

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Eighteenth Legislature

March 14, 1978.

EVENING SESSION

BUDGET DEBATE CONTINUES

MR. A.N. McMILLAN (Kindersley):— I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by pointing out that, well, some people I suppose of socialist docttrined philosophy are, and were wildly ecstatic about the hon. Minister of Finance's new Budget and he was no exception, I hope. Some people were quite pleased with the tax cuts. I, for one, think that that cosmetic attack on the economy will be of some small benefit to Saskatchewan taxpayers and the population as a whole. One would be hard pressed to go much further than that, in purely economic terms of lauding the Budget because in effect, I think, the steps that have been taken here in this Budget do little to actually grapple with the severe basic economic problems that we in Saskatchewan face. It's difficult in fact to fault the members opposite for their approach to the Budget and in fact they budget themselves. They are severely restricted in the approaches that they could take by their own doctrinaire philosophy. The Minister of Finance is more aware of that than most are. However, there were some things that you might have considered doing in your Budget which would have in the long run done a significant amount of benefit for the people of Saskatchewan in a financial way which you've failed to do. Perhaps the most significant factor arising out of the whole Budget Debate has been the fact that our gross domestic product in Saskatchewan this year will probably rise by one per cent perhaps two per cent. Somewhat smaller than the increase in the gross national product which is estimated to be in the neighborhood of four per cent. That in itself, the fact that we're looking at only a one or two per cent increase in our gross domestic product is somewhat disturbing in view of the kind of opportunity that we have before us in the development of our resources. One only need to stop and consider what possibilities could have lay in store for the people of Saskatchewan if we had taken the money that we spent on our potash industry which in effect did nothing to boost our gross domestic product, applied that money towards capital expenditures that Sask Tel and Sask Power have hoped to undertake this year and then, if you are so committed to borrowing an additional \$438 million, applied that towards new projects in Saskatchewan. Under those circumstances, that might have been money well borrowed. It might have been an economy well stimulated. But the problem is, is that as I say, restricted in your own political philosophy, your Minister of Finance, or whoever makes these decisions for you, and I'm certainly not convinced many of them are made on that side of the Legislature. Whoever makes those decisions for you was unable to take into account the kind of financial stimulus that could have been applied to this economy with this Budget.

One could spend hours I suspect in this Legislature, and in fact other people might, pointing out to you people for your benefit and for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan, some of the examples in this province which indicate to you that our financial economy in this province is not as healthy as it could be. It's bad enough for us to think that we're faced with a great lost opportunity here because of your narrow doctrinaire socialistic approach to the economy. But to wake up in the morning to advertisements from your government — much as I did this morning and I hope that the Minister of Industry and Commerce will give me and the rest of the members of this House a brief moment to listen to this. To wake up in the morning and listen to a 30 second government clip from the Industry and Commerce paid for by my money and the rest of the people of Saskatchewan, telling us how sound our economy is in the first

instance, how good our unemployment rate is and what a sound province we have for private investment. Now that's really hard to wake up to in the morning. I tell you right now. And it doesn't start a day off very well for some of us in Saskatchewan who are enlightened in our economic thinking.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. McMILLAN:— We have gone over the argument previously about the ethics of using the public's money to buy votes and the ethics of it smelled to high heaven and that situation remains the same. This however is a new twist, it's one thing to have the government with Hollywood-produced color commercials on television prime time, telling us about the aesthetic values of the co-operative spirit in developing this province — few would argue with the principle I'm sure. Many would argue about the practicalities of you using the taxpayers' money but to get the Department of Industry and Commerce to do a 30 second clip on how sound their provincial economy is, is bordering on the ludicrous. The part that really got to me, and there was quite a considerable amount in that 30 second clip that was disturbing, was the statement that our economy in Saskatchewan is based on a healthy relationship with private industry. We've heard the Premier who started this little socialist charade when he was at the First Ministers' Conference in Ottawa, we heard the Premier starting to laud the benefits of perhaps having a cozy, although not a wholly matrimonial relationship, with the private industry. The Premier said well, we could certainly use a little private investment, it's often welcome in Saskatchewan but of course the government is going to keep going, the energy development should be left in the hands of the government but we might squeeze in the private industry a little bit.

Certainly, well it might be argued that our Premier as well is a complete Neanderthal, but I won't be the one to make those arguments here in this Legislature. The Premier has, over the past few months, been trying to spin this web for the people of Saskatchewan. Again, another one of those indications to the people of Saskatchewan that this government is not at all comfortable with the economic position they have taken in the past, or for goodness sake, you wouldn't try to — however subtly — try to change your impression in the eyes of the public. You've done a poor job in Saskatchewan. The Premier is trying, certainly in appearance anyway, to shift your image to the right in the political spectrum, particularly with respect to economic issues. Probably it is a good political move. The Minister of Industry and Commerce underwrites a 30 second commercial telling people in Saskatchewan how sound private investment is in Saskatchewan, some 3 short weeks after his government has driven one of our finest corporate citizens to eliminate 20 per cent of its staff at Simpson's Timber at Hudson Bay. I said at that time when that took place, while the Premier was sanctimoniously lauding his government's willingness to co-operate with private industry, I said at that time it was a hypocritical statement in view of what was taking place in Saskatchewan. It is just as hypocritical today, I say to the Minister of Industry and Commerce, as it was then. You are no more to be excused for making that erroneous statement than your first minister is. Simpson's Timber came into this province with good intentions of running a good operation, abiding by the rules, the legislation, the regulations and the taxation of this province, abiding by environmental concerns, labor laws — for the interest of the Minister of Labour — and all of the other regulations and legislation that we could impose upon them in Saskatchewan. They have been a good corporate citizen.

Three or four years ago, as a result of the Springate study, you people decide to jump completely into the timber development business on what I say was poor advice. Your

judgments, the rationale you used for getting in to the extent that you did, was not based on sound fiscal planning or rational reasoning of any kind. It was based on a political desire or a philosophical desire. We see the results of that today. Thirty some people at Simpson's Timber laid off because Simpson's Timber has a shortage of material to harvest. Where did that material go? Into the government's saw mill at Carrot River.

That's one example of many, many examples that could be given in this Legislature about your attitude not just to private investment in Saskatchewan but to the economy as a whole. Your decisions are based purely and primarily on the political impact they might have and basically on your narrow socialist philosophy. I say that's the wrong approach to take. Obviously, given the situation you people are in you probably aren't going to do anything else and until the people of Saskatchewan are prepared to replace you, which may be sooner than you think, we can expect to have Budgets like this that don't deal with the fundamental problems in the province of Saskatchewan.

It is interesting, as well, to hear people like the Minister of Industry and Commerce and certainly the Premier and others, laud our low unemployment rate in Saskatchewan. The Minister of Finance gave, in glowing terms, the number of people in Saskatchewan that were unemployed and it is so low, he said, because of this government's action . . . (interjection) . . . Well, we'll get to your figures because they are very much like your figures for the number of civil servants in Saskatchewan.

The Minister says 13,858 civil servants in Saskatchewan last year, failing to mention the fact that his own government provided Statistics Canada with figures which would indicate that there were 19,000 civil servants in the general civil service and an additional 10,000 plus working for Crown corporations, more than 29,000. Some could argue that your unemployment statistics — why Statistics Canada is not much different, and any of you who happen to turn on your television over the dinner hour would note that the University of Regina is undertaking a study to determine if, in fact, the method by which we go about ascertaining unemployment rates is accurate. I say that while the minister may be bragging about the number of unemployed in Saskatchewan, he has neglected to even mention one particularly significant portion of our labor force which is never, as a rule, listed in the unemployment statistics. I can only assume that the Minister of Finance doesn't feel it's important for him to bring to the attention of the people of Saskatchewan that there are probably 15,000 people in Saskatchewan today, who he not only has jobs for but, whom he doesn't even consider in his Budget, nor when he's talking about general development in Saskatchewan.

If the Minister of Finance was to include in his figures the native and Metis population in Saskatchewan, it would add immediately an additional 15,000 people to the labor force and probably raise your unemployment figures by 50 per cent. The minister doesn't even count them, let alone find work for them.

If the minister was prepared, as I should hope he would be, to try and bring some alleviation to the strain caused on our economy by having 15,000 productive adults completely out of work, dependent almost entirely on our basic infrastructure of social services, if he was to include in his Budget these problems and the kind of strain they put on the economy, I suspect he would've sung a particularly different tune when he brought his Budget down.

I heard as well, the minister — formerly Minister of Co-ops, he changes so often it's difficult to keep track of his portfolio, I believe the new Minister of Revenue — talking

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today about those lean and mean years of Liberal government when the provincial population turned down and we didn't want to return to that situation again.

I have before me a study done by the provincial government's, I believe, executive council, planning and research. Their estimates for this government and for our province are that by the year 1980-1981, our population will be dropping significantly despite all the glowing reports given to us and the cautious optimism portrayed by the Minister of Revenue today.

Your own figures! This is a report that was available to members of the Legislature, although perhaps inadvertently some time last year, I believe. The figures themselves are particularly disturbing when one notes that while the Minister of Revenue is really disturbed about the population figures under the Liberal government, they were the highest in the province's history under a Liberal government, at 951,500 in 1966. The projected population figures in Saskatchewan for the year 2000 — I assume only that your planners decide that this is probably only if an NDP government continues in power because that would be the statistic they wanted — in the year 2000, under an NDP government, your own people say we will have a grant total of 861,500 people in Saskatchewan, 100,000 people less than we had in 1966 under that Liberal government. Yet, the Minister of Finance mentioned none of this in our debate on the Budget. It's disappointing to hear, on one hand, the glowing reports — last year's budget was of course a budget of cautious optimism; this year was a Budget that the minister was proud to bring down, I'm sure.

Despite the fact that you have every opportunity open to you — I talk to the Attorney General regularly about the potential for uranium development in Saskatchewan and every time you mention the term, dollar signs ring up in his eyeballs — you have such tremendous potential to develop this province, not strictly in dollar terms but in terms of personnel and improved standard of living. Believe me, it's not as good as it could be here; lower health costs, direct or indirect, to the people of Saskatchewan; lower insurance costs, direct or indirect; greatly increased opportunity, not just for our native unemployed but for the young people that are coming on to the labor market.

We saw university students here today complaining bitterly to the Minister of Education about increases in tuition fees, a government that was so previously committed to free education for all. How could this happen under a socialist government? You people — the board of governors told you people all those figures were going up. If you people had made the same commitment to education in this province as your previous Liberal government did, you would have an additional \$54 million in the Education budget. I can only assume that the reason that we don't have that today is because the Minister of Education is a weak link and in that cabinet chain. I would hate to single out the Minister of Education, of course. There are some strange things happening and I don't mean to refer to the member for Qu'Appelle who has done some strange things here and outside the House before but the Minister of Mineral Resources.

I'd like to spend a very brief moment to talk about our provincial economy and the kinds of things you wouldn't have to do as a government if you were to adopt a different approach to the development of the economy of Saskatchewan. SPC rates, as we all know, particularly for natural gas, have gone up astronomically since 1974, 101.7 per cent. That figure I know the Minister of Mineral Resources is proud of but I have a few more details you might be equally proud of. The province of Saskatchewan in many instances pays private developers of natural gas in this province between 15 and 35

cents a thousand cubic feet for the gas Husky Oil develops for them, Mobil Oil and whoever else in the private field develops gas.

MR. CAMERON:— How much?

MR. McMILLAN:— Thirty-five cents down to fifteen cents a thousand cubic feet. That's what the provincial government pays for it.

MR. W.J.G. ALLEN (Regina Rosemont):— What do they charge for it?

MR. McMILLAN:— What do they charge for it? Now, I am glad to hear the member for Rosemont speak up because if he is a user of natural gas I suspect he's in the low use brackets, perhaps no more than 3,000 cubic feet a month. I want you, Mr. Member, to stop and think what's going on here. Your government is paying in many instances, between 15 and 35 cents a thousand cubic feet and SPC is turning around you under the direction of the Minister of Mineral Resources and selling that gas back to you for \$2.56 a thousand cubic feet. I haven't even bothered to figure out what a percentage mark up that is because it would be obvious even to those members of you sitting across the way that it's astronomical. Now that's bad enough. I know that the member for Rosemont is seriously disturbed about that. I know that, but the really disturbing thing, I thought you might have approved after you went to the fatherland on your holiday, but I understand from talking to you while the weather wasn't that nice that perhaps the climate there in other terms wasn't that nice either. Listen to this though, this wouldn't even happen in Cuba, Mr. Member for Rosemont. While the low users, those people who are forced to use natural gas as the means of heating their homes and for no other reason, pay \$2.56 a thousand cubic feet what do people who use 150,000 or 500,000 cubic feet a month pay? How much per thousand cubic feet? Like Ipsco or Kalium or other industrial users, people who are using that gas to heat shops and factories to create for themselves some semblance of a profit in this province.

MR. CAMERON:— They must pay \$3.00.

MR. McMILLAN:— No, no, one would expect that there would be a graduated formula to encourage these people to conserve gas. Certainly those people that are making a profit in this province, though they may be few and far between, should deserve to pay their fair share of the gas bill. One would think particularly under the hackles of this government, this socialist government, that the multinationals and industrial corporations would pay more. But they don't pay \$2.56 a thousand cubic feet like the poor people and the old people in this province do; they pay \$1.43. Why is that, I ask the member for Rosemont, if you're flying socialist planners in your back room when they drew up this budget and promised the people of Saskatchewan that there wouldn't be more than 8 per cent increase this year. Who is going to pay the increase? Well, some of it will be passed on to the industrial users, some of it will be passed on. However, the fact remains, you get this justified the next time you are invited to sit in on a caucus meeting or a cabinet meeting. Ask your Minister of Mineral Resources why the multinationals and industrials in this province are subsidized for the price of their natural gas. Ask him why the greatest burden is placed on the people that need this natural gas for the simple use of heating their homes. I think there would be some interesting questions to be raised to the Minister of Mineral Resources. However, there is little else that one need say. I would suggest to my curly headed friend the whip opposite, and I absolutely love to poke fun at you because the glare is hard on the eyes. However, your caucus has a problem and your cabinet has a serious problem. It's no

accident of course. It might be a fluke of intelligence that you people didn't bring in the best possible Budget for the people of Saskatchewan but it's no accident, there is a problem. Look around you, look at your ministers down in the front row, you have one rather young minister who most would consider an opportunist, look around you, your Cabinet is growing old. Where is the courage that you needed to really come to grips with the kind of economic problems that we have, the courage isn't there. Your ministers are scrambling those that are prepared to run again. Some of them are old or creaking, some of them are probably too upset about the natural gas prices they pay to want to have anything to do with your government after the next election. Look around you, what are your decisions based on the economy, ask your Minister of Finance, pure politics. Your government is struggling, you have been since 1975, struggling to get re-elected in the next election. Some of your backbenchers almost bolted the caucus when they thought they had a lovely opportunity to force an election this spring and maybe take advantage of a little swing of politics. Aged and senile minds undoubtedly prevailed and we won't be going to the polls until June of 1979, probably no difference.

What are you doing, who is leading this little battleship that is floundering around in the water, your aging Premier probably the oldest in Canada — I have never checked the statistics. The man certainly doesn't look the part since his hair has been growing darker, but what's that say about your Cabinet? Paranoia — spruce the Premier up a little, darken those temples, I couldn't believe it, before my very eyes the man's hair, I thought he had a secret. Look at the rest of your Cabinet, old, faltering, some of them not feeling too well.

I would like to say to the Minister of Mineral Resources in pure physical terms you are the bright spot in that Cabinet. I can safely say that in the absence of the Attorney General. You Cabinet ministers turn around and look behind you, what new strength have you got to drag down into the front row to bear the brunt of your mistakes over the past few years. How many of those people are beside prepared to step into the trenches the crippled old war horses and go to war in June of 1979, very few of them I suggest? Those that have the battle talent are remaining silent. I suggest that if you were to bring in, if you in fact have the forth right courage to deal with the economic problems that we have in Saskatchewan that you would put aside your paranoiac fears about your political performance. You would no doubt . . . war wounds I don't doubt there are a few there I say to the arthritic whip from the caucus opposite.

Your Premier, a painted man, came struggling with difficulty to try and assemble some consistent direction in your economic policy. I say your Budget has been one of cosmetic appearance. Either the failure to develop the courage or the inability to deal with the real economic problems remains a consistent problem for the people of Saskatchewan. Your mistakes in decisions, your mistakes in approach, those mistakes are to some extent being forgiven and to some extent will be forgiven in the future. The Minister of Mineral Resources knows this well, they will be forgiven because of the great potential that has been thrust on this province with the price of our minerals and resources on the world market. Even that, I say if there ever was a time for the world demand for our goods to go up it was when we had an NDP government because we needed the money worse then than we did under a Liberal government. We have little responsible..I would love to tell them about some polls but I got so much of that during the Pelly by-election from my members to the left, every day a different figure. I couldn't believe one could run polls so successively quick. Every one of them must have been conducting his own poll because each of them had a different set of figures. I assume that that would be the same reaction.

I'll tell you, whatever conclusion you may have come to with respect to your polls in Pelly, they weren't quite good enough. Second best isn't good enough in this game either. Our Budget has been second best, your caucus to some extent is second best, third best, fourth best, we'll know after the next election.

I would only like to say, in summation that I would hope that the Minister of Finance would shake the table at the next caucus meeting and say to the rest of the fellows in that caucus, we have a job to do here, we have got to turn this provincial economy around a little, not just cosmetically but fundamentally. Try and scrape an ounce of courage into your backbenchers, Mr. Minister of Finance, get them to speak up when they are being badly abused with their gas rates by the Minister of Mineral Resources or when their friends and neighbors are being badly abused by your overall economic policy and moving to Alberta or elsewhere to get jobs. You need a fundamental change in approach. I had hoped that would be forthcoming in the Budget, it wasn't. Thanks for the cosmetic changes and I hope that under the next Budget that we can have a little more fundamental dealing with the kind of problems that we face in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment and not the Budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):— Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who has just spoken indicated that he woke up this morning to the sound of the potash fine family of Crown corporations. What really woke him up this morning was the sound of another Lear jet flying from Ottawa to Regina, flying in another Cabinet Minister to try to bail out the hon. member from Assiniboia. They have been coming in on an hourly basis so far to absolutely no effect. I would like to commend the Minister of Finance. We await your report on your trip to Cuba and the briefing that you got which I expect we'll get in due course. I'm a little surprised we haven't had it yet this session. I know that the hon. member has learned a lot there and we're a little disappointed that it took so long for him to brief the rest of the Assembly and tell us what he learned, what new proposals and projects the government will implement going into the next provincial election. There's another voice speaking from underneath the golden dome of non-confidence, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the Minister of Finance for his presentation. One of the most expressive that the Minister of Finance has shown since he took that portfolio. I'm a little surprised to see the new mannerisms that the minister has developed since he first presented his very technical budget a couple of years ago, and I must admit that the mirror probably took a great workout prior to presentation in the House. But I again commend the Minister of Finance for the great effort to try to make lively what is otherwise one of the expressions of the great tragedies of the government of this province.

You know, this Budget and the attempt by the government opposite to gloss over and make light of the great budgetary deficit created, tries to disguise as well, Mr. Speaker, a fundamental shift in the economic strategy of the government opposite. And I say it's a fundamental shift in strategy, in economic strategy because the one articulated by Allan Blakeney in 1972 has proved to be an utter and abject failure. And all that one has to do is go back to 1972, take a look at the Debates and Proceedings and take a look at the remarks of the Premier of Saskatchewan when he set out in detail the economic development strategy that his government would follow in the next four years.

On March 1, 1972 Allan Blakeney laid it out in detail and I notice a few members

opposite who were around at that time hanging their heads because it has been a failure. First of all he said that he doesn't believe that the population is the acid test of development. I think that's fair. That is the one thing that he has been successful in, is trying to avoid population as being an acid test of his government's success, because obviously, that would be a failure. But he states that we believe very soon that our resources will be attractive enough that we can develop them without massive public subsidy, without the massive public subsidies we've poured into the pulp mill development, which at that time were being poured into the pulp mill development. That's the same man who today has put \$20 million into interest free loans into the potash industry. The biggest subsidy in the history of this province, \$200 million that he has given, he has subsidized on free interest. There's a man who five years ago said he would never do a thing like that. There's a man who five years ago condemned the previous Liberal government for putting a few million dollars into a pulp mill. That's peanuts compared to the subsidies that your government is putting into the resource industry. He also says and this is the third plank in his economic strategy of 1972.

We believe that much more could be done to promote industry's base not on resource development, not on resource development but rather on manufacturing goods for people here in the prairie basin.

I think we all can remember the prairie basin speech and the great phrase used at that time was the prairie basin and how much we were going to do for the prairie basin. That was the main plank of the Premier's economic strategy of 1972. He also indicated, and this will be a great surprise to all of those who have watched SEDCO develop over the last few years:

We believe very profoundly that opportunities for secondary industry properly researched and properly presented will be taken up either by private industry or in appropriate cases, by government.

I suppose one could begin at this time to list the failures of SEDCO, some of the absolutely horrendously stupid decisions made by SEDCO, one of which will be discussed in the future of Henniger Malting and how many billions of dollars have gone down the vats, the vats on Henniger Malting to serve the prairie basin I assume, I don't know. But he sums up by saying on page 127, March 1, 1972 again:

In short then our development strategy is not based solely on the big resource based industry but supposedly in a balanced approach.

That was the new order as presented in 1972. There was the man who stood up in this House in 1972 and said that everything that was done before was wrong, all this emphasis on the grandstanding and the basin, big industries and the subsidies to the resource industries, he was going to change all that. And yet what do we see today? What do we see today? We see a Premier who today is admitting in this Budget by the great emphasis on the resources that he has been a failure, that his policies have been a failure and his economic strategy of 1972 was a total and complete failure.

We have, as we say, to refute his earlier strategy of an interest free subsidy to the potash industry of some \$20 million. We have the subsidy itself with the potash industry of over \$200 million. We have the attempted bail out of our plywood industry and the subsidies necessary to even keep the northern plywood industry. We have the financial mess of Saskatchewan Forest Products — not going to subsidize the resource industry because it no longer needs it says the Premier. We have the Premier indirectly subsidizing the uranium industry in the North by building roads notwithstanding Bayda

hasn't come in with its decision, subsidizing roads to resources. I am not sure that the roads to uranium mines isn't a greater failure and a more tragic mistake than the so-called golden highway in the North which led to no where, which led into the trees of some seven or eight years ago. The primrose path it was then called.

Let's look at some of the industries that the Premier has delivered to us as he is going to supply the prairie basin. Let's look at SEDCO, Fleury Industries, Mobile Homes for the prairie basin, that's what that was supposed to be, 'deep sixed', bankrupt to the tune of several millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money. We look at motels to serve the prairie industry or our prairie basin. All of a sudden there has been a great flush of activity by SEDCO in motels and the ownership of some of the motels are somewhat subject to criticism, but motels to serve the prairie basin. This is the second or third plank in the Premier's economic strategy of '72. Bankrupt, Henniger Malting — booze to serve the prairie basin. Beer to serve the prairie basin is the second plank in the Premier's economic strategy of '72. Deep final financial trouble and I understand Henniger is now out. Intercontinental Packers was bought to serve the prairie basin, in financial trouble, a bad investment, a bad investment at that time.

It's strange and I think any fair reader of the political situation in Saskatchewan knows full well that that government, if it thinks it's got a good thing, blows it up, advertises it, promotes it. It's sure been silent on the economic strategy of 1972. I think the reason is obvious, that the emphasis on the resource industry and a complete about-face by the Premier, has made it clear that his economic strategy of 1972 was either improperly administered or bad in concept or incapable of being implemented. All three grounds are reason for condemning the policies at that time and all three are grounds for the people of Saskatchewan to justify making the change in government that they intend to make either this June or next June, or 1979 or 1980, as the Hon. Minister of Highways has indicated.

But there are other tragedies. Now that he has admitted the blunders from 1972, or attempted to avoid them, he now gets into doing what he said he wouldn't do, and that is get into major resource industries. But does he do it in a smart way? It is probably the only government anywhere in the free world that would nationalize an industry in such a way as to go out and cause competition for that industry so that the economic viability, which was risky in the first place, is even more risky as a result of the very actions of the nationalizer. As a result of the nationalization of the potash industry, you have caused a new mine in New Brunswick, in direct competition with the very industry that you have nationalized. You have caused increased exploration in North Dakota to create more competition for the very industry that you nationalized. You have so alienated your markets that you have encouraged the Russians, a competitor to increase their economic activity in the very industry that you have nationalized. Now someone is going to have to explain to the people of the province of Saskatchewan why a government would spend \$200 and some millions of the taxpayers' money and then deliberately create competition for himself to lose markets.

Now, obviously there is something wrong and I say that the thinking that was wrong in 1972 and has been proved false by this Budget, is the same thinking that pervades the government office of today and is another reason for a change in government in this province.

We have, as well, an indication of further failure of the government in the field of the economic activity, the business climate of this province and that is in the Budget Speech, another reference to small business, that this government is now going to take

an interest in the small business and industry of this province. The government announces some new programs. You know, I'm going to tell the small businessmen of this province to not believe the government office — don't believe the government office — because now it is saying we've got to help the small businessmen in this province but I can remember going around this province as a member of the small business committee, intersessional committee . . .

MR. ROBBINS:— He was a member of the Liberal Party.

MR. LANE (Qu'Ap):— I can remember the hon. member who interjected this time, who was on that committee and who is now the Minister of Revenue, predicting publicly that the province of Alberta was going to impose their sales tax within the next couple of months, one of the famous prognosticators of the government opposite. How wrong he was. But that business committee went around the province and all of a sudden got hurried up into a report. That report was filled with great promises and commitments of the government opposite of how it was going to save small business. It happened to be, I might add, a report that just happened to be tabled full of great promises and flowery language a couple of days in advance of the Lakeview by-election.

I'm not going to impugn any motives to the government opposite that that was deliberate. I've been urged to do that. I will say that the considerations that prompted that government to be so flowery and its commitment to business has now had to make another commitment to business because it sees another election coming along. I say again to the small businessmen in this province, don't believe it. Don't allow that government to interfere with the operations of small business because you'll go the way of companies to which SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Company) has made loans and that is to economic bankruptcy.

I think that the emphasis on this Budget to a great dependency on the resource industry is something that the Premier argued against in 1972. The fact that in the best times in the history of this province, we've had to mortgage our future, something alien to the traditional thinking of the people of this province, proves, in the most obvious way, the failure of the economic policy in 1972 of Allan Blakeney. I say the last five-year plan was a failure and this five-year plan is also going to be a failure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to digress to a couple of matters that were raised in the Budget. I'm going to have some comments on the other governments. I note that in the press comments the other day the members opposite have forgotten all about their own budgets to talk about other provinces' budgets. I'll have some comments to make on the budgets of other provinces in a minute. I'm going to digress from the failure of the government to have comprehensive and sound, effective economic policy into an area touched upon by the previous speaker and that is the question of the number of civil servants in the province of Saskatchewan.

If the Minister of Finance doesn't feel badly I think we can all accept that he didn't really write the speech. He just delivered it. I don't think it would be fair to accuse the Minister of Finance or blame him for all the inaccuracies in the document. I think the ones who wrote it are the ones to take the responsibility.

In that particular document, he refers to financial management and how well this province has been financially managed. I'll have some comments on that as well, but I would like to turn to the heading on page 32, of the 'Reduction of Civil Servants'. He has indicated through four fiscal years civil servants ranging between 13,852 and 14,398,

every figure of which is reputed by evidence supplied by Statistics Canada, by information given by the government opposite. The numbers have been given that the latest number of civil servants in the last quarterly report, Provincial Government Employment by Statistics Canada, Public Finance Division, indicates that as of September 1977, the number of salary and wage earners, full time and other — the gross payrolls for the general government services, and I'm prepared for the record to define that, was \$18,846. That does not include the summary of salary earners and wage earners, full time and other, in the gross payrolls for the provincial government enterprises. As of September 1977, that figure was \$10,749. For clarification, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to give the definitions because they're definitions that the general public will understand as to what constitutes provincial government services — first of all, all departments of government, administrative, regulatory and special funds which perform functions similar to those of departments and which may be organized as boards, committees or agencies. Some examples, and I challenge the Minister of Finance to say that the employees are not civil servants, are the Alcoholism Commission, the Agricultural Research Foundation, those employed by Community Capital Fund, Farm Start, Land Titles Assurance Fund, Milk Control Board, Crop Insurance Board, Saskatchewan Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Hog Marketing Commission, Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan, Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission, Saskatchewan Sheep and Marketing Commission, the Research Council, the University Commission, the Wildlife Development Fund, Workers' Compensation Board, Public Service Superannuation Fund. I challenge the Minister of Finance to say the people employed there are not considered civil servants by the people of this province because we know full well that they are. And that definition of government services also includes government owned and financially supported institutions.

The definition of provincial government enterprises — I challenge the Minister of Finance to say that the people in these categories are not civil servants, all 10,000 of them — a provincial government enterprise is an organized entity usually corporate which is established by a political decision-making body to produce goods or services for sale on the open market, maintains an independent system of accounts that permits the charging of specific elements of cost against the revenue, has a relatively autonomous management in the conduct of his day to day operations and is staffed by personnel not normally subject to statutory requirements governing employment of the general public servant. Obviously, all of them are Crown corporations. I challenge the Minister of Finance and members of the government opposite to go out publicly and tell the public of this province that employees of Crown corporations are not public servants and are not civil servants. And the fact is that as of September we had nearly 29,000 civil servants and the minister says that there are 13,852.

You know we've been accused — the people of this province have been warned that if a Conservative government takes over in the province that it will fire civil servants. That's the accusation. We believe after the false evidence given by the Minister of Finance, our first job won't be to fire civil servants it will be to find them, find the 5,000 that are missing not counting the Crown corporations and to find the other 10,000 that don't show up in the government statistics. That's what our first job is going to be, not fire anyone. We'll fire the government golf pro at the penitentiary — but not anything other than that. And I think that's justifiable, Mr. Speaker. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that we would have great public support if the golf pro at the PA Correctional Centre was let go the following day. I suppose even right now the minister responsible for the Correctional System would become a public hero if he fired the golf pro employed by the PA Correctional Centre himself. Why wait for us to do it?

Mr. Speaker, we have been accused that if a Conservative government took over there would be a witch hunt, not a witch hunt, Mr. Speaker, a man hunt. We've got 10,000, 15,000 civil servants to find. We don't know how they are being treated because they're non-persons according to the Minister of Finance. They're non-operative. They don't exist. Mr. Speaker, those non-existent civil servants deserve fair treatment. They deserve to be put back in the public records so that they're treated fairly, that they're not buried all around the province. In fact, this government is telling complete and gross untruths, falsehoods on the statement of the number of public servants. I think as well that it's interesting to go back to 1975 to show you the other statement by the Minister of Finance that he's put a freeze on civil servants. In 1975, in March, in Saskatchewan according to the same Statistics Canada Report. At that time there were 15,426, obviously an increase of about 4,000 since 1975 in government services and I won't take the time of the House to show the great increase in the number of Crown corporations and I challenge any member opposite to say that there's been a decrease in the number of employees in Crown corporations since 1975. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that for some strange reason the government opposite is afraid to come clean on the question of the size of the civil servants in this province and also afraid to come clean with its true management record. The management record, set out in its glowing terms used by the minister to show how well he's done, I think has been refuted by the provincial auditor's reports of the past to one of which sets out the, I believe 26 government agencies for which reports were not issued, the debate that we've gone through publicly, the debate that the Premier lost and I'm referring to public account committee exhibit 7 tabled by the provincial auditor April 2, 1976 when he includes irrigate plan, prescription drug plan, housing corporation, continuing education, education, municipal affairs. I can see why he hasn't audited the Department of Social Services. It's going to take more than the provincial auditor's full staff to be able to audit that particular department. It's like a bad debt write off the way it's been operated. We might as well just take our losses and go as if there's no use trying to correct it so we might as well start all over again. And I suspect as well, Mr. Speaker, that that's what will be done in the next couple of years. Mr. speaker, one of the reasons that I believe this government has embarked or continued its bad management . . .

MR. P.P. MOSTOWAY (Saskatoon Centre):— Telephone call Gary from Switzerland.

MR. LANE (Qu'Ap):— What were you doing on my phone I might ask? I suggest to the hon. member if he had been in the House he would have been a lot better, a lot more than listening to my phone calls, as I've referred to the golden dome of non-confidence in the past. I think you've just added to the designation. We have a program that I'm going to urge the government to cancel immediately because it's one that I think creates more problems and it's called the executive interchange program. And it's a federal government program which is used irregularly, but used, to bring in federal civil servants to fill positions if there's a vacancy that can't be filled or whatever. Now for the sake of the people of this province the last thing this province needs is a federal government civil servant showing us what to do. Surely, if there is a government in Canada that is filled with nothing but bad management, bad programming, bad staffing, incompetent management, it's the federal government of this country. And to bring any one of those people in here, I think would be just like contacting cholera, for all the good it does you. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, what we should do, we should isolate and put in quarantine any one of our civil servants that learned anything from the government in Ottawa because we can't learn anything good when it comes to financial administration and the Auditor General's Report of the Government of Canada of 1976 proves that in space when he says that the Government of Canada has lost

control of the public purse. And I think as well, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General of Canada indicates one of the reasons, and I say this seriously, one of the fundamental changes in approach to government management that we are going to have to take. We have tended over the last ten years in this country to promote public servants because of their program oriented because of the program ideas they have or the program proposals, and in fact, we are going to have to get more financial control of our governments by promoting those people who have administrative capabilities, who have financial capabilities, and are more effectiveness oriented as opposed to program oriented. I say to the members opposite, the government opposite that that is a fundamentally different approach to the management of government, one I suggested based on the track record you are not really capable of, I suggest as well obviously one that the Federal government has proved to be incapable of. One final indication of the fact that the government's financial management may be in question. I have been critical as the members opposite know of the way we institute programs and I will give you the example.

The government opposite, instituted a program known as the dental Program, a good program. But we will never find out the cost of that program. The figure was given and I believe \$158 per student, that was the cost. The interesting thing about that was it was proved in public accounts is that it did not include the cost of the renovations of the old nurses' residence at the General Hospital for a \$1 million. It did not include the cost of equipping that for the training schools, it did not include the cost of training, it did not include the cost of renovating hundreds of schools around the province to put in the requisite dental equipment, it did not include administrative costs, and in fact the program really costs, I venture to guess double what the government opposite says it was going to cost.

I say it's fair for the government opposite to say that they are going to spend \$350 per student, that would then be a matter of fair debate in this House, but for the government opposite to say it's only going to cost \$158, when in fact it's well over double that. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, to give you an indication the provincial auditor or provincial controller and I'm going to refer to public accounts of April 9, 1976 when we attempted to determine the cost of the dental program, said the following, and this is the provincial controller:

Mr. Chairman, the total cost of the program can't be determined from the present accounting system because there are a fair amount of indirect cost that we haven't alleged or charged back to the plan itself. For example, there are the central agencies that are involved in part of the processing such as the provincial controller, public service commission, purchasing agency; in which these kind of costs are not allocated back to the program, so to get an actual cost of the program would be almost impossible, I would say.

That's the provincial controller stated that it was almost impossible to determine the cost of the dental program.

Now surely it is incumbent upon any government concerned about financial management, to not only approach this Assembly and the people of the province to say this program is going to cost X dollars. We can debate fairly as to the priority, X dollars, that five years down the road we expected the cost X number of dollars and then let the people decide; but to say, and to bring in programs when you can't determine the cost as stated by your own provincial controller, I say is not good financial management, I say in fact, that that's bad financial management. I think the areas have been reputed,

the economic program in 1972, the first five year plan of the Blakeney government has shown to have been broken up or sunk on the rocks of stupidity in politics. I say to you that the next five year program will bankrupt this province if you continue with the rate, you mortgaged the future of this province already and I say that the Budget from a political point of view will be of no assistance to the government and I think they have realized that over the last couple of days because the people dislike and continuously let you know, your potash program. Secondly, the people distrust, dislike your Land Bank program. They distrust your ability to manage this province, the massive debt. They don't like the idea and as I say, it goes against the grain of the traditional thinking of the people of this province to mortgage the future in the most prosperous of times. The people certainly condemn your comments on law and order when they see the words stated by the Minister of Finance and see the actions of the Minister of Social Services and see the actions of inmates canoeing down the North Saskatchewan or the fishing at Montreal Lake or golfing. What kind of a law and order program is that? That's the program instituted by the government opposite and they certainly don't, given the record spending of the government, believe your protestations of restraint. Your protestations of restraint in the size of civil servants, I think have been adequately refuted. I think, as well, that your falsehoods and your complete mis-statement of the facts as to the size of the civil service, indicate your inability to manage properly the financial affairs of this great province. Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the Budget.

HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways and Transportation):— Mr. Speaker, we have been regaled this evening with two speeches..

MR. PENNER:— One good and one not so good.

MR. KRAMER:— One bad and one worse. One ranting and raving on several things but at the same time I think he stayed within the parameters of decency. I offered a reward two years ago to catch the member for Qu'Appelle telling the truth, that's when he was a Liberal. Nobody as yet has claimed the reward. I raise the reward now to \$200 to find some statement that he may make at some time in this House to be the whole truth and I would like to offer that to someone who could take the time to peruse this volume, this almost diarrhea of words that comes out of this . . .

MR. LANE (Qu'Ap):— Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the Statistics Canada report on the number of civil servants. You can give me the cheque for the \$200.

MR. KRAMER:— Mr. Speaker, with his usual good manners and his complete ignorance of House rules, he has once again broken the rules of the House.

AN HON. MEMBER:— And he is only a lawyer.

MR. KRAMER:— And he is only a lawyer, someone says. Once again he said, you will notice, he said I will go in to the budgets of other provinces. Later on he said, I will do that. I listened closely and I never heard a word. I never heard a word about that great Tory Budget of Ontario, nor did he say anything about — we heard a great deal about Saskatchewan civil servants — but he made no comparisons, I noticed, with the Alberta civil service. I would like him to put those figures up. I can you why he didn't because they are 2 to 1 even when you take the per capita, compared to their population, at just less than 2 million. As of 2 or 3 years ago, not quite 3 years ago, Mr. Speaker, I tabled in this House Statistics Canada reports, as the member for Qu'Appelle purports to do now. At that time, Statistics Canada indicated, when they were telling us to put controls on, Statistics Canada said that Saskatchewan — that was a federal government report

— and he was supporting them at the time, in fact he got a little red when I put that on the table nearly 3 years ago. Mr. Speaker, 13,000 civil servants in Saskatchewan; 13,000 in Manitoba — those were Statistics Canada — and 32,000 at that time in Alberta, more than Saskatchewan and Manitoba put together, with far less services.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we again have this disgusting diatribe coming from the red necks over there about the civil service. Please, Mr. Speaker, I would like them to be honest just for once. Let's have a list of those that they would fire. Let them be honest for once in their lives.

When you go to a federal conference, Mr. Speaker, I was to one. I will just give you some idea about Alberta's civil service.

It was at the Canadian Council of Ministers on Weights and Measures, Transport and Highways, in Toronto and I had one advisor with me. His name is Mr. Popoff. Mr. MacMurchy was there for one day and then went home to take care of his job here. He had one — his director is presently chairman of the Highway Traffic Board. The Solicitor General for Alberta was there with 22 and I challenge you to deny it. Twenty-two.

AN HON. MEMBER:— That's terrible.

MR. KRAMER:— Damn right it's terrible.

Mr. Speaker, I take a dim view. The last count of Alberta — 44,000 civil servants and where are the services?

Now they talk about Crown corporations. Well all right. Is a person who works for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, or Sask Tel a lesser person, a lesser Canadian, or a lesser Saskatchewanian than if he worked for Calgary Light and Power, a private corporation?

MR. McMILLAN:— Why don't you include them in the numbers?

MR. KRAMER:— They are included.

MR. McMILLAN:— No they aren't.

MR. KRAMER:— You know finally the decorum has slipped. Your trousers are down, finally. It amuses me when the pin pricks a little how fast the facade drops.

Mr. Speaker, we heard nothing, absolutely nothing from the people opposite about that infamous, people-crunching budget of Ontario which was brought down the same day and small wonder — that government, talk about deficits. Those members opposite, they have now got a \$6 billion deficit in the province of Ontario, their last deficit, \$1.6 billion, wealthy Ontario. That's just their last one. Now the Treasurer of Ontario says, well I made a bit of an error. He was only 50 per cent out on his estimates. He estimated that he would be \$800 million of a deficit before the election last year. It turns out to be \$1.6 billion \$16,000 million and they are complaining, Mr. Speaker, over there about a \$44 million deficit in Saskatchewan, which is not a deficit at all but simply using up the surplus of \$111 million of three years ago. If that isn't a mix-up of Tory/Liberal — Liberal/Tory logic, I never saw any.

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Mr. Speaker, I do a fair job running here and I will continue to do so. Mr. Speaker, I would say that it ought to be noted once again (and it has been said before) while the people of Saskatchewan enjoy a no-cost health insurance, wealthy Ontario recognized for years the most wealthy, had to press down on the poor and the rich alike (of course they treated them fair), the rich paying \$528 and the poor the same. That's justice. Like the elephant said when it danced among the baby chicks, that's fair and equal. Some are more equal than others. Mr. Speaker, \$528 per family — most Ontario people will be paying more in health care than they will in income tax. Most of them will. These people have the nerve to stand here, Mr. Speaker. Just a moment hon. Leader of the Conservative Party I wish you would wait for a moment I have something for you. I wanted to say that they didn't miss. You know they did have a tax cut, they had a tax cut in Ontario. They took care of their friends as usual, those bloated arrogant capitalists. . . .

AN HON. MEMBER:— Bill Davis smoked cigars.

MR. KRAMER:— . . . yes, that smoked \$2 cigars. There was a tax cut there while they were robbing and gouging the poor, a tax cut of 41 cents on a \$2 cigar. Compliments for the Tory tax cut (Mr. Kramer sent a price tag to the Conservatives on the opposite side of the House).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KRAMER:— Mr. Speaker, I was watching the antics and the movement back and forth — they are a fluid group over there. I have an Indian friend who is chief of an Indian Band. He came to me and said, "Those Conservatives, do you know some of them?" I said, "Yes, not any better than I want to. I know them I see them across the floor." He said, "There are some of those fellow we would like to make chiefs." I said, "Oh, you want to make them chiefs." He said, "I would like a little advice about those fellows. Do you think we are doing right? We had a contest and we have chosen the member, Mr. Lane for Qu'Appelle, and Mr. Thatcher for Thunder Creek and of course the Leader, Mr. Collver and the member for Rosthern, Mr. Katzman, we have to give them Indian names. We have finally come up with the names. The member for Qu'Appelle, we are going to call him Changing Wind and the member for Rosthern we call him Passing Wind.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KRAMER:— The member for Thunder Creek him Broken Wind. We have used those for the braves. Now for the chiefs, we honor them by calling them Hand, like Yellow Hand and Strong Hand. We got a name for the Leader, Smooth Hand." I said, "Smooth Hand, how come?" He said, "Well in Cree we got no word for slippery."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KRAMER:— Mr. Speaker, we heard a great deal about ads from the member for Kindersley. I am sorry that the Indians didn't discuss his name with me, that is maybe to come. Mr. Speaker, we hear a great deal about these ads. The member for Kindersley said that he woke up in the morning and he hears this ad about how wonderful things are. I say isn't that great! I believe it is just as proper for us to be telling people of Saskatchewan about their business . . . (Inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I think it is equally as much a right as it is for DREE to tell us in great ads just lately by the federal government about how they were developing INCO, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and all the rest of the federal programs. I go to Alberta and I see great ads,

the glories of Alberta and all things that are done there. Millions of dollars worth of advertising being spent. Now maybe those things should be watched carefully. But somehow or other, what we seem to miss when we see these ads of Imperial Oil, or Shell, or Canadian Pacific telling, Mr. Speaker, telling us how they are developing the Tar Sands in Alberta, how they are taking all that money and developing the Tar Sands in Alberta. They don't tell us that that money wouldn't be spent and that industry wouldn't be going on if the federal government and the Ontario government and the Alberta government hadn't bailed out the big three and subsidized them with money to make it go in the interests of Canadian energy for the future. They fail to tell us that. They fail to tell us that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when these people are putting on their ads, whether they be hockey or anything else, that's our money too, that's our money too. I'm going to say this. . . .

MR. NELSON (As-Gr):— Do you agree with them?

MR. KRAMER:— Certainly I do.

MR. NELSON:— I don't!

MR. KRAMER:— Well, I never had a great deal of respect for your opinion in any case.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say on those multinational ads when they stop lying about us, when they quit lying about us, we'll quit telling the truth about them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KRAMER:— Mr. Speaker, I will have a few words to say about the Department of Highways and Transportation tonight. First of all I want to say that the Minister of Finance has already announced that we a budget this year considerably larger than last year. We will have a budget of just under \$160 million. This is going to provide adequate road development in the North and the South through Saskatchewan. We certainly want to press again, along with the governments of Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba, to continue to press for a national transportation policy which will develop roads across this country that are national in nature, going from one end of the country to the other. We make no apologies for making this request, certainly not from Saskatchewan, not from Alberta or anywhere else, especially since the federal government has invaded our provincial tax field more than two years ago with a 10 cent excise tax, over and above the other taxes that were already hidden there, such as the sales. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the excise tax netted the federal government last year \$45 million. The federal income tax on our crude was \$155 million, and up to now in export tax, since the Arabs brought about the windfall, and since the price went up, Canada has collected \$472 million in export tax. Then they say that they cannot afford, they cannot afford to take care of a highway system that will join Canada, continue to join Canada, and provide free movement for Canadians from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island.

Now sometime back in the past, 20 years ago, it would seem to be important that we build the Trans-Canada Highway, and it was shared on a dollar for dollar basis. It was not a modern road as we know it today, but it was good for its time. Now if the logic was right at that time, Mr. Speaker, it is five times as right now. Five times as right now because the traffic has increased five times.

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I notice an aspiring federal candidate is talking about sharing. I would like to know and I would like him to say in public where he stands on a true, meaningful, national, Trans-Canada highway policy. (Inaudible interjection) Let's hear him. I hope we hear some public announcements from him. He stands exactly where Otto tells him to stand, that's where he stands — where he has always stood.

Mr. Speaker, we have had nothing but a patchwork of free handouts. The federal government at the very meeting I was talking about in Toronto just less than six months ago, less than six months ago, said that our accident record in Canada was 30 per cent worse than the United States. Our death rate was 30 times worse — why? Because the federal government of the United States pays nearly 100 per cent of all the interstate highways, and it doesn't matter whether it is a rich area or a poor area. Whether it would be Newfoundland or Manitoba, Lake of the Woods, or anywhere else, those roads would be built by them — instead of gouging every last dollar out of the provinces, and doing nothing in return.

Turning a little closer to home, Mr. Speaker, we will take a look at what is happening right here in our own province. Saskatchewan's population has increased fairly substantially. Prosperity from those poverty days of '69 and '70 (when the only industry that was any good was the moving trucks moving out), since that time there has been a wave of prosperity in this province that has never been seen before.

In 1971 we had 465,000 vehicles in this province. In 1977 (that is nearly a year ago), 650,000, an increase of 185,000 vehicles — 20 per cent increase. In 1971 Saskatchewan people travelled 4 billion miles, in 1977 they travelled 5 billion miles — 1,000 million miles more. That is simply because there is a tremendous amount of activity going on up and down the length and breadth of this great province. Fifty per cent of that traffic, Mr. Speaker, was on the provincial highway system — 50 per cent.

We have credit to Saskatchewan, people of Saskatchewan, taxpayers. We have 13,000 miles of highway in this province, the equivalent of Ontario and the equivalent of Manitoba and Alberta combined and they're just as good as either — better than some places. Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of that is dust free. We will spend this year a little more than \$87 million in capital construction on that highway system. We will spend another \$10 million on urban assistance to build up the streets and arterial roads and so on. We will spend \$1.4 million on airports. The northern and southern systems will both be moving forward very rapidly with construction programs.

Now on the primary highway system it is interesting to note that we have 23 per cent of that 13,000 miles in our primary system which is, I could describe it this way, subject to 110,000 pound truck loading, about 3,000 miles of highways. Sixty per cent of our highway travel is on that 3,000 miles of road. Seventy-seven per cent of the mileage carries only 40 per cent of the traffic.

The secondary highway system — that's the four and five system and not the primary system — will enjoy \$58 million worth of construction this year. There will be 54 grading projects, building or rebuilding 388 miles, 67 paving contracts covering 527 miles and 14 oiling contracts covering 184 miles. It will be a very busy year for Saskatchewan road builders.

Northern road construction — there are at least several projects in the far North; finishing Highway No. 2 to La Ronge Airport, finish grading Highway No. 155 to Buffalo Narrows and finish oiling Highway No. 155, Beauval, both North and South causeway

bridge complex, new bridge at Buffalo Narrows.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be moving with a new bridge at Gronlid, approximately \$1 million on a bridge this year, and 25 smaller structures — about \$2 million spent there, including the bridge at the Regina by-pass.

Mr. Speaker, we heard I believe from several — oh yes — I think that was the financial critic. He stood up there the other day with what he termed his bombshell. He was going to bring in a bombshell concerning criticism of our Budget. Well he stood there, as usual — reminded me of a kid that was not so speedy — that was half fast. He's kind of slow, you know, just half fast. He stood there, you know, like that kid that used to try to work for us once in a while on the farms and we used to find him out in the pasture with a piece of rope in his hand and he didn't know whether he'd found a calf or lost a rope or vice versa. Sure missed that one. It's the other way around — that's right. Matter of fact, we all have to miss something once in awhile.

You know every once in a while you find a little truth almost anywhere, the Leader Post. We have heard a lot about the provincial debt, the province's debt tells a lot about our finances. Now this is not done by funny money critics that we have across the way, the Liberal retreads. Let's take a look at what Ed Owen said and I am sure you have read it, "The lowest provincial debt in Canada with the exception of Alberta," and let me tell you a little about that. The very lowest and it winds up, I commend this for reading if you haven't read it:

A final indication of the province's health is that its assets exceed its debts and that's how it should be. Only Alberta can make a similar claim in Canada, that these provinces are traditionally looked to as financial leaders such as Ontario. They are in a sense over their heads because they borrowed more than they are worth.

Now there is a little thing about Alberta that has mystified me ever since they had a Social Credit government. They were very clever. They always talked about their provincial debt over in Alberta, but did you ever try to check on their municipal debt. We heard some advice from across the way about how we ought to treat municipalities, from across the way today, how we ought to be doing more for the municipalities. Well let's take a look at the last figures on Alberta municipal debt. Once again we have Ontario, the municipal debt is \$515 per capita; British Columbia \$616; Manitoba \$532; in wealthy Alberta \$891 — \$891, the highest municipal debt not only in western Canada. And what is Saskatchewan's, not \$515, not \$891 but \$273, Mr. Speaker. These people will criticize my colleague, Mr. MacMurchy, on the way he is treating, the way he treats.

They talk about the provincial debt, I wonder if the Calgary Light and Power and all the utilities, just imagine that they were publicly owned, the \$3 billion they owe who is paying that? The \$3 billion that these combined utilities owe in Alberta for their expansion programs, who is paying that? Some wealthy philanthropist down in New York, I suppose. I say that the users in Alberta are paying it and when they are all through paying, the profits will still be going off to New York and Los Angeles and maybe to Switzerland and they won't own a thing, that's right.

Mr. Speaker, we will be expanding again with handicapped assistance, we will be expanding with transit assistance, 28 new buses will be bought by Saskatoon and Regina, in order to assist them we will be paying

50 per cent of that. We will be paying 50 per cent of that again as well as another near half million in the three cent subsidy. One of the things that I am very proud of is the handicapped transit service that we are offering. The city of Saskatoon is operating and we are paying 75 per cent of the buses. And the Department of Highways is paying 50 per cent of their operating deficit. The purpose is simply, Mr. Speaker, to take those people who would otherwise be sitting in a back room. They want to work, they have abilities we can use. They are picked up in the morning, taken back at night. I congratulate the cities that are operating these programs, highly subsidized.

Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. member for Saskatoon is not telling the truth, the initiative came right from here. Right from here! We put the program before them and they were sensible enough to accept it.

AN HON. MEMBER:— How much help did they get from the Liberals?

MR. KRAMER:— None. None. Unheard of. Free enterprise never thinks of the underprivileged, never.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great strides in public safety, this year, in spite of the foot dragging from across the way; in spite of the derision from across the way. Our highway system, once again, has enjoyed a reduction, a reduction of 18 per cent of highway accidents; injuries a reduction of 28 per cent; fatalities a reduction of 8 per cent. Unfortunately, the municipal and the urban areas have not done that well. The accident rate in some cases is up. The average across the province is good and I certainly hope that we can look forward to another year of safety, another year of a probable cut in our insurance costs, because the people of Saskatchewan have undertaken to try to change their driving habits and they have succeeded, in spite of the road blocks that have been put in the way of safety, by politicians who put politics ahead of people. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make highways safer. Obviously, something has been done to have the kind of reduction on our highway system that we have. We are going to continue to remove and relocate approaches, flatten side slopes, install guard rails, improve highway intersections, assist local governments to identify hazards. There are funds, this year, to assist them and trying to find out what is going wrong with their accident rates, because 55 per cent of the automobile accidents in Saskatchewan occur in the urban areas.

MR. PENNER:— Are you going to put an intersection at Preston and the freeway, Mr. Minister?

MR. KRAMER:— The member has a physical difficulty. He has trouble speaking when he is standing up.

Mr. Speaker, the maintenance program has enjoyed another \$2 million increase this year. We have 127 crews, averaging about six, scattered up and down the length and breadth of this province. These people who, winter and summer, fair weather and foul, are providing service — good service — to the people of Saskatchewan. I would like to, at this time, congratulate them and thank the great numbers of people who wrote in congratulating them on the way they handled the five-day blizzard in this province. Other than a couple of minor misunderstandings — I hope they were that — there was not a single complaint all the way from the border to Uranium City. I think that says something for a group of civil servants. Mr. Speaker, these are the people who are called out day and night when there is an emergency and have over the years done a cardinal job in providing services to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said there will be \$45.3 million for maintenance, (that will be some two-thirds for driving services in the summer and improving them, \$6 million for winter maintenance) and the rest is for things like line painting, mowing, signs, guard rails, maintaining ditches, assisting small communities, maintaining roads in parks and camp grounds — all of these things are done by these 127 crews.

There is one more thing I want to mention and that is, Mr. Speaker, again a credit to our civil service in the department, our engineers in our Department of Highways and a credit to the Saskatchewan Research Council, the University of Saskatchewan. We planned and built a test track, a first one of its kind in Canada, built and designed entirely in-house at a cost of \$375. The mechanical work was done in the Highway shops in Saskatoon; technical work was provided by the Research Council under Dr. Tom Pepper. I'm proud and I think the Saskatchewan people will be proud. We can now assess scientifically what the impact of various loads under various conditions, extreme cold, extreme heat, are. Any type of weather can be simulated there with a series of sensors at different levels which will provide an accurate record of the loads passing over. The wheels that are there can simulate any weight, any given weight through hydraulic pressure being placed on them. I say again, this was invented, designed and built right here in Saskatchewan and it will be used. Already, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia have shown an interest, and it will be used as a measuring stick for our needs and to determine our future needs as well in western Canada. I want to publicly thank our highway people and Dr. Pepper and the Research Council for their initiative — these people who are maligned and downgraded by both Conservatives and Liberals.

In 1977 the Department of Highways finished its 60th year of service in Saskatchewan. Our budget has increased steadily substantially. My first capital budget was \$42 million; this year it will be just under \$100 million. We will do all this, Mr. Speaker, with less permanent staff than we had last year.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride and pleasure that I present my share of the Budget and I certainly will be supporting the Budget and voting against the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Minister of Social Services):— Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to participate in the Budget Debate and my first words of course are words of congratulations to the Minister of Finance for the Budget that he brought in for us and looking at the opposition, Mr. Speaker, one can easily detect that it is a Budget that all of us are extremely proud of, even the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, for a few minutes before I get into the text of my speech tonight just to remind the member for Kindersley of the — he said he was surprised and almost ashamed of the companies that have left this province since Mr. Blakeney took over the reigns of government in the province of Saskatchewan since 1971. It is obvious that he either has a very short memory or he just refuses to face the facts. I remember the Premier just a few years ago giving us a litany, simply a litany of hundreds of companies that had shut down while the Liberals were in power here in Saskatchewan. I remember full well in the city of Saskatoon, such famous companies as Quaker Oats shut down and moved out. I remember such companies as Gulf Refinery who shut down and moved out. I remember such companies as Robin Hood of Moose Jaw who shut down and moved out. Mr. Speaker, in those years under a so-called free enterprise

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government, business couldn't survive. But they are certainly very vibrant under the government and leadership of Premier Allan Blakeney.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) for the program that they have put in for the handicapped. I think all of us on both sides of the House would want to wish him or congratulate him for taking the initiative some years ago in making moneys available to towns and cities for transportation for the handicapped.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to the Budget itself. For me, as I said before, it is a pleasure to participate and a pleasure to support the Budget. Despite the national problems that we have of inflation and unemployment and slow economic growth, this Budget shows that the Saskatchewan government is determined to maintain and improve high standards in health care, in education, in social programs in the year ahead. Because of the prudent policies of this government in building up substantial reserves in years of economic strength we find ourselves able to continue our commitment to the people of Saskatchewan during years of economic slowdown.

It is a particular pleasure for me to rise in support of this Budget, in view of the Budget recently presented in Conservative Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I happened to be in Ontario when the budget was brought down. The Ontario Conservatives are predicting a deficit of \$1.36 billion this year; Mr. Speaker, that is what they predict in their budget. In my personal conversations with one of their ministers he told me that he wouldn't be surprised that that deficit would be \$2 billion this year — \$2 billion! They have chosen to combat hard times with regressive policies, penalizing the sick, the elderly, those on fixed incomes, the unemployed and the working poor.

The years of the NDP in Saskatchewan have been characterized by better and expanded health care services and programs at lower cost to the consumer; new and innovative housing; education and social programs, and progressive resource policies. The reign of the Conservatives in Ontario on the other hand has been characterized by increased health care costs which are passed directly on to the consumer by means of staggering increases in health care premiums. Mr. Speaker, a 45 per cent increase in premiums two years ago and another 37.5 per cent increase this year — a total of \$528 for a family of three in Tory or rich Tory Ontario. Over the past five years, Mr. Speaker, Conservative Ontario has accumulated as my colleagues have stated before, deficits of about \$5 billion or \$6 billion. Ontario taxpayers, because of the ineptness of the Conservative government are handing out \$2.5 million each day in interest charges on their government's accumulated debts. Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 million paid each day on the interest charges of the accumulative debt of the Conservative government. At the same time, the Ontario government has reduced taxes to mining companies and continues to give away the province's resources. Ontario's total revenue from resources in the past year amounted to .2 per cent of their total revenue. Ontario today receives more in tax revenue from health premiums than it gets from corporate income tax.

Mr. Speaker, I would be ashamed to be a member of a party presenting a budget such as Ontario's, a budget which includes measures to tax the sick, reduce health services, cut back on money to municipalities, reduce money for housing and abandoning the elderly. The people of Saskatchewan wouldn't stand for such a budget. In time of economic turmoil and hardship, the Blakeney government has presented a Budget full of measures to lighten the load of the people of this province, not increase the burden as what happened in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite have often accused this government of big spending, big government, centralized decision making. I submit that this Budget, once again, attests to the fact that they are completely wrong. In total, 45 per cent of the provincial Budget goes directly to local authorities to run their programs. This means, on a Budget of \$1.7 billion dollars this year, \$764 million will be controlled and spent by local governments. Gone are the days of heavy-handed Liberal conditions on school boards, hospital boards and municipal governments. Many of the decisions affecting this province's Budget are made not by the provincial government, but by local authorities.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to my own city of Saskatoon. As the member for Saskatoon Buena Vista and as a resident of that city, I am keenly interested in the way this government provides for the needs of the people of Saskatoon through government grants. Saskatoon mayor, Cliff Wright, has been somewhat critical of this Budget but he did indicate that you couldn't be overly critical because of all the money that the city was receiving. He also indicated that because of revenue sharing and the money that they were receiving, he didn't expect that there would be a mill increase this year. I speak, however, not as a member of the provincial Cabinet, not as an MLA but as a resident of the city of Saskatoon when I say that in the area of provincial government grants to the city of Saskatoon, there is very little room for legitimate criticism.

Since 1972 Saskatoon has received \$785 million in provincial grants. Last year Saskatoon received \$5.2 million in municipal grants under revenue sharing. This year's allocation is \$7.3 million, a 40 per cent increase over last year. During this fiscal year the city will receive \$145.8 million for the support of local services, including such things as the Western Development Museum, the Saskatoon Centennial Auditorium, sporting and park facilities, libraries, cultural organizations, transportation and educational facilities. Saskatoon will also receive \$35.1 million for the building of better facilities, including \$5 million to complete the expansion of the University Hospital, \$7.3 million for provincial office building construction, \$400 thousand of a \$12.8 million expansion of a Veterinary Medical College at the university and \$900 thousand for the construction of a swine research centre.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon will also receive \$7.458 million for programs aimed primarily at Saskatoon's senior citizens. This amount includes funds for senior citizen activity centres, allowances to special care homes, home repair grants, home care and benefits under the Saskatchewan income plan. Mr. Speaker, \$1.4 million has also been allocated for the construction of 250 senior citizen housing units. Saskatoon's handicapped have not been forgotten as has already been indicated by the Minister of Highways. A total of \$2.858 million has been allocated for the health, social services and educational needs of the handicapped. Included in this amount is \$156 thousand for improved transportation services.

In addition to the services already mentioned, the city of Saskatoon finds itself the location of a number of unique and innovative projects. One of these is the establishment of a three-year unified family court which will lay the groundwork for a broad program to deal with families in crisis.

Business and industry in Saskatchewan have grown a lot over the past seven years. This government knows that a growing economy needs the best possible research and development facilities. It is for this reason that SEDCO has leased an 80-acre site from the University of Saskatchewan overlooking the river. Research and development facilities will be built in a park-like setting. Work is now under way at the park. It will

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include the SEDCO centre, a hydrology lab and land development in Saskatoon East. These will have an anticipated total cost of \$17.5 million. Saskatoon Research Park will provide a valuable tool to Saskatchewan business and industry in finding new and different ways to build a strong economy, as well as provide jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the announcement of the Saskatoon River Edge Authority. The Authority, as I understand it, will be a body corporate consisting of members appointed by the provincial government, the city of Saskatoon and the University of Saskatchewan. The government has made an initial contribution of \$200,000 to this project. The Saskatoon River Edge Authority promises to be a lovely addition to our fair city.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note the increases in the quality and quantity of services available to people of Saskatoon over the past few years. I am proud to be a member of the Blakeney government which has assisted so much with the growth of Saskatoon through generous municipal grants.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROLFES:— Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to my favorite topic, senior citizens. I know that the Liberals opposite simply cringe when I mention this topic because they did so little for senior citizens in their seven lean years. When you compare what we have done for senior citizens I can well understand why they hate to have me list the litany of the things that we have done for senior citizens.

MR. MacDONALD:— You better start doing something real.

MR. ROLFES:— Yes, we will as long as you and Otto keep your hands off of things, we will be all right.

Mr. Speaker, he asks for something real. Listen and I will give you something real. I would like to turn to an area for which my department has some responsibility. That area is Programs and Services for the Elderly. In the past seven years there has been a rapid expansion of programs in all sectors of society in this province. But Expansion and Development of programs and Services for Senior Citizens in Saskatchewan has been particularly vigorous. This government looked at the record of seven years of Liberal government in Saskatchewan and concluded that senior citizens were the most neglected segment of society during those seven lean, hungry years. We saw there were many needs in the area of programming for senior citizens that the Liberals had not recognized and many gaps in existing services that they had not even attempted to fill.

One of the first moves, Mr. Speaker, made by this government was to remove the Liberal deterrent fees on medicare and hospital premiums imposed on senior citizens by the Thatcher government. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that I am sure that one of the first moves an NDP government would make in Ontario would be to remove the medicare premiums of \$528 per family that the Conservatives had put on in that particular province. It is estimated this move has saved Saskatchewan's elderly people \$5 million in the first year alone. We then took a hard look at the needs of this province's senior citizens and subsequently developed programs to meet these needs.

These needs are presently being met through programs such as the Saskatchewan

Income Plan. This plan provides senior citizens with a monthly supplement to their old age pension. Last year my department spent \$6.4 million on Saskatchewan Income Plan payments. We are constantly reviewing the needs of our senior citizens and as a result have increased expenditures on this program for the coming year. We have raised the maximum monthly benefit to \$25 for single pensioners and \$45 for couples. We have also increased, Mr. Speaker, the minimum monthly benefit to \$9 for couples and \$5 for single pensioners. Mr. Speaker, this is approximately \$2 million more and will add about 2,500 beneficiaries to the Saskatchewan Income Plan program.

MR. CAMERON:— You ought to be ashamed.

MR. ROLFES:— I would be ashamed if I had to say we gave nothing.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognized a need for a senior citizens' home repair program. This program originally provided elderly homemakers with a once only grant of up to \$500 for home repairs. We have enriched the program this year. The maximum grant has been increased to \$650 and will be renewable every five years. Income eligibility requirements have been expanded and this step is expected to increase the number of annual applications for senior citizens' home repair grants from 2,000 to 8,500. An additional \$3.3 million has been budgeted for this program in the coming year.

MR. CAMERON:— Fifteen cents a day.

MR. ROLFES:— Well add the two together and you've got 5.3 so far. I am still . . . I have just started. Funds for the Residential Rehabilitation Program have also been increased this year. In addition, 1,500 low-cost housing units for senior citizens will be built this year at a cost of \$21.8 million. We are now up to \$27 million. What did the Liberals spend? Mr. Speaker, you can see that the Liberals are getting a little edgy again. What did the Liberals spend on programs for senior citizens in 1971? Nothing, Mr. Speaker, nothing. They didn't count as far as the Liberals were concerned. They refused to acknowledge the need for income support. Oh, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, they did put a deterrent fee on, which cost senior citizens \$5 million. I should mention that. They refused to acknowledge the need for income support for maintenance and low-cost housing for Saskatchewan's elderly. The Ontario Conservatives in their latest budget don't appear to be any more sympathetic.

Last year this government allocated \$45 million for Property Improvement Grants. Many of the recipients of this grant are senior citizens. We have increased expenditures of this program by about \$4.5 million to a total of about \$50 million. The Liberals' proven difficulty in recognizing the needs of Saskatchewan senior citizens is nowhere more pointedly illustrated than by their lack of initiative in the area of health services.

Three programs developed by this government have filled a very real gap which existed in health care services, particularly for senior citizens. I am referring here, of course, to the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan, the Hearing Aid Plan and the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living. A total of \$23.7 million will be spent on these three programs in the coming year.

As mentioned by the Minister of Health in his address to this House last Friday, the Department of Health and Social Services are developing a proposal which will provide relief to special care homes, which accommodate individuals requiring extensive amount of nursing care. Mr. Speaker, \$4 million will be provided for this purpose and

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for additional level IV beds.

This year my department is budgeting \$1.2 million for construction grants to special care homes. Last year we spent \$11.1 million in subsidies to special care home residents.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce, tonight, that the subsidies for level II will be increased to \$144 and for level III they will be increased to \$430. This amount..

AN HON. MEMBER:— Is that per month?

MR. ROLFES:— That is per month, yes. This will amount to a total of \$12.7 million of subsidies to special care homes in levels II and III.

Mr. Speaker, nursing homes alone are not, of course, the answer to all the health care needs of our senior citizens. We know that we must develop alternatives to institutionalization. Studies have indicated that the vast majority of senior citizens want to continue living in their own homes and communities for as long as it's humanly possible. Some action has already been taken by the Departments of Health and Social Services to develop programs such as Home Care Nursing, Meals on Wheels, Homemakers and Friendly Visiting.

This government presently funds 187 such projects throughout the province. The Health and Social Services Departments of this government have undertaken the task of developing a comprehensive home care program for the people of Saskatchewan. The primary target groups of this program, we hope, will be the elderly, the physically and mentally handicapped, the chronically ill and those persons who would otherwise occupy an acute care bed. The particulars of this program are presently being finalized and I will be announcing the program in the very near future.

This government has not ignored the social needs of our senior citizens either. One of the ways in which we have attempted to meet these needs is through the funding of senior citizen activity centres. These centres, probably more than anything else, assist our senior citizens in overcoming the feeling of aloneness, an alienation that is so real in our society. They provide opportunities for companionship, recreation and a sharing of interest and concerns. More importantly, they provide a form through which senior citizens can continue to keep in touch with, and contribute to, their own communities. In 1971 there were 13 such centres. Presently there are over 250 senior citizen activity centres in the province. Mr. speaker, we give those activity centres a 20 per cent construction grant, plus we pay 40 per cent of their operating. And judging by the number of applications for funding that my department receives from such centres, this number will certainly continue to grow.

Mr. Speaker, last year the Department of Social Services spent \$49 million on the care of and services to Saskatchewan senior citizens, 25 per cent of the entire Department of Social Services' budget. This year, the government has budgeted over \$100 million for programs which are aimed directly or indirectly at improving the quality and quantity of services available to our senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, \$100 million for senior citizens of this province!

The senior citizens of Saskatchewan have made a rich contribution to the development of our province. We feel it is only fitting that we take time to officially recognize this contribution. Therefore, the week of June 18 to 24 has been declared "Saskatchewan's

Salute to Seniors Week" and the number of events and activities appropriate to this special week will, hopefully, be organized in every community in honor of their senior citizens.

Members opposite have often criticized my department and this government of not providing for senior citizens. We have seen how the Liberals provided for them, and with the examples of Conservative Ontario and Manitoba, to look at, we have a pretty good idea of what Saskatchewan Tories would do, given the chance. I say the senior citizens of Saskatchewan cannot afford to give either of these parties another chance, a chance to bring back deterrent fees, a chance to close hospitals. You had your chance in the '30s. We know what you did then — a chance to cut back on money for health care services and a chance to cut housing and social programs. Your record in the '30s should last us for at least 200 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now turn to employment programs. Figures released today by Statistics Canada once again illustrate the federal government's inability to control levels of unemployment in Canada. The official unemployment figure now stands in excess of one million; the unofficial figure is probably closer to 1.7 million. One of the fed's solution is a toughening up of unemployment insurance regulations. Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to try and prevent people from abusing the unemployment insurance but I am opposed when the federal government tightens up the unemployment insurance regulations and expects us as provinces to pick up the costs for those when those people come on our social assistance rolls.

Mr. Speaker, just last week every provincial minister expressed his concern that their assistance rolls were going up because the federal government refused to stimulate the economy and provide jobs so that people would have an opportunity to work. But, Mr. Speaker, despite the lack of activity by the federal government and despite the national problem of unemployment, Saskatchewan has consistently managed to maintain one of the lowest levels of unemployment in the country. This province's present unemployment rate is 5.1 per cent, the second lowest in the country and well below the national rate of 9.5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that 9.5 per cent is a disgrace and any government that is willing to put up with that doesn't deserve to reign. Saskatchewan has been able to . . .

MR. CAMERON:— Would the minister permit a question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. ROLFES:— No. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been able to maintain this low rate of unemployment through the development of progressive and innovative employment programs. I would like to briefly mention some of the ways in which this government has provided job opportunities for the people of this province who are trying to enter or re-enter the working world. Too often in the past many people in Saskatchewan were written off, simply because they had a particular mental or physical handicap. This government has been able to provide work opportunities and training for many who were previously ignored. We made use and still make use of such programs as training on the job. We have work preparation centres and work activity programs. We developed the Employment Support Program. This program has gone further to destroy the myth fostered by members opposite concerning those on public assistance than has any other program initiated by any government.

The Employment Support Program has proven that given a chance people on assistance prefer to work if work is available for them. We have made this work available at the provincial level. Of over 2,000 people who have participated in the Employment

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Supply Program over the past four years more than 80 per cent of them have not returned to the welfare rolls. They were given a chance to learn a trade or to be accepted back into the work force. Now that they have they want to stay there. Because of the past success of the Employment Support Program, we intend to continue and expand the program in the coming year. We have increased funds to this program by \$1.6 million over last year so we can continue to provide training and jobs to people who want to work.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to day care. Over the past few years an ever increasing number of women have entered or re-entered the work force either because of personal preference or financial necessity. Many of these women are working mothers. This government recognizes this trend and recognized the accompanying need for increased and improved day care services. In February of 1974 we officially launched a day care program. This program proved to be of tremendous benefit to working mothers throughout the province and continues to be so. We have enriched the day care program this year again. We have increased grants to day care centres. Renovation grants have been increased from \$100 to \$200. Renovation and start-up grants will be admitted into one accountable start up grant of \$400. We have added a \$500 grant for equipment and we have increased special supervisory grants for handicapped children from \$50 per child per month to \$150 per child per month.

Next year, Mr. Speaker, has been proclaimed International Year of the Child. We have a number of specific projects and events in mind in recognition of this year and are presently corresponding with the federal government in this regard. Our specific plans for International Year of the Child will be announced at a future date.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, members opposite often tell us we are not doing a good job of running this province. This Budget proves that they are dead wrong. We know what the Liberal's track record was like and we see what the Conservatives in Manitoba and Ontario have done: fewer and poorer services to people, increased taxation, increased unemployment and resource giveaways are the Liberal and Conservative's solution to a faltering economy. Why should we expect anyone to tell anything different from Saskatchewan Tories. Using past and present performance as a yard stick, Liberals and Conservatives alike have given us no reason to believe their cries of, "We can do it better". Unlike Liberal and Conservative governments across Canada the Blakeney government is not cutting back on services and we are not incurring huge deficits. Our record is there for all to see and it's a record of which the people of Saskatchewan can be justly proud.

This government has made many accomplishments since 1971, some of which I have talked about today. These accomplishments have been made possible through this government's progressive resource policy, a policy which recognizes the combined role of government and private enterprise in developing this province's natural resources and a policy which ensures that benefits from these resources accrue to the people of the province. With these resource revenues we have been making sure that Saskatchewan people not only receive the highest number and quality of human services available in this country but also that the people of our province are insulated from the national economic disaster facing most of the rest of the country.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a good place to live and this Budget promises to make it even a better place. I am confident that the strong leadership role of Allan Blakeney will continue to benefit the people of this province in the future as it benefits us all today.

Mr. Speaker, from what I have said you can certainly detect that I will oppose the amendment and whole heartedly support the Budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CAMERON:— Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would take a question before he takes his seat. Would the minister take a question?

MR. ROLFES:— No.

MISS L.B. CLIFFORD (Wilkie):— I am sorry that the Minister of Highways had to leave because I was going to thank him for the 20 miles that he is going to pave in my constituency. Oh, there you are! Thank you very much. But if you are thinking of more bridges we could put a couple of bridges in my constituency.

I was quite upset by the Minister of Social Services, however, particularly because he continues to perpetuate the myth about the long, lean Liberal years when he should be talking about the insensitive inflationary years of the NDP.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MISS CLIFFORD:— He continues to say that all the low cost housing, he gives all credit to the provincial government whereas 75 per cent of it really is federal money, 5 per cent of it is sponsored by the local government, leaving the rest to the province. So don't try to perpetuate any more of these myths.

As well you were talking about unemployment and what you are doing about it and I would like to ask you what you are doing about the 72 per cent of the 30,000 native people in this city that are unemployed? What have you done about that type of figure? And when you are giving us these figures make sure that it is the real figures not really what you want to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak briefly in this Budget Debate. The Minister of Finance stated that there were two necessities that guided him when he was making this Budget, the first was the need to protect the people from increases in the cost of living he says and the need to create jobs. I think rather though, Mr. Speaker, there was an overruling factor that was guiding him when he was creating this Budget and that was the beginning of a giveaway program for an election campaign which they hope to get underway. The most glaring of these examples was the lowering of the provincial income tax rate from 58.5 per cent to 53 per cent of the basic federal tax. Now instead of having the highest income tax in Canada we only have the sixth highest income tax in Canada. We naturally welcome such a decrease but I was wondering why it didn't occur last year when the federal government indicated that they would have this leeway in their books.

Let's look for a moment at the increases that have occurred in the last few years. The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and the member for Maple Creek and Kindersley have all indicated in the last couple of days the increases in the residential power rates 57.2 per cent since 1975. Natural gas rates have been increased 93.7 per cent since 1974 and with the 8 per cent that they are now proposing it is going to be 101.7 per cent. Is that cutting down on the cost to the people of Saskatchewan? What about the telephone rates, Mr. Speaker? We are promised an 8 per cent increase as well. In the last two years there has been a profit no less of \$37 million in the Saskatchewan

Telecommunications budget. Did the Minister of Finance reduce the income tax last year, Mr. Speaker? No. Did he use the profits of the Crown corporations or the monopolies to reduce the burden that is placed on the citizens of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? No, instead he indirectly corrected this revenue to keep our deficit down to \$45 million. He is collecting a utility tax, Mr. Speaker, on all of the citizens of Saskatchewan — a method of indirect taxation. But who is hurt most by these political gains and politicking, Mr. Speaker? The people who are hurt most are my favorite topic of discussion, as the Minister of Social Services says they were his, and that is the senior citizens. The answer is always those who are on fixed incomes.

Let us look for a few minutes at the problems of the senior citizens. The members opposite have glowingly spoken of the Budget promises for the senior citizens, especially the Minister of Social Services. Increases in the Saskatchewan Income Plan benefits — \$5, Mr. Speaker — \$5. My colleague for Maple Creek and others have outlined the problems very well. Of the benefits to the senior citizens, they receive from the federal contributions of old age supplement and guaranteed annual income and the Saskatchewan Income Plan, the province pays \$300 a year of the \$3,433 a year and the federal tax is indexed to the rising costs.

That percentage share of costs is nothing to be hollering about on the other side of the House — 16 cents per day. Is that something to be proud of? What can you buy for 16 cents a day, three quarters of a chocolate bar perhaps, I don't know, but are you proud of that figure — 16 cents a day? Why weren't some increased costs for the power, gas and telephone eliminated for senior citizens? These token increases show a lack of concern over the increased costs and is a slap in the face of senior citizens — 16 cents a day I say, Mr. Speaker.

I think what they have been doing is trying to indicate that when you plant a sapling you try to save the forest instead of one tree. Mr. Speaker, instead I think that they can't see the forest for the trees.

You said that you were going to make supplementary monthly payments to nursing homes on behalf of heavy care residents. That is a commendable effort I say to the Minister of Social Services, but is simply a carrot that is hanging over the heads of the senior citizens for the voters. If you want to do something to really help you can increase those supplements to each resident of the nursing homes. You have announced an increase but you can increase them further. This would be a greater asset to senior citizens. You continue to put an increasing strain on those senior citizens with minimum incomes who do not qualify for Saskatchewan Income Plan. Their small savings are quickly being used up by the high cost that you charge for nursing homes. They live in dread and despair of having to be supported by the government — a state in lifestyle which their upbringing has conditioned them to feel is undesirable and a loss of dignity. No amount of juggling the figures change the fact that Saskatchewan successfully competes for the highest nursing home rates in Canada. I ask, Mr. Speaker, what is the price of dignity to this government? I guess what it all comes down to is the way in which we spend our money, Mr. Speaker, its priorities. It can be compared to parents who have a food budget. Are they going to spend a large portion on feed which is good for the health of their children or are they going to buy a portion of goodies and junk foods which only provides the appearance of care?

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the government, like the latter parents are simply giving the appearance that they care about the people of Saskatchewan and they are not caring about the realistic problems of the senior citizens. I commend the

government, Mr. Speaker, for the additional increases in the senior citizens home repair program. As well, you propose to increase the number of level IV beds. It is encouraging to know the government is finally listening to some of our proposals. How could the government have spent money for senior citizens that would really have benefited them more? This is the question. We have suggested on numerous occasions that the logical answer to the problems in nursing home costs would be to cover all levels of care under medicare and have them under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health to cut down on the overlapping of costs and foster continuity, a more economical way to get value from the taxpayers' dollar. For those senior citizens still at home, reduction in power, gas and telephone rates. We have suggested, Mr. Speaker, that because we believe in the deinstitutionalization of care for the senior citizens and appreciate their contribution to Saskatchewan that a Liberal government would, and this government should, work with municipal governments to give our senior citizens tax breaks in their property taxes, hold firm their utility and other housing costs to the extent that such taxes and costs not rise higher than they were when they became 65 or retired at a later time. That would be a positive step, Mr. Speaker, to assisting those who need it most.

Let us look for a moment at the home care options program. Experts working in the health field have a number of concerns about it, two of them being that your present suggestions for the home care options program will not use the present personnel and programs to the utmost consideration but will do much basically to add bureaucracy and costs. It is time the minister and the government listen to the public opinion and implement the best type of program possible, not just spend money because they want to add another program. Take some time from your election frenzy and seriously consider the health care personnel and the opinion of the public so that you can implement the best program.

Mr. Speaker, I find it quite amusing that the Minister in charge of SPC does not care to listen to the suggestions because he is the cause of most of the problems of the senior citizens right at the moment. I would suggest that perhaps he could listen and take some of this to heart so that he could eliminate some of the problems which senior citizens have.

Mr. Speaker, what about the money that is spent on the Prescription Drug Plan? How can we best make use of the money that is being spent in this manner? My colleague from Saskatoon Eastview and myself have outlined on numerous occasions how the plan can become more workable. I won't go into those details at the moment. It could be much improved by covering all the drugs for senior citizens as prescribed by their doctor. As you may recall, I have made this distinction before, because many doctors prefer other drugs that are not in the formulary. This is particularly true with coronary and high blood pressure problems, conditions that are most affecting senior citizens. I don't feel that we should force people to use other prescriptions than are prescribed by their doctor, simply because they are not in the formulary and therefore bought at a cheaper rate by the government from a preferred dealer. The minister again, if he had a chance and hadn't spoken would say, well all the other provinces are doing it that way. That's not good enough. As concerned representatives, we must not allow senior citizens to be penalized in this manner. This is a manner in which our money could be spent to the benefit of the senior citizens if the government were sincerely concerned about their welfare.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss briefly the Budget in relation to corrections and youth services. For some time I have stressed that remand centres

must not be in correctional centres but in separate facilities and that the emphasis on community corrections and reduced reliance on incarceration, as the initial response to criminal behavior, is good. I would hope that the funds provided in the Budget for the five more small decentralized facilities for short-term offenders would accomplish these goals. I would hope, at the same time, that the minister has considered in his Budget that probation continues to be a serious problem due to under staffing, lack of structure and cumbersome and an ineffective means of reacting to misbehavior and violation of the probation order.

As well, I have previously mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that there is a void in the area of juvenile corrections and services. Juvenile offenders between the ages of 16 and 18 presently have little alternative other than jail. The Maher Report also recommended that there should be a concentrated effort to offer services to continue assistance to the emotionally disturbed individual and provide alternative programs to institutional jail situations. I have proposed that we look at reorganizing our departments and consolidate all the special services for children and youth within the province. If additional money were required it would be a positive way in which to spend more money but I add however, that a new division as far as these new provisions does not necessarily need to be created but simply a reorganization of priorities, responsibilities and personnel. These are productive, positive and realistic ways to budget tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. We must look into the future, not just pile temporary solutions on top of temporary solutions or hope that another department will look after the problem.

Such was the case when I asked the minister the other day about making good for government debts to Ranch Ehrlo for the cost of them during the Maher inquiry. The Ranch tried to get back on its own feet in the budget of the next year and instead of shouldering the responsibility they couldn't decide which department would take up the dilemma and take up the responsibility — typical planning and realistic solutions of this government — they can't see what the real problems and the solutions are.

As I close I would like to quote from a book by Geoffrey M. Calvert, *Pensions and Survival*, on the section which says:

From a point of view of elected officials, of course, it is supremely logical to vote for benefits but not for the taxes to pay for them. In this way the politicians win support of public employees but do not alienate the taxpayers because the cost won't be felt during their political tenure.

Such is the case, Mr. Speaker. The government is clearly not caring if the solutions to our province's problems aren't the best ones in the long run, but hoping they simply can squeak through another election. It won't work, Mr. Speaker. It is time that they take responsibility and employ common sense, qualities that are lacking by the members opposite and the members to my left. Because of the lack of these qualities in the Budget I cannot support the motion but I will be proudly supporting the amendment.

MR. H.H.P. BAKER (Regina Victoria):— Mr. Speaker, so many remarks in this House over the past weeks have always referred to the civil service of this province and the numbers that we have on record indicating that we should cut the civil service, indicating that they are not doing their job; in other words, lay off people and not carry out the fine programs that we have. When I hear them ridiculing the civil service at times, having had the opportunity of being a civil servant for some 14 years, I think someone should stand up in defence of them. I think there is too much being said about

people who are doing an honest job for an honest day's pay. Some may ridicule them for carrying placards out in front of the Parliament but that is a right that this government gave them some 32 or 33 years ago, a right that they deserve, a right that I fully support.

When I think what is happening in Manitoba, if those stories that are coming out are true, with hundreds and hundreds of people being laid off or dismissed, families uprooted that have had seniority and have worked in programs, good programs that Mr. Schreyer had brought in and find that they were without work, purely to fill an election promise or for political advancement, I must say, Mr. Speaker, the day will come in three or four years that what they have done in that province will haunt the leaders of the day and they will become extinct in the next election.

I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to enter this debate on the Budget for 1978-79. I think the Budget speaks for itself but it is important that we continue to inform our people and the electorate of the many great things we have done and will do in the future.

I notice members across the way are having difficulty to point out flaws in the Budget. They know that under a New Democratic Party government the members view all situations with sincerity and are not afraid to move in on every aspect of government affairs, if they are detrimental to the Saskatchewan people. We are a free party working for free people who deserve a fair share of the economy.

As in the past years, opposition critics and members seem to know of no other words in the English language but restraint and the preaching of austerity. This year is no exception. These were the words expressed over and over from 1964 to 1971. As I said last year, because of the policies of restraint and austerity, Saskatchewan lost 103,000 people in those seven years.

Restraint and austerity have been and always will be the cause of increased unemployment, tight money and high cost money, higher interest rates and deficits.

Take a look at the Ottawa situation. Over \$8.5 billion to \$10 billion in deficits and over one million people unemployed — a tragic situation for our great Canadian nation, probably the wealthiest country in the world on a per capita basis, with a dollar that is losing its value and the confidence of other nations.

I must repeat what I said last year and I quote: "It is not the spending that causes inflation — it is the gouging from our people through high interest rates and the hunger by some for exorbitant profits." I said too, "Restraint and cutbacks in spending are not the answer. We need planned spending in our public sector to fill the gaps of unemployment." This Budget is trying to do that.

The private sector, we appreciate, is not able to provide the amount of investment to meet all employment needs.

This year's Budget has heeded my request even more so this year than last year. This increased spending will enhance the growth and overall economy for Saskatchewan. It will keep the wheels of our reliable construction industry turning. As we all know the construction industry and its related services are our biggest employers. That is why Saskatchewan has been able to boast of the lowest unemployment, most of the past year, in all of Canada. Our policies will keep our people here and will continue to bring

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many of our former citizens back with additional new ones.

It appears that the two opposition groups have now joined forces in their similar criticisms of our financial structure.

This year the Budget has eased up on restraining funds and has increased capital spending by \$140 million. I am personally pleased about this to spend more than last year. I said last year we should be spending more because unemployment will creep up on us, and it did, to around 6 per cent at present. If we follow your logic across the way, that unemployment figure will be over 10 per cent by next March. The cry seems to be create unemployment — put them on welfare or unemployment insurance as Ottawa has done to over one million unemployed in this country. Those critics across the way managed to get headlines which read: "Critics Deplore Lack of Restraint". That headline should read: "Critics Will Bring On Unemployment, Recession And Depression". Some day they will look upon those write-ups as the greatest error they ever made in their political history.

What does this Budget do?

1. It will create employment — an indication of some 4,400 positions.
2. It will increase the incomes of senior citizens by \$25 a month for a single person — for married couples to \$45 a month.
3. It will give Regina an increase of \$2.14 million or more in revenue — to help hold down the mill rate.
4. It gives \$200 to \$230 for the Property Improvement Grant, or as I call it, the Homeowners Grant — the plan that I advocated in 1965 which the former government picked up.
5. It will cut income tax by \$52 million, giving complete tax relief to 22,000 people as well as tax relief to many others — a drop from 58.5 per cent to 53 per cent, a drop of five and one-half points and a decrease of 9.5 per cent.
6. It increases the Home Repair Grant for senior citizens from \$500 to \$650 — given again in the fifth year.
7. It is putting the lid on electrical rates.
8. It increases the Saskatchewan Income Plan benefits.
9. Automobile insurance rates are cut back by 5 per cent.
10. An increase in financial assistance to small business — and a tax cut from 12 per cent to 11 per cent.
11. Youth employment funding will be increased to \$1.2 million, giving some 1,500 young people employment.
12. \$500,00 will be earmarked for high school students looking for work.
13. It gives \$680,000 for Regina's transit system and \$220,000 for transporting the

handicapped.

14. School boards in Regina are to get \$20 million — a 10.8 per cent increase in grants — hopefully they can hold their mill rate too.

16. Look at the additional capital expenditure for Regina:

— \$6.9 million for the Regina General and Pasqua hospitals for this year.

— \$23.3 million in the Sask Tel Tower building, ridiculed by many over there, plus creating 1,152 parking stalls on Cornwall Street to enhance the downtown parking; 18.8 million for the S.G.I.O. Tower for downtown Regina; an increase in the age to accommodate children from 5 to 12 years of age for free dental treatment. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I look forward in the future to a complete dental care plan.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to say that we in Saskatchewan have free medicare with no premiums or deterrent fees. We have a drug plan for all with only a \$2.25 addition fee. We have free chiropractic services; we have free testing for glasses; we have a good hearing aid plan; we have free handicapped needs in providing equipment and facilities. The increased transportation grants for our handicapped is a welcome gesture. Today in Regina, we have 11 buses in operation and I see another \$220,000 in the Budget for 1978 to give increased aid. Yes, a compassionate plan, thinking of the needs of others. Yes, we think about people, we believe in people, particularly those less fortunate.

In the Budget, more level IV care funds are available to look after those in that category. However, I still maintain personally, as I have said three years in this House, that all people in nursing and special care homes should come under our medicare plan to fulfill our laid down policies of years ago, to have a cradle to the grave program.

Mr. Speaker, pensions in Canada should be set for men at age 60 and for women at 55, if they wish to take them. This would open up the employment channels for most of our unemployed people.

Turning to agriculture, our primary industry must be kept strong. Most of the responsibility falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. They have failed the farmer. What do we see? Depressed prices for grain; depressed prices for livestock; hit and miss programs such as LIFT — many don't remember it and others would like to forget it — the farmers lost around 600 million dollars. Security for farmers is a must, particularly to attract many more young farmers. Things are very serious for the future of farmers. Yes, they need parity not charity in selling prices as against rising costs.

We must be concerned out west about the Crow's Nest rates; these must be retained at all costs. Farmers in small communities are really concerned about rail line abandonment which does affect them in many ways.

Yes, and we better look out that they don't do away with our orderly marketing system, the Canadian Wheat Board, a godsend to farmers. This should really be expanded to take in all grains. It will only be done in the future, Mr. Speaker, by a New Democratic government in Ottawa.

We have great wealth in this province and more is being found every day. We must develop this wealth for future generations, particularly in the field of oil, potash, uranium and other base metals.

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It was said in this House that Regina has the highest inflation rate. That may be true, but did you know that Regina has the second highest per capita income of all cities in Canada, second only to Edmonton.

I say the future looks good..Thank you, sir. I say the future looks good, you will have to keep the mayor. In not too many years the people of Saskatchewan will have the highest per capita income and I say this without fear of contradiction. We will have the highest per capita income compared to any province in Canada. Yes, we will exceed Alberta with its non-renewable resources.

In private enterprise, Mr. Speaker, you spend money to make money. In public business, you spend money to create employment and give a better quality of life.

Regina's industrial, commercial and residential growth has been beyond our expectations. Regina's building permits in 1976 were over \$176 million. Last year, 1977, the permits amounted to over \$183 million. This year, 1978 we are some \$4 million ahead of last year at this time.

The past three or four years have been difficult, too, because of inflation. The high cost of living created high property taxes. However with a new revenue sharing plan we will be able to hold or come close to holding our municipal mill rate. With revenue sharing over the next few years, we can look forward to coming closer to holding the line in future years, while still doing much in capital spending for needed projects. Yes, it is a budget that has foresight, giving solid growth and helping to curb unemployment.

Regina people appreciate the New Democratic Party and its approach to developing a secure economy for our families so that they can continue to earn well and keep providing a good life and future for our children. Not only this year, but for years ahead.

I thank the people of Regina Victoria constituency for electing me to this Legislature so that I am able to do my part in helping to provide security and a good quality of life, not only in Regina but for all the people in Saskatchewan. Our population has been on the upswing since 1971.

We will continue to build a solid economy allowing all Saskatchewan people to share in our resource moneys and not let others take most of it out of our province. Our slogans will continue to be prosperity, security and assuring freedom from want; freedom from deterrent fees; freedom from poor wages; freedom from paying hospital and doctor bills; freedom from paying chiropractic fees; freedom from paying dental bills for our children; freedom from high costs of car insurance and personal liability charges; freedom from high costs for hearing aid; freedom from wholesale home and farm foreclosures, and there are many more benefits I can speak of.

We know what we went through under former governments, Mr. Speaker. Heaven forbid that we ever have to go through those days again. I know the people of Saskatchewan appreciate this government because it has been the only proven one that has done the needed things for our youth, our young couples with families and our pioneers, the senior citizens.

Our 75th Anniversary for our Queen City of Regina this year will be celebrated with joy. Our pioneers played an important part in laying a good foundation. You and I must continue to build on that foundation, now and for future generations.

The New Democratic Party is and has been working for us. Because of this the next provincial election for the New Democratic Party and government will meet with even greater success at the polls. I am prepared to support the Premier if he decides to call an election this year. Not only would we win but we would win with even more seats. This Budget, while called an 'Action Budget' is one that gives security, employment and is one of compassion, thinking of the needs of others.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose the amendment and support the Budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. E.B. SHILLINGTON (Member of Government Services):— Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter this Budget Debate. I believe the Minister of Finance has presented a sound Budget. I am convinced that it comes to terms with some of the fundamental problems facing us today.

I notice, Mr. Chairman, that a number of comparisons were made with other budgets. All of those comparisons, I might add, were made by this side of the House. I suppose that goes to show how good our Budget is. We haven't heard the opposition compare this Budget with other budgets as they have in the past. There is a good reason for that, Mr. Speaker. Other members have pointed out that the Ontario budget is a real horror story — from the point of view of the individual. Other speakers have noted, Mr. Speaker, that the province of Ontario increased health premiums by 37 per cent — a regressive tax if ever there was one. It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the administrator of the hospital system in Ontario noted that even with that increase in hospital premiums, the number of hospital beds would decrease by 5 to 10 per cent. I noted in reviewing the Ontario budget that they take in, in Ontario, more from lotteries than they do from corporate income taxes. Surely that is a scandalous situation, Mr. Speaker, in a province which has the head office of most of Canada's corporations in it.

The member for Thunder Creek professed to be shocked at the Saskatchewan deficit. He didn't bother to compare the Saskatchewan deficit with the Ontario deficit. They have a total budget of \$14.5 billion and a deficit, Mr. Speaker, of \$1.3 billion. In other words, 9.4 per cent of their budget is borrowed. Compare that with Saskatchewan, where a measly one-quarter of one per cent of our Budget is borrowed. Surely, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that the Ontario budgeting is sound and ours is poor is another example of Conservative financial wizardry.

I noted the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, haven't compared Saskatchewan with Manitoba. Indeed, I suspect the Progressive Conservative caucus opposite are going to be pretty shy of any comparison with Manitoba for some time to come. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Progressive Conservative caucus opposite will be disowning any relationship with Manitoba. They were very proud of Manitoba after the election. This was a sign of things to come across the country. I am not so sure it will be now.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Manitoba is an example of what happens if a right wing party is elected and actually attempts to implement the drivel that they peddle. I have watched with amazement the actions of Sterling Lyon. He is a true reincarnation of Herbert Hoover. I felt, Mr. Speaker, that we had learned some lessons in the great

depression. I thought we had learned that when the economy is weak there is a role for government to play in encouraging expansion. I thought those lessons were firmly implanted in everybody's mind. Not so, however, the good Premier of Manitoba. At a time when the economy of Manitoba is weak, a good deal weaker than Saskatchewan's, he is slashing budgets, he is cutting out all capital works projects and he is firing public servants. He is attempting to do for Manitoba what Herbert Hoover did for the States. My guess is he will win as many elections and he will occupy the same exalted place in history. I predict the government of Manitoba will go down in history as a bizarre one term government.

I don't want to dwell on the Manitoba experience too long, but as I said, it's an example of what happens when a right wing party take themselves too seriously. It is a lesson, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatchewan as to what could be expected here from the Progressive Conservatives if, woe betide us, they should ever reach their goal of being in government.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government instituted in Manitoba a freeze on buildings which had been started, or in the drawing stage. That is not an example of responsible government and their action has not met with much enthusiasm.

A recent article in the Journal of Commerce quoted the Labour Relations Director of the Winnipeg Building Exchange (that's the contractors' organization) predicted a 35 per cent unemployment rate this winter in Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, that's a higher rate of unemployment than Winnipeg had during the depression. The article goes on to say that the move by the Conservative government was taken at a time when Manitoba's construction trade was weak, following a year when high unemployment figures were setting new records. It is a sad example, Mr. Speaker, of what the people of Saskatchewan could expect from Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Budget is exactly what is needed. It holds the line on operating expenses. At the same time it dramatically increases capital expenditures and cuts taxes. This is intended to spur what is admittedly a sluggish economy. We admit, Mr. Speaker, the economy is sluggish. We do not claim credit for the booms and we do not accept the blame for the recession. Rather than taking credit for the boom we sought to build on it. We encouraged small industries to develop in Saskatchewan. We strengthened the family farm. When the economy is weaker we will do what we can to take whatever measures are possible to spur the economy. Contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with the behavior of the old-line parties who don't believe in a planned economy. They believe a government ought to ride like a cork in the ocean and be blown to and fro by whatever chance brings. When the economy is good, they take credit for it. When it's bad, they find some villain, Mr. Speaker. The former Liberal government found the villain and that was labor. Their answer to the recession of the late 1960s was labor. I don't know what sort of a villain the Conservatives would find but I am sure they would find one, maybe welfare recipients, maybe public servants, who knows. We can be sure, Mr. Speaker, that it would be some group who can't protect themselves, some group who have no voice.

I would like to make some comparisons of my own, Mr. Speaker. I would like to compare the fiscal management of this government with that in Ottawa. During the good years, Saskatchewan put away around \$200 million. Now, when the economy is weaker, we can run a deficit without borrowing any money. Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to compare that with the government of Ottawa. In the last fiscal year their deficit will be around \$10 billion. That means they are borrowing 23 per cent of what they spend. At a

time when strong leadership is needed they have very few options. The contrast with Saskatchewan is striking. We expect the federal budget in a month or so. I don't know what it is going to say. I'm sure it will paint a rosy picture, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Saskatchewan know better. They know that the present federal government has no qualms about making promises before an election that they can't keep afterwards. I am sure it will be rosy but I don't think it will be believed.

Mr. Speaker, I was going to make a number of comments about the Department of Government Services. I am proud of the way that we have saved money in a number of ways. The members opposite might scoff. We have two buildings, Mr. Speaker, the Wascana Provincial Office Building and the Saskatoon Provincial Office Building which will be on time and under budget. I challenge the hon. member for Wascana and the hon. member for Regina South who have a recent interest in federal politics, to quote a federal building — to name a federal capital project which has come in time on budget — never, never.

Mr. Speaker, I was going to go on and mention the Central Vehicle Agency where we have saved a considerable amount of money using fewer cars, running more miles on them and running smaller cars. I was going to go on and discuss our policy for leased space. It is a fact that our leased space costs us 20 per cent less than the market value. We are able to do that because we have the most sophisticated leasing system, as sophisticated a leasing system as exists anywhere in the world. We make extensive use of computers. We keep track of what the government needs and we try to match these with the leases and the opportunities. We apply uniform standards.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to compare that with the federal government. It's unfortunate the member for Wascana and the member for Regina South aren't here to listen how well their federal government does. This is an article in the Financial Post dated February 2. It goes on to say there were indications that the government's handling of its \$20 billion worth of real estate is far from businesslike. The Senate Finance Committee was told by senior public works officials the federal government has no way of knowing whether federal office space is used or used efficiently. At one point in time, Senator John Godfrey took issue with the claim that officials only lose track of 3 per cent of the space. He said, "There's no way of knowing what the real vacancy rate is." "That's right," said the federal officials. The truth of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the present federal government has in excess of five office buildings, the size of the Government Administration Building which they don't know what is being used. So that in effect they have lost five office buildings.

Mr. Speaker, I was going to go on to discuss our energy conservation program, something I am very proud of. Mr. Speaker, we have used less energy in our buildings this year than we did last year. We have done this in a variety of ways. We have turned off the lights at night, we have turned down the heat at night. Mr. Speaker, we have taken out lights. One example is Kelsey Institute and Saskatoon Technical Institute (STI), we have removed 400 lights. In that building alone, we have saved \$3,000 a year in energy costs. In the Melfort Court House as a result of conservation measures gas consumption decreased by 12 per cent and energy consumption decreased by 3 per cent. The Provincial Office Building in North Battleford, the gas consumption decreased by 16 per cent; electricity 20 per cent. In Meadow Lake gas consumption decreased by 18 per cent; electricity 10 per cent. The Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Science, energy consumption decreased by 35 per cent. We'll continue, Mr.

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Speaker, with these kinds of programs saving the Saskatchewan taxpayers' money.

One of the most exciting areas, Mr. Speaker, and I'll close shortly, one of the most exciting areas in Saskatchewan is in the arts. We have had many successes in the past year. We have one play, Mr. Speaker, called "Paper Week" which has been filmed by the National Film Board which has been entered into the Academy Awards. The National Film Board is confident that this film will win an Academy Award and I am as well.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was part of a film making experience we'll always remember. We filmed W.O. Mitchell's, "Who Has Seen The Wind." Mr. Speaker, most Saskatchewan people are aware of the awards this film has won. Not so many are aware that this film has been a smash box office success. It is estimated, Mr. Speaker, that this film will become the most successful film in Canadian film history, easily surpassing such films as "The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz." It has already grossed over \$1 million in box office sales. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be so uncharitable as to read back to the opposition some of their speeches when we lent them the money. This is not a time to be that unkind. They were critical. They said we'd lose our shirts. I suppose that's what is to be expected, Mr. Speaker. The opposition are always indulging in petty criticism, always able to see the problems. This government saw the opportunity. We invested in it and we told the Saskatchewan story.

Mr. Speaker, I have gone over my time. I take great pride in supporting this Budget. It is a continuation of our efforts to wrest for the people of Saskatchewan, the benefits that we derive from our resources, but it is something more than that, Mr. Speaker. This is tangible evidence of what those benefits mean to Saskatchewan people. This Budget, as contrasted with the Ontario budget, is tangible evidence of what a resource policy is which is structured to get back for the people, the benefit of their resources means, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in supporting the Budget and opposing the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 10:14 o'clock p.m.