased that we don't have to support the bad mismanagement of hotels and gasoline stations. I am pleased that we are not bothered about changing lanes. I am pleased that we are not bothered about managing merchants or ranches in Thunder Creek for that matter. I am proud that our Government is forging ahead with the good management of our resources and so bringing freedom to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I shall oppose the amendments and I shall support the main motion with pride and pleasure.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. W.E. Smishek (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, let me join with other of my colleagues in extending my personal congratulations to the Hon. Member for Bengough-Milestone and to the Hon. Member for Regina Rosemont for a very creditable and commendable job they did in moving and seconding the Address-In-Reply. They are a credit to their constituencies, they are a credit to our party and to our caucus, we are proud of these two young men. They have done a very able and commendable job in moving the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on behalf of the voters of Regina North East and express my appreciation to the burgesses of Regina for their approval of two bylaws permitting the construction of two new high schools in Regina North both of which are located within the boundaries of the constituency I represent.

This success is the result of many years' hard work by the Regina North East Citizens' Committee, who developed briefs, met on numerous occasions with elected representatives, attended meetings and generally kept up the pressure to demonstrate the need for that growing part of the city's need for a high school.

On May 14, of this year, my colleague, the Minister of Education, announced the approval of the Department of Education for two new high schools, a public and a separate school in Regina North East.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have been associated with the citizens of Regina North East and to have provided my assistance in their effort.

With the approval of the bylaws, the school boards have been given the green light to proceed with the planning and construction of a 700 student capacity public and 500 student separate high school in Regina North East.

Another announcement that has brought great pleasure to the citizens of Regina, for that matter, the citizens of southern Saskatchewan, has been the Government's decision to go ahead with the regeneration of the Regina General and Pasqua hospitals. This will be a ten year program involving major new construction and renovation of existing facilities at an estimated cost of \$66 million. This project follows the recommendations of the Dr. Clarkson report, commissioned while I was Minister of Health, so I have great personal pleasure in seeing the benefits that this regeneration will bring the citizens of Regina and southern Saskatchewan.

An architect has been selected to complete the detailed design and it is hoped that initial construction may start in September of 1977.

Mr. Speaker, this multimillion dollar project of regenerating these two old hospitals in Regina is only two of many projects the NDP Government initiated, planned and completed. Other projects which come to mind readily, a \$30 million expansion of the program of the University Hospital in Saskatoon with construction well ahead of schedule. Two major hospital facilities in North Battleford costing over \$9 million. Two Moose Jaw hospitals were rebuilt, besides four others each in Swift Current, Weyburn, Estevan, and Melfort. New hospitals have been built in Lestock, Eston, Climax and Lampman, and a dozen of smaller reconstruction hospital projects took place during our administration and new health and social centres have been developed in hospitals where the Liberals had closed hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, tens of millions of dollars have been spent and committed to provide better hospital facilities for the citizens of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, before getting into the main topic of my remarks, I want to comment briefly on some of the events that have taken place since this Assembly met last.

One of the major events is the impending retirement of the Member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake, as Leader of the Opposition. We are going to miss his wit and his flamboyant speaking style. I think that we all respect him even though we seldom agree with him, that's not really surprising because at times he tells me he can't even agree with himself.

I am sure that all Members of the House will join with me in wishing him well in his future.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, we are all interested in the forthcoming leadership convention of the Saskatchewan Liberals. It will be interesting to watch the performance in this Session of those two declared candidates for that position. I almost said, 'leadership hopefuls' but I realize how difficult it must be for any potential leader of the Liberals to remain hopeful, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, I understand that this convention will be unique among leadership conventions - the loser gets to be the leader. Perhaps that is why merchants talk about 'loss-leaders'. In any event I should like to extend my personal condolences to my fellow MLAs from Regina who have demonstrated tremendous courage by not withdrawing from the race. Indeed I have heard that the Member for Regina Lakeview has a new theme song 'Old Lang Syne'. His colleague from Regina Wascana says he will not seek re-election in his present constituency. Mr. Speaker, could it be that he is getting a message from his constituents? First of all he was going to move to Regina North but he found that by handing out carnations on the eve of elections just wouldn't work in Regina North, so he changed his mind. He looked further north, to Saskatoon, who knows, he said he was going to move to Saskatoon, but who knows he may even end up in Prince Albert-Duck Lake. And we all know what a frustrating experience that will be for the Liberals. Heaven help the taxpayers if he should ever become a Cabinet Minister. I am not sure the province could afford all that executive jet travel.

During the past few months, the Conservative Party in Saskatchewan suffered a severe blow, the Member for Qu'Appelle defected from the Liberals. The Member for Nipawin is looking unusually tired and particularly this afternoon. He indeed did look tired and weary but I am not really surprised, Mr. Speaker. Trying to cope with a caucus that now includes the Member for Rosthern (Mr. Katzman): and the Member for Qu'Appelle must be a new version of the Russian roulette. Meanwhile the Member for Nipawin would do well to remember the old proverb, "It's a long lane that has no turning".

Mr. Speaker, I will move from these enjoyable diversions to comment on the economic situation of this province. The year 1976 was a good year in Saskatchewan. The gross provincial product, which is the sum of all goods and services produced in the province, is forecast to reach \$6.9 billion. This is a growth rate of 13.4 per cent.

Members of the Legislature may be interested in some of the figures which contributed to this growth.

Mineral production in 1976, for example is expected to increase by eight and one half per cent over 1975. Total investment in 1975 was 30 per cent higher than it was in 1974 and is expected to increase nearly 20 per cent over 1975. That is a 50 per cent increase in two years, unmatched by any other province in the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, construction has increased by 30 per cent in 1975 over 1974 and we are presently estimating that 1976 value of construction will be 25 per cent over the previous year. This is a particularly impressive record of 55 per cent increase in a period of two years. Mr. Speaker, it is this record of expanding economic growth since the New Democratic Government took office together with good management of our finances in the province that made it possible for Saskatchewan to get a double "A" credit rating from the two leading American rating agencies.

Mr. Speaker, that is why Saskatchewan is able to borrow for capital purposes at a preferred rate. This year for the first time Saskatchewan entered the Euro-Bond market. We were able to borrow \$75 million at an effective rate of 8.6 per cent. On November 16, we borrowed \$125 million in the United States public market for the first time in 30 years, at an interest rate of 8.7 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, yet the uninformed, the Leader of the Conservative Party says that there is a deterioration in the investment climate in Saskatchewan. Let me repeat, investment up by 30 per cent in 1975. In 1976 up by another 20 per cent. The value of construction up by 30 per cent, up again by 25 per cent in 1976. Credit rating moved from a single "A" to a double "A", as good or better than even the richest provinces in Canada. The ability to borrow at preferred interest rates. Mr. Speaker, if this is deterioration, let's have more of it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, the more I witness the performance of the Leader of the Conservative Party, the more he gets exposed, the more one wonders who or what is deteriorating. To be kind, Mr. Speaker, he indeed has a strange concept of government, finance, accounting, business and management. A concept that has been foreign to this House, and I think as foreign to any other provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, let me also rebut a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition as he was giving us his swan song on Tuesday. He got so carried away with his verbosity, truth was the last thing that worried him. During his dissertation he made this statement, let me quote, "They (meaning the Government): mortgaged our future to a degree unheard of in any province in Canada." I ask you to check the Hansard report.

Mr. Speaker, I have news for him. Saskatchewan has the lowest gross provincial direct and guaranteed debt per capita of any province in the Dominion of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, let me give you the figures. These are figures that are published for 1975, the latest available figures. Saskatchewan the lowest per capita debt of \$1,066 per person; Alberta second lowest \$1,421; Prince Edward Island \$1,427; Quebec \$1,429; Ontario \$1,631; British Columbia \$1,740; Nova Scotia \$1,937; New Brunswick \$1,993; Manitoba \$2,343; Newfoundland \$3,264, three times the per capita debt of Saskatchewan.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, these are the latest figures available for 1975. We have borrowed some money in the last few months, but so have all the other provinces, many have borrowed much more than we have. Yes, even in relation to their population, there is no reason to believe that even with the current borrowing that our position has changed of still having the lowest per capita debt of any province in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Further proof of the improvement of our economy has been an increase in the population to an estimate of 940,000 by the end of the year and the creation of 12,000 additional jobs. Our unemployment rate was only 2.9 per cent in October, the lowest in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — It is a record which makes us proud.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we must note that farm cash receipts are expected to fall by about 12 per cent from the 1975 levels to an estimated \$2.2 billion in 1976. This is as a result of lower final payments for the 1974-75 crop pools and of lower current grain prices.

We expect mineral production in this coming year, to be higher than it was this year, to a level of between 15 and 19 per cent over 1976.

I mention all these facts, Mr. Speaker, because I want to put our current economic situation in perspective. We recognize that there will probably be a reduction in the province's rate of growth next year, as the effects of the reduced farm income begin to spread through the economy. As a result it is likely that tax revenue will grow much less rapidly than it has in the past few years.

But I want to remind Members of this House, Mr. Speaker, that we are slowing down from an exceptionally high level. The diversity of our economy, however, will enable us to remain healthy and the policies of this Government will ensure that any slowdown is kept to reasonable proportion.

The boom may be over, at least temporarily, but we are a long, long way from the dark days of the late 1960s and 1970. It was another party which was in charge of the economy in the late 1960s and 1970. Mr. Speaker, the same party which is today creating added difficulties for all the provinces including the Province of Saskatchewan, that is at the federal level. I refer of course to the broken promises of the Federal Government in the area of cost sharing arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, the Member for Nipawin claimed that Saskatchewan people are the highest taxed in the country. Mr. Speaker, that is absolute nonsense, the kind of nonsense that the Hon. Member has been inflicting on this Assembly ever since he came to this House. His motto seems to be: My mind is made up, don't confuse me with the facts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am going to give him some facts, if they confuse him, I suspect that no one will notice any difference anyway. Let's look at our taxes compared to other provinces. Our sales tax at five per cent is the lowest in Canada, if you exclude Alberta which has no sales tax at all. Our gasoline tax at 15 cents per gallon is the second lowest, second only to Alberta. Our diesel at 21 cents per gallon is the third lowest. Our automobile insurance rates are still the lowest in Canada. Saskatchewan residents do not pay any medical and hospital premiums; compare this to the family premium of \$153.60 in Alberta, or \$225 in British Columbia or \$384 in Ontario.

Our corporation income tax is the fourth lowest in Canada and our personal income tax is the most progressive of any province in Canada. Low income earners in this province pay the lowest provincial income tax in this country. And what is more important, their after-tax income is significantly higher than for individuals in similar income brackets in any other province.

For example, a single taxpayer in Saskatchewan with an income of \$10,000 has \$8,299 after paying all the taxes, compared to the individual in Ontario, who will only have \$7,982. Or take a taxpayer of \$15,000, if he has a wife and two children, his after-tax income is \$12,448, compare that to rich Tory Ontario, that person will have a net of \$11,966.

Mr. Speaker, these are the facts. Not that Saskatchewan people are the most highly taxed in Canada, as the Member for Nipawin tried to suggest, rather that Saskatchewan has a sound economic climate, a fair and equitable system of taxation and social programs that are the envy of the people in every province in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Nipawin speaking this afternoon, also complained that in our White Paper on the economic review, that we don't provide him with a breakdown between the public and private investment. You know, Mr. Speaker, last year the Leader of the Conservative Party complained that he wasn't getting money for research. We gave him the money for research, he gets all the information. He gets the Estimates, where all the capital expenditures for the province are included, he gets all the reports for the Crown corporations, he has the staff, we have provided him with the money. But it seems he either doesn't know how to get at the facts or is too lazy to do his own bit of work, Mr. Speaker.

Let me help him. He said that in Saskatchewan the only reason that there is any kind of investment is because of large public investments, and that public investment is greater than the private investment. Well, Mr. Speaker, his Members might take some notes. In 1974, public investment in the public sector and that includes provincial, federal and municipal investment, that's the total public sector presumably that's what he wants, was \$501.3 million. In 1975, and this is the preliminary estimate, \$721.3 and the estimate for this year is \$904.5. The private investment for that same period in 1974 was \$1.185

billion, in 1975 \$1,467 billion, the estimate for this year is \$1,642 billion. Again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Conservative Party is totally wrong, as usual.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to discuss the current tax and fiscal negotiations with the Federal Government. Mr. Speaker, when we entered into the cost sharing agreements with the Federal Government in 1972, we were led to believe that they would form the basis of federal-provincial relations for some time to come. Now the Federal Government is backing down. They have announced their desire to end the current cost sharing arrangements for hospital insurance, medical care and post-secondary education. They want to replace these programs with cash grants tied to the gross national product and with a transfer of some tax points. I want to take a few minutes to discuss these proposals, Mr. Speaker, because their implications for Saskatchewan and for Canada are very serious.

We in Saskatchewan have always believed that the current cost sharing programs have been of immense benefit to the whole of the country. In particular, they have made it possible for the poorer provinces to meet national standards in their social programs. In general a Canadian living in the poorer province now has the same access to medical care facilities as he would have if he lived in the rich province of Ontario. This common national standard has become an important unifying force throughout the country, Mr. Speaker. The Federal Government is however, now complaining that these arrangements have become an uncontrollable drain on the federal treasury and the federal contributions have been growing too quickly. So they want to end these programs which have been among the most important instruments of social justice ever introduced in this country. Their solution is abolition, rather than seeking ways of working with the provinces to control costs, rather than trying to correct specific flaws in the cost sharing programs, rather than assuming some of the blame for the inflation problems they themselves have helped to create.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three years the Federal Government in a series of arbitrary moves has set the stage for complete withdrawal from the financing of hospital insurance, of medical care and post-secondary education. We have repeatedly stated our opposition to this form of federal transfer. The growth in value of the grant and tax room would certainly be less than the growth and the cost of services which the provinces would have to maintain, so provincial taxpayers would be forced to bear even an ever-increasing share of the financial burden. We should remember too that when the Federal Government offers tax points to the provinces, equalized to the national average, we are not getting any kind of a bargain, Mr. Speaker. One point of the personal income tax in Ontario is worth about 20 per cent more per capita than it is in the provinces which are equalized to the national average. Under this system the richer provinces will be able to afford higher levels of services and the poorer provinces will face increasing taxes or lowering the standards, or both, Mr. Speaker. If any program is designed to increase regional injustices, this is it, Mr. Speaker.

In the event that all Members may not be aware, let me tell you that the basis of the federal-provincial financial arrangements is the Fiscal Arrangements Act, a federal Act which is negotiated every five years. The current Act expires on March 31, 1977. As part of the negotiations on cost sharing, the provinces have also been negotiating other aspects of the

provincial financing. These include the equalization formula, the revenue guarantee and other areas, such as revenue stabilization and a tax collection agreement. I must say that it is disconcerting to try negotiating with the Federal Government when they start their negotiations by announcing that they intend to give the provinces \$900 million less than they were receiving up until now. This will certainly be the price we pay for the Federal Government's refusal to honor its commitments on the revenue guarantee as a result of these so-called federal tax reforms in 1972.

Those who were in this Legislature may recall that in 1972 the provincial tax rate was converted from 34 points to 37 points, a figure which was supposed to yield as much revenue as the old 34 point rate before the tax reform. None of the provinces believed that this conversion would work. The Federal Government held a contrary view. In order to get the provinces to accept this rationale they agreed to provide a revenue guarantee which would guarantee to the provinces that the provincial income and tax revenues would grow as quickly under the new system as it did under the old. History has proven that the Federal Government was grossly incorrect. The revenue guarantee now entitled the provinces to \$900 million. Saskatchewan's share is estimated for this year at about \$38 million. Some of this is the result of tax changes introduced more recently, but most of it relates to the fundamental proposition that the provinces stated at the time of tax reform.

The Federal Government now says that the revenue guarantee was for five years only, Mr. Speaker, and that at the end of the five year period the provinces should adjust their tax rate to make up for the difference. Mr. Speaker, that was not the promise that was made to us. In May of 1973, the Hon. John Turner, the Minister of Finance at that time, said to the provincial ministers, and I quote from the record in the federal Hansard:

There is a particularly difficult problem of adjustment for all provinces when the guarantee comes to an end in 1976 . . . In due course, I would want to consult with you with some concrete proposals.

Those were the words of the Hon. John Turner, the Minister of Finance at that time. That sounds to me like a commitment, that sounds to me that Mr. Turner on behalf of the Government at the time made a commitment to the provinces of this country. Instead of concrete proposals by the Federal Government, we have been told to solve our own problems, to find our own tax money.

To the heavily-burdened Canadian taxpayer, the Federal Government has used the words of Marie Antoinette: "Let them eat cake". We argue that the Federal Government should make an offsetting tax reduction. This is necessary because the problem relates to the sharing of income tax given to the provinces and cannot be solved merely by making the pie larger at the expense of the taxpayer. We see no reason why the Canadian taxpayer should face a net tax increase because of a refusal by the Federal Government to honor its commitments.

I should say that Saskatchewan is not alone in this stand, this is the collective position of every province in this country. Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, we face an immediate fiscal problem. Our revenue entitlement for the 1977 tax year alone will drop by \$38 million, as I said. This is the equivalent to 5.5 points of personal income tax for Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, it is most

likely that our provincial income tax rate will have to be put up to offset this revenue loss unless Ottawa alters its position.

Mr. Speaker, when I go to Ottawa in December on the 6th and 7th, I will argue with all the energy and ability I can muster that the Federal Government should make an offsetting tax reduction. If the Federal Government holds on to its \$900 million windfall, as they say that they will, then the Federal Liberal Government will have a lot of explaining to do to the Canadian people. Being mugged in a back alley at least gives one a chance to fight back. Being robbed by the Federal Government is a much more depressing experience.

An Hon. Member: — Quit passing the buck.

Mr. Smishek: — I'm not passing the buck, my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to another area in which our relations with the Federal Government have not been entirely happy. I refer, of course, to our attempts to co-operate with the federal anti-inflation program.

We all remember, Mr. Speaker, the Thanksgiving turkey we received from the Prime Minister a year ago last October. We were given compulsory wage and price controls, in a form which we and millions of Canadians found highly unsatisfactory. We said that if the program was to succeed, the public must be able to see its success, Mr. Speaker. For this to happen, the public must clearly see that not only wages, but prices are equally stringently controlled. We urged the Federal Government to adopt a system of mandatory prior approval for price increases in such key commodities as steel, fertilizer and cement and other such key items, instead of possibly rolling back a price increase after the fact, long after the public has begun to pay the increased prices. We said the Anti-inflation Board would have to announce any intended price increase in advance and give its approval or rejection. This method of controlling prices would be both effective and visible, but perhaps because it would be effective and visible, the Federal Government has rejected it.

We urged the Federal Government to impose an excess profits tax on corporations. Now, however, the Federal Government has moved in precisely the opposite direction. The cost pass-through rule for price increases on individual commodities has been dropped, and so have the controls on profit margins for individual product lines. Instead, firms will be subject only to controls on their overall profit margins. Mr. Speaker, all sorts of individual increases can be hidden in an overall profit margin. It doesn't even take much business skill to fiddle with an overall profit margin so that it looks small. In our view these changes have virtually abolished the already weak price control program.

We also urged the Federal Government to strengthen their controls on the incomes of professionals, which at present are ridiculously weak. We have argued, without success, for a professional income surtax. Members of this House will recall that in my budget speech last March, because of the lack of federal response, I announced that Saskatchewan would introduce its own surtax on high income earners.

We urged that wages of low income earners up to \$10,000 a year not be subject to controls, Ottawa said, "NO".

For all of these reasons, the credibility of the federal Anti-inflation Program has reached the vanishing point. In particular, the great majority of Canadians remain convinced that nothing effective has been done to control prices. We, in Saskatchewan, have been and continue to be highly critical of the federal Anti-inflation Program. Yet we have made every effort to co-operate, and to ensure that our actions would contribute to the program's success. We established a Rent Control Program. We have made a great effort to restrain government spending, and the Estimates which I will place before the House in February or March will provide further evidence of this. We established the Saskatchewan Public Sector Price and Compensation Board.

We decided to set up our own board because we thought it would be more sensitive to the needs of the Saskatchewan economy. We have been gratified by the co-operation that all aspects of the public sector in Saskatchewan have shown. When we set up our own board we gave it the power to differ from the federal guidelines in several important respects. The most important is the exception that we made was that wage offers that were then announced and were on the table would not be subject to controls and would be allowed to stand.

In addition, we directed the board to consider prairie-wide comparisons where the board thought that these comparisons were valid. In ruling on some 57,000 public sector employees, the board has made roll-backs affecting only about 2,600. It may not be widely known, Mr. Speaker, to Members of the House or to Canadians generally, but Saskatchewan has the most effective program for controlling public sector prices, fees and charges of all senior governments in Canada, including the Federal Government.

Not only does our board review the pricing policy of Crown corporations, as the federal Anti-inflation Board does with Crown corporations under its jurisdiction, but Saskatchewan also reviews all fees and charges in the public sector by both provincial and local governments. We control such items as park entry fees, nursing home rates and municipal water and sewer rates and so on. It is the most effective price control program in the public sector area in the country and this is acknowledged by the federal anti-inflation people. Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada not to have signed an anti-inflation agreement with the Government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we have important disagreements and in addition to that we have not signed an agreement with the Federal Government but our program is effective without signing an agreement with the Government of Canada. When the other provincial governments have had the opportunity as I see it now to end their arrangements at the end of March with the federal Anti-inflation Board, I expect that many will choose to look at Saskatchewan to set up their own boards, that is if the program continues at all. If we object so strongly to the federal program, Members of the House may wonder why we are co-operating at all. Basically, we would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to argue that the provincial public sector should be free of controls while those controls continue in the private sector and in the federal public sector.

Naturally, our board's tenure is tied to the duration of the federal program, and will last only as long as the federal program lasts. If it is found necessary to do away with our

board earlier than the Government will consider it.

In the months ahead, Members of this House can be assured that we will continue to press for those changes in the federal Anti-inflation Program which will make it more effective in controlling prices and thereby more convincing to the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of the province, I want to express our appreciation to Judge Ernest Boychuk, Chairman of the board, and to Messrs. Everett Wood and Jim Maher, for first, accepting this onerous responsibility and for the remarkably good job they are doing for the people of Saskatchewan.

The board has until now dealt with 914 wage and compensation cases up to November 11, 1976. They have dealt with hundreds of cases dealing with fees and charges. Generally speaking the board is able to make rulings on cases referred to it within three weeks. With the federal board you are lucky if you get a ruling within three months. The board has a small staff of seven, five of whom were seconded from various departments and agencies. I might advise the House, while they are seconded from other departments those other departments where they were from did not fill those positions.

I wish to acknowledge our appreciation for the good work these employees are doing. In many ways this is a thankless job. It takes a special kind of person to assume this kind of a responsibility. I am grateful that we, as citizens of Saskatchewan, are fortunate to have in our midst, such people. Again, to the three board members and the staff, thank you for your dedicated service.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I am particularly amused by the new-found Liberal conscience and their concern about health services. Mr. Speaker, I wonder where and when the conscience of the Liberals started to bother them. Certainly it did not bother them at all with respect to health services during the years 1964 to 1971. Up until 1964 under the CCF Government, we had in this province the reputation of being the leader in the health field. But when the Liberals took office, the last thing they considered was expanding or improving the health services of this province despite the promises that they had made.

Mr. Speaker, remember the Liberal promise of 1964. They said if they were elected that they would introduce a comprehensive drug plan. Remember that promise. Well we waited in 1964 and 1965 and through to 1968, then they called an election and there was no drug plan. But they had a new election promise. They said that if they were re-elected that they would hold a plebiscite and we waited for three years and there was no plebiscite. Despite their promises before the election and statements when in office that a publicly financed drug plan was a good thing, there was no action for seven years. For seven long years the Liberals did nothing but they said it was a good thing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when the New Democrats took office a publicly financed drug plan was introduced within four years. We introduced it in 1975. But because, Mr. Speaker, the New

Democrats introduced it, the Liberals are saying that it is a bad thing, that a drug plan is a bad thing. In fact, what are the Liberals saying? Well, I listened this afternoon to the Hon. Member for Saskatoon-Eastview (Mr. Penner): and what did he say, and I quote him:

That the drug plan is a waste of money.

That's what he said. Mr. Speaker, that's what the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Eastview said. He said that the drug plan was a waste of money. Well, I invite him to ask the people of Saskatchewan. I ask him to ask the people who were spending \$100 and \$200 a month on drugs and now have to pay only \$4 or \$5.

Mr. Speaker, on the second day when this House opened, the aspiring leader for the Liberal Party, the Member for Lakeview (Mr. Malone): described programs such as Pharmacare, SAIL, the Hearing Aid Plan, as "political gimmicks are little programs." That was his description. That was the Hon. Member for Regina Lakeview, the aspiring leader of the party.

The people of Saskatchewan can be assured that if Mr. Malone ever had the fortune to become the Premier of Saskatchewan Pharmacare will go, SAIL will go, the Hearing Aid Plan will go. Mr. Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party and in this Government believe in the comprehensive publicly financed health services programs. A service that is available to all people without financial deterrents and a service that is accessible to all people regardless of age, sex or economic means. That is our philosophy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, when we were elected in 1971 we proceeded to again re-establish Saskatchewan as the leader in the health field. As a first step, we removed the Liberal hospital and medicare deterrent fees. Remember those? And the people approved. We removed the charges on the estates of the mentally ill that were imposed by the Liberals and the people approved. We first removed the medical and hospital premiums from those 65 years of age and over, and the people approved.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — We then removed the premiums from all the citizens and the citizens agreed and approved.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, we stopped the closure of small hospitals. Remember those Liberal days of 1968 and 1969. Small hospitals fell like dominoes. People in rural communities didn't know from one day to another whether their hospitals would remain open. They closed 11 hospitals in a row. Eleven hospitals fell in a row; Prelate, Maryfield, Neudorf, Quill Lake, Leroy, Willowbunch, Qu'Appelle, Hodgeville, Mossbank, Lashburn, Frontier. All of them, one after the other. Mr. Speaker, fortunately there was an election, because there were others scheduled for closure.

Mr. Speaker, when New Democrats took office that was stopped.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Not only did we stop the closure of small hospitals, but those hospitals in most cases that were closed, we converted into health and social centres.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to add new programs. We are pleased to have introduced the Dental Care Plan for children. We are pleased to have introduced the Saskatchewan Aid to Independent Living to help the less fortunate to be able to have limbs and to be able to move around the walk again in many cases. We were pleased to introduce the Hearing Aid Plan. The Hon. Member for Lakeview (Mr. Malone): says that these are gimmicky plans. Yes, we are proud to have again introduced the first universal Prescription Drug Plan in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — I am certain as I am standing here, Mr. Speaker, that the day will come, not too long from now, that other provinces will follow the Saskatchewan lead.

We are pleased to have introduced the Aware Program and to have insured chiropractic and osteopathic care. We were pleased to have abolished the two mill special levy that was imposed by the Liberals on the small hospitals. Not only were they closing them but on those small hospitals, in order to remain open, the Liberals were imposing a special tax.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to make other significant improvements in the health field.

Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about hospitals. We have been hearing a good deal. Well, Mr. Speaker, when we took office in 1971, our hospital system was in a shambles. Hospital employees were starved. No group of people in Saskatchewan were lower paid than the hospital employees. Morale of the hospital employees and the nurses and administration people was at an extremely low ebb. We proceeded to change this, Mr. Speaker.

With the co-operation of hospital employees and their unions and with the co-operation of the hospital boards and the hospital association, a new system of collective bargaining was established for hospital employees and nurses.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of what we have done for this group of dedicated people who serve the less fortunate, the sick of our province. Wages for hospital employees since we took office, have gone up from 90 to 150 per cent. The average is more than 125 per cent. Nurses' wages have gone up by more than 100 per cent, on the average.

Oh, there have been some tensions at times, Mr. Speaker, at the bargaining table, from time to time there were differences. But I am glad to say that the people who look after the sick of this province, are today getting a decent standard of living and wages which are comparable to their fellow workers in our health field from the east to the west of us.

Mr. Speaker, what happened to the budget of the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Hon. Members to listen. I invite them to take a look at the public accounts for the fiscal year 1970-71. The total expenditure for hospital care, spent by the Provincial Government of that time, the Liberal Government was \$83,739,687. And what is the budget of SHSP for this year? The estimates that I have tabled, \$193 million. And the Liberals say that this is a cutback. From \$83 million in a period of six years to \$193.

Mr. Speaker, when we prepared our budget last year, collective bargaining for hospital employees was still in progress, including collective bargaining for the nurses. It was difficult to determine precisely what would be the final result of collective bargaining, but we had provided \$39 million more than in the previous year. We thought that this would be enough. I would like to remind the Hon. Members that wages represent close to 80 per cent of operating costs of the hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell this House that the \$193 million provided in last year's budget will not meet the costs of operating the hospitals. In a more recent review of hospital costs, it appears that additional funds will be required. Treasury Board has made a careful review and it appears that an additional \$14 million will be required to finance our hospitals. That means that we will be spending in the order of \$207 million in the current year for hospital care.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will provide that money without deterrent fees, without closing hospitals and without imposing premiums on the people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I should like the Hon. Members to take note. Under the Liberal administration six years ago, \$83.7 million was provided, under the NDP in the current fiscal year, \$207 million will be provided. That's an increase of 247 per cent, for hospital care for the operation, excluding the capital costs.

Mr. Speaker, we make no apologies for providing these additional funds, but we do have a responsibility to the total population to ensure that our hospitals are operating in the most efficient and economic manner.

A few hospital beds were closed because studies by the Department, by the hospital boards and by the Medical Association revealed that in certain instances there was undue and unnecessary use of hospital beds. We have the highest number of beds per thousand population in Canada in the province.

Our utilization rate is between 35 and 40 per cent greater than in the rest of Canada. I am not convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan are more often ill than people in the rest of Canada.

The economies that we are trying to implement are intended to ensure the most efficient use of our hospitals. Whether it be hospital care, Mr. Speaker, psychiatric care, medical care, Pharmacare or Dental care, Saskatchewan is the leader in Canada and in North America for having the most efficient health system in the North American sphere.

And which is accessible to all the people without economic deterrents.

Mr. Speaker, let me say a word about the Conservatives trying to get on the health service bad wagon. Conservatives like to mimic. But I hope that the Hon. Leader of the Conservative Party is not going to imitate the people he gets his directions from, people like Dalton Camp, who was an ardent supporter of deterrent fees. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Leader of the Conservative Party doesn't imitate his Federal Leader, Joe Clarke, who was saying that the only way to restrain health costs is by imposing charges on the users.

Mr. Speaker, we in this party, we in this Government, reject that concept.

All I say to the people of Saskatchewan, is be aware of the Conservative health policy, if they have one. It is worse than a swine flu.

Mr. Speaker, I will oppose the amendment, I will support the Motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. G.H. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview): — Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to rise and participate in this Throne Speech debate and I must confess I hardly know where to begin. I was interested in some of the remarks made by the Minister of Finance. He talked about the \$30 million that's gone to University Hospital and tried to allude to the fact that that was doing something related to hospital beds and so on, and, of course anybody who knows anything about University Hospital is aware of the fact that that's a teaching institution and the \$30 million spent there won't do anything with regard to hospital beds.

I was interested in his sense of humor. I thought that it had about as much credibility as the statement he made that the past year has been a good year, when I think two Members pounded the desk.

I must say that when the Attorney General came back in I've always wondered who this 'Ralph' is that gets up and down at football games in Calgary and then came here last week and jumped up and down at Taylor Field and I've come to the conclusion that it must be the Attorney General who has to do something in his free time to get rid of the frustrations of being where he is sitting and does it in that way. An excellent performance and I hope that he intends to be in Toronto this coming Sunday.

I was interested in the remarks as well, before I get into what I have prepared, Mr. Speaker, of the Member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver): the Leader of the Conservative Party. I thought that it took him a while, but he did learn, that it's not really wrong to prepare a speech and then to read it. I have to say that I agree with the Member for Quill Lakes (Mr. Koskie): that despite the fact that it was about an hour longer than last year, that it didn't have much more in it than a year ago.

I want to remark about this business of questions. I was a bit surprised while I was out of the House yesterday, I took the

opportunity to take a look at Hansard and I noted that when the Premier sat down yesterday, the Leader of the Conservative Party asked whether or not he might address a question to the Premier, and, of course, the Premier said, yes and so he did. I was rather surprised that a person who espouses this business of open government and so on, today, would then refuse when asked a question by the Attorney General to respond to that question. It really doesn't do much in my mind, Mr. Speaker, to add any kind of credibility to the espoused statement of the Leader of the Conservative Party that he intends to sit over there. I shudder to think what might happen if that were the case.

Mr. Messer: — . . . I visit them regularly.

Mr. Penner: — Do you go on a bus or . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to welcome all Members of the House to the fireside chat . . . from the Member for Saskatoon Eastview. I'm delighted that everyone is so wide awake.

It's a pleasure to be here again, speaking on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon Eastview and Saskatoon in general. We've had a good year. Housing starts both single and multiple dwellings are in the neighborhood of 2,200 units. We've had something in the order to \$124 million in construction permits this year, compared to \$122 last year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Penner: — And I knew that that would be the response that I would get and I hate that Members opposite take any credit for that.

Mr. Messer: — Why?

Mr. Penner: — Well, there is one statement that indicates why you should take no credit for it and that relates to the fact that we, you know, in the last few years have had a bountiful harvest and things have been good and I think that has had a great deal to do with it. The other thing, of course, is that the forebears of those who settled in Saskatoon had the good sense to do it on the banks of the river, where the jewel of the prairies sits. I think that probably those are the two factors, that if there is any credit they should take it.

I want to congratulate - I'm sorry that they are both out of the House - the two new Members of the Cabinet, the Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris): who is now the Minister of Continuing Education; I'm sorry, I note that the new Minister of Industry and Commerce (Mr. Vickar): is present this evening. I hope that the Member for Melfort will be able to inject some kind of common sense into the Government, based upon his free enterprise success in the past and I hope it will not be long before we'll see some of that rub off on some of your colleagues. You've obviously been able to make some kind of contribution in a year, in order to be where you are.

I'm sorry I didn't have an opportunity to hear the mover and the seconder of the Throne Speech. I did catch a part of what the Member for Bengough-Milestone (Mr. Lange): had to say on

the radio the other night. I was surprised that it was the same old hackneyed stuff, the same old statement that the grain transportation system in Saskatchewan today is as good as it was 60 years ago. It served things well for 60 years, there's no need for change. The fact, that if that's true, one might argue why farmers decided that the horse and buggy were no longer adequate, why the road system was not adequate and why those were changed. To suggest that the grain transportation system ought not to change, I think, Mr. Speaker, is as naïve and silly and as much drivel as to suggest that the methods of getting the grain to the elevator or the road system ought not to have changed over the period of time. I think that it's rather unfortunate that the ranks of the backbenchers are so thin that a person gets up to move the Throne Speech, something I consider to be an honor, and talks about the same old drivel that they've talked about in the past that hasn't any more sense attached to it than it has had in the past.

I'd like to spend a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, talking about government spending. It's been a booming year in Saskatoon with regard to government spending. We've got office buildings coming out of our ears. Saskatchewan Government Insurance has a new edifice. The Department of Education regional staff will be housed in new rented quarters in my constituency. Downtown, the monster is slowly rising out of the ground. The monster that was to house the Saskatoon section of the mushrooming bureaucracy, but has since been found to be too small to accommodate the multiplying hordes. The monster that was originally scheduled to cost about \$12 million, later revised to about 15 I think, and now likely to come in at something between 20 and 25 million dollars.

Cost control with the Government doesn't seem to exist, Mr. Speaker. Common sense is no longer a part of their decision making fantasies. In addition to the example of Saskatoon office space, let me state another. I want to dwell for a few moments on the Government's position with regard to health care. There has been a good deal said about it by the Minister of Health today and by the Minister of Finance.

A Government, which in my view, Mr. Speaker, is changing the emphasis from quality health care, one that has been admired and emulated across this nation, indeed across the continent and internationally and has replaced it with a plan that is becoming top heavy with what I consider to be political expediency.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has conceived of a dental plan which is ridiculously expensive. During the first year of operation of the plan alone, we're talking about six year old children, the cost per child treated was \$145. That doesn't include over \$8 million that had been budgeted to fix up schools for the dental labs, money that just floated around. It was incongruous as a matter of fact, to see people coming in to plan the dental labs, who talked as if the money grew on trees with regard to changing lighting and changing wall sockets and putting in plumbing and painting and so on. At the same time the school boards were having to scrimp and save in order to get money to do the very same kind of thing in classrooms just down the hall. That \$145 figure per child, Mr. Speaker, comes right out of the first report of the dental plan, and doesn't include the cost of training the dental technicians either. Mr. Speaker, I invite any parent who has ever spent \$145 a year

on their six year old child's teeth to phone me, I would like to know about it. Because I doubt very much that any six year old child's teeth has come to \$145. Let's keep in mind that orthodontal work is not included in the dental plan and, therefore, wouldn't be included in the \$145 figure. I have made that challenge in a number of places, Mr. Speaker, in the last six months and I haven't yet had a parent who has contacted me suggesting that they paid more money than that. I said before and I say again, that that cost is horrendously expensive.

Mr. Byers: — I will pay the rental of the hall if you come to my constituency and say that.

Mr. Penner: — I would be delighted, I would just love to go.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke a few minutes about the Dental Plan and I want to speak for a few minutes about the Drug Plan.

The Minister of Finance, a minute ago, accused me of saying earlier that in my opinion the drug plan was a waste of money and I want to say it again. We need that drug plan like little else that I can think of. We could have had a drug plan that would have served people who need drug care in this province without making a universal drug plan that has the costs built into it like this one does. We could have had a drug plan modelled on the Manitoba plan that would have given health care to the elderly and people who are chronically ill, people who have a drug bill annually even if it is more than \$50 a year and given them some help. Frankly, there are a lot of people in Saskatchewan, and I am one of them, who doesn't need that Drug Plan right now. I can pay my own way and there are a lot of people in Saskatchewan who can pay their own way and nobody ought to be ashamed about saying they can pay their own way. Instead we have got a plan with 70 or 80 civil servants sitting around here, a bureaucracy with people who don't know and didn't know for a long time what they were to do. They didn't even know what they were supposed to do!

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Government opposite has for the last five years talked about wanting to keep rural Saskatchewan alive and you know the Drug Plan itself is a hindrance to that. Because the pharmacies which are going to charge the dispensing fee, which are big outlets, can afford to drop their fee and the little fellow, whether he is in a small town or a neighborhood pharmacy, can't afford to do that because of the additional paper work that the Government has forced onto him with this plan. So they are the people who are suffering from the business point of view. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, and I want to reiterate it, I am for the people who are responsible for that drug plan to take another look at it. To take another look at the costs that are involved. To take another look at the Manitoba plan and come up with something that is reasonable for people who need it and that doesn't have the kind of costs that that plan has got.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Penner: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to go and spend a few moments talking about the Level VI beds in Saskatchewan, or the acute care beds or our hospital situation. I want to take a statement out of the Throne Speech. One sentence - "Modest restraints in

health spending have been accomplished without major cuts in service.” Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend a few minutes dealing with that particular point. I hope that the Members opposite will listen to this because I think that some of them have been deluded by what they have heard elsewhere. I am going to deal with a situation in the Saskatoon hospitals.

Miss Clifford: — He says, don’t worry.

Mr. Penner: — Well, I am sure he hasn’t worried about it or we wouldn’t be in the position we are in. Saskatoon hospitals have a combined total of 1,264 acute care beds, 42 per cent of which are utilized by Saskatoon citizens. Based on a population of 132,000, Saskatoon citizens are utilizing approximately four beds per thousand population. This compares with the overall provincial supply of 7.4 beds per thousand, a national average of 5.4 beds per thousand, while Regina has five beds per thousand.

Saskatoon residents have the lowest rate of hospitalization in the province. That is, during 1975, 127 residents per thousand population were hospitalized. Compared to other Saskatchewan regions, such as Melville, 327 per thousand; Yorkton, 226 per thousand; Moose Jaw, 209 per thousand and Regina, 138. The national rate is 156. These facts and statistics clearly suggest that Saskatoon’s hospitals are being utilized efficiently and effectively and that members of the medical staff are not only utilizing the hospital facilities in a responsible manner but are in fact better utilizing them than hospitals throughout the rest of the province.

Both City and St. Paul’s daily hospital rates are below the 1974 national average of \$96 per day, and although University’s daily rate was higher, this hospital operated at a lower daily rate than similar teaching institutions in Canada. It is also important to note, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has the second lowest average daily rate in Canada. Prince Edward Island, which does offer specialty in university medicine, records the lowest rate.

Now we are all aware that last spring in the budget debate, Mr. Speaker, the Government introduced a plan that would call for increased spending to hospitals and I never disputed that. There is no question of that but that increased spending was going to result in a decrease in services. A decrease because there were going to be beds closed and there were going to be staff let go at those hospitals, because the value of the dollar has simply shrunk to the point where comparing dollar figures is meaningless.

The Minister of Finance talks about a 47 per cent increase but I wonder if the Minister of Finance really, or anybody in the Department of Health has bothered to take a look at what has happened to the actual cost of hospital materials during that same period of time, the extent which they have risen during that period of time. All the way from gauze bandages and tape to the very sophisticated technical equipment that is needed in labs in order to run those institutions. And then later, Mr. Speaker, we heard of another cut that was to take place effective July 1 and another five per cent cut that was to be applied universally across the province.

Now let’s take a look at what that five per cent cut would

have done had it been applied in Saskatoon. Bed reductions would significantly have reduced the capacity of Saskatoon hospitals to admit and treat patients requiring treatment, for example in urology and orthopedics. In 1976 admissions would have been reduced by 1,300 - 1,300 admissions fewer in Saskatoon, had that July five per cent cut gone again and 90 hospital beds been closed. With regard to specialty care units, the only types available in the province such as the neonatology intensive care unit would have been forced to severely restrict admissions and thereby out-of-province referrals would have increased by necessity. The capacity to carry out surgical operations would have been reduced. Lack of funds would have forced hospitals to perform approximately 950 fewer surgical procedures than the year before. A total of 164 staff physicians would have been eliminated in the three hospital centres based on the 1975 actual staff. Now as it turned out, Mr. Speaker, the five per cent cut was not applied because the three hospitals went to the Government, the Minister of Finance alluded to that, and convinced them that their earlier diagnosis, if you will excuse the word, of the situation had been incorrect and they didn't put that five per cent cut on those Saskatoon hospitals. It should never have been considered in the first place because if anybody in the Department of Health had known anything at all about efficiency and effectiveness and cost control in hospitals, they would have known that applying a five per cent across the board would have been absolutely ludicrous.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Penner: — And having 164 staff out of those hospitals and 90 beds closed; instead, we have about 50 beds closed and about 90 people who are not employed in those hospitals today compared to what was there a year ago.

We have had extensive increases in waiting lists. A year ago at one hospital alone in Saskatoon the waiting list was 1,500 and today it is 2,100. A whole wing is closed in one hospital. Mr. Speaker, I think that the evidence is clear. There was a suggestion made in the House the other day that it was time that a task force was established to take a look at the priority of spending in the health care field. I think that makes good sense because the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are becoming concerned about the degradation of the health care system in this province, at the same time that the Government is running around picking up potash mines and paying \$120 million or \$130 million for them.

While I am speaking about that purchase, Mr. Speaker, I was interested in a couple of remarks that were made at the time the big official announcement was made and this Duval mine now is part of the thing that belongs to the people of the province. And I have to admit every time I go by it I cringe. But a reporter asked the Minister in charge whether there were any plans for expansion and he says, no, I don't think there are any plans for expansion. A half hour later the Premier was asked the question and he said, yes, we are looking at about a 25 per cent expansion. Mr. Speaker, the left hand doesn't know whether the right hand is there, let alone what it is doing. In addition to that the Premier admitted it was a gamble. Well, I guess everybody has been saying it was a gamble right from the beginning, but I still can't understand when we are having the kinds of problems that we are supposedly having

economically, the poor future that we've got, the fact that our tax rate is going to increase when the potash corporations were bringing in \$100 million a year. No risk at all to us, and here we are spending \$130 million of the taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any sense at all.

I think when we look at that kind of priorities it is time for the Government to look at them in the light of the health care field. And I hope they will establish a task force to look at health care spending. Yes, a task force. Somebody with some sense to take a look at what is happening in the health care field, if you don't have it yourselves. Somebody who will take a look at our acute care system, at our Drug Plan system, at our Dental Plan and all of the other aspects of the health care system.

I agree with the Minister of Health. He says, there is a limit to the number of dollars we can spend on health care. There is no question about that. Well, then, let's take a look at the best way to spend it. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that one of the best ways to spend it, is not to have hospital beds closed. Not to go out to a rural town in this province, a 36 bed hospital that now is only operating 30 beds with people lined up in the hallways because they can't use those six beds because the funds aren't there. Nursing staff going home at 3 in the morning from an 11 o'clock shift. That kind of thing ought not to be happening.

I am sorry that the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Speaker, is not here because I think another thing that the task force ought to do is to take a look at the implications of the number of Level VI beds that are being used for Level IV patients. They didn't go into hospitals in the urban centres, I am sure Regina is no different than Saskatoon. Talk to the administrators of the hospitals. Find out from the staff how many people are staying in those institutions who are not Level VI people, who would go or should go into Level IV facilities but they can't because there is no room for them. And that happens in every one of the hospitals in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

I hope that the Government, in developing the task force, will use some of those kinds of things that I suggested as guides. I hope that they will take people and put them on the task force who know something about hospitals, who know something about the health care system.

Mr. Messer: — What task force?

Mr. Penner: — Well, I am hoping that you are going to announce one in due course.

Well, Mr. Speaker, since it is obvious that my remarks on health care have been taken to heart I would like to spend a few minutes dealing with another subject because it seems to me that one of the biggest problems that we face in this province is one that we face not only in Saskatchewan but elsewhere and that is the problem of the concept of bigness. The bigness of business and labor and industry and government. I think we are getting to the point, Mr. Speaker, where we have got a couple of alternatives and we are going to have to begin to move on them. One of them is to diffuse the power and the other is to become so engulfed in bureaucratic authority that there really is very little escape. I think we are fast arriving at that place now.

The bureaucracy in this province has grown. That is neither a positive or a negative statement with regard to the people who are there. The fact is it has grown, it has mushroomed, nobody can deny that. We can't continue to justify hiring new people because of new programs. You can't continue to justify 80 people operating a drug plan because you have a drug plan like that when you don't need that kind of drug plan. When you could have revised it, streamlined it, made it available to people who needed it and not had nearly that number of people.

Mr. Romanow: — That's the old means test.

Mr. Penner: — We are not talking about a means test, you know it and I know it. We are simply talking about something that applies universally to everyone but does not require the kind of costs that we have got now. Because as I said before, there are many people who can pay their way and we ought not to be ashamed to admit it.

Mr. Speaker, I can't take the time now obviously, but I have got a question on the Order Paper. I have a Notice of Motion on the Order Paper that relates to the question and I will be glad to deal with it in more detail then. But I tried to explain that if the people sitting opposite, Mr. Speaker, take a look at the Manitoba plan, they would recognize the fact that if you put a limit on the amount of money that each person is going to have to pay, that you can administer that kind of plan without the kind of bureaucratic control we have got now and I don't think that there is any doubt of that. But you see one of the things that has happened is that the Members opposite, including the Attorney General, are becoming trapped in this question of bigness, this concept of the philosophical idea of power and control and prestige. I think we need to break that philosophy down. I don't think we can continue to fall into the trap that other countries are falling into and I invite Members opposite just for a moment to think of Britain, the cradle of the parliamentary system, a system that we have copied as a model in this country and stop and think for a moment what has happened to that country today.

Mr. Romanow: — The Conservatives . . .

Mr. Penner: — I don't think you can either credit it or blame it on any particular party. I think what you need to do is take a look at a philosophical concept and that philosophical concept exists with you people, this concept of bigness and control and we need to break that down. There are ways that it can be done. There are ways as a government that you could do that. You are great people at trying to wiggle out by talking about something that has absolutely nothing to do with it. Nobody is saying here that we are particularly enamored by big anything. I said a minute ago that I was concerned about big government, big industry, big labor, big welfare. I want you to understand that.

I think Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, can do something to diffuse power. They can do it within their own realm. Let's take a look at the municipal field for a moment. There has been discussion frequently from municipal government asking for more authority at the local level. We have said for two years, and I think it is extremely important, that municipal government

should have an opportunity to share in the revenue that comes from the province. It was part of our election platform a couple of years ago. Nobody caught on to it. But I think it is an important concept. Municipal governments today are talking about the need for that. SUMA has been talking about the need for that. There is no question that grants have increased, no question of that at all. They have increased substantially. But I think you need to be sensitive to what local governments are saying today with regard to sharing revenue that is available to the province. I hope that the Government will do that. I hope the Government will take a look at other ways in which power can be diffused to the local level, related to planning, for example.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might go on to a couple of other items that are in the Throne Speech before we close.

I was pleased to note that the Government is intending to table the white paper relating to education. I think that is going to be a significant document in the field of education. It has never happened that all of the law related to education has been consolidated into one document. I think that when we see it and when we have an opportunity to study it and I think the Government has taken a wise step in tabling it, giving people an opportunity to react to it. I hope that it will not be long before we shall see it and that we will be able to react to it.

The Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, makes mention of improvements in traffic safety. Some of them I agree with, some of them I don't. I am interested about what they are going to do about safety for school buses. I hope that that is going to be significant. I hope it is going to be realistic.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to its other faults, this Throne Speech alludes to the need to increase provincial income tax. The Minister mentioned that a few moments ago, five points, maybe six. The Premier apparently mentioned it yesterday in his address. I think that in a time when this province has been as buoyant as it has ever been, that it is irresponsible to be talking about increasing the provincial income tax. We now have the second highest provincial income tax rate in the nation and the Government is talking about increasing it.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy for the Government to pass the buck. It is easy for them to say that it is somebody else's responsibility. But it is very difficult for the people of Saskatchewan to swallow that line. To blame the Federal Government at the same time we see this Government throwing out money for potash mines as they have been doing. It is not going to sell, Mr. Speaker. The people of the province are not going to buy that any more than they bought the argument about health care. Because the priorities of the Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, are not in tune with the way the people of this province are thinking.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Penner: — Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech was long on quantity and it was low on quality. It fails to address itself to the issues of the day, and I shall therefore not support the motion but will support the amendment.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:28 o'clock p.m.