

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 15, 1979

EVENING SESSION

Budget Speech Debate Continues

MR. G. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to comment on the budget speech delivered by the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) on March 8 past, a budget that has been named by many as the leaky budget. Mr. Speaker, after perusing the contents of the documents delivered to me, namely the budget speech and estimates on March 31, 1980, I am inclined to agree that it's a leaky budget in more ways than one. Mr. Speaker, after close scrutiny of many of the statements or arguments put forth to support the minister's plans in his speech, the old saying they wouldn't hold water is quite true. Indeed, they are very leaky and wishy-washy. Mr. Speaker, I don't propose to be as well skilled in the field of economics as the Hon. Minister of Finance, but I do believe I have an average mathematical ability and therefore I do believe there is some merit in the observations I propose to make in the course of my speech.

First, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the elected government should be honest and truthful with the taxpayers of this province. By that I mean, Mr. Speaker, every preamble to a budget speech should start out as follows:

I, your Minister of Finance, on behalf of your elected representatives, propose to spend x millions of dollars on your behalf for the ensuing 12 months and I propose to extract that money from you in the following manner. In order to spend the previously mentioned millions on your behalf in addition to that which I propose to take from you by direct and other means, I also expect I'll have to borrow x millions of dollars to meet that expenditure.

That, Mr. Speaker, should be the opening paragraph. If there is one thing I know for sure it is the painful truth the government as such has no money, only that which they get by taxation directly or otherwise from the people in this province, be they individuals or corporations. Mr. Speaker, many times during the recent campaign, I was confronted with the statement, Oh well, the government is paying for it. Oh well, who cares, the government has lots of money. They give out grants for this and grants for that. Mr. Speaker, this is false. The economy and philosophy that is being forced upon our people, young and old, today by the government opposite is untruthful, irresponsible and dangerous. For example, Mr. Speaker, I have seen repeatedly in recent weeks, an ad on television showing a gentleman expounding about the medicare card and then he finishes the ad by saying, You know, it's free.

Mr. Speaker, let me set the record straight here and now. I am not against medicare but I do abhor lies and untruths. Medicare is not free. You know that, Mr. Speaker, and all the members of this Chamber know that. If we as individuals were to use similar tactics in advertising we would be guilty of misleading advertising. We all know medicare has to be paid for by the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, even those unfortunates who are on welfare, or senior citizens, or whatever their status in this province may be, pay towards medicare every time they purchase a taxable item. This 5 per cent sales tax if called by its proper name is E & H tax — education and health. So, Mr. Speaker, let the government of the day call it the way it is. Let them have the intestinal fortitude to say to the people of this province, look you don't pay any medicare premium, senior citizens

receive reductions for this and that; people in organizations communities, etc., receive a grant for this and that. But we first receive the money from you by easy extraction, then we pay it back in all these different forms of so-called free programs.

Mr. Speaker, in short the government is saying we'll handle your money for you because we have experts like the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) who is well-schooled in economics. I say to you the time has arrived when the people of this province must not be misled anymore by misleading advertising, pamphlets filled with only half the story, half-truths, bribed with their own money, etc. Let us tell it the way it really is. Government can only do for the people what the people can do for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, in short what I have been trying to point out to the Minister of Finance and his colleagues opposite is, please let's quit trying to con the people of this province into thinking that all the giveaway programs of government are free. Search your conscience. Let your conscience be your guide and tell it the way it is! In order for you to give as a government you, as a government, must first receive. Then if you don't receive enough in any given year, you borrow on the people's behalf and the people then pay the interest on what you borrow.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn to those portions of the budget which refer to the departments of which I am the opposition critic. First, I would like to refer to the Department of Telephones. This could also be referred to as telecommunications, or the department of real estate! This is what we should be calling it, the department of real estate. Mr. Speaker, in the estimate document I received I note there is only a slight reference to the Department of Telephones on page 99, which indicates an amount of \$54,080 will be spent for programmed services by a staff of three persons. I presume that further details in respect to the Department of Telephones (telecommunications, real estate, etc.) spending will be forthcoming in other documents to be filed during this session.

I was able to find some enlightening information in the budget speech. I found that the gross debt of the Department of Telecommunications, as of December 31, 1978, was \$423,925,000 and some. The proceeds from loans in 1978 in respect to Sask Tel is \$80 million.

I happen to be one of those ordinary citizens who does not like to play around with statistics for the sake of confusion. I'm only interested as a taxpayer and a citizen in the end result.

In the case of telecommunications, financing and management, it would appear, Mr. Speaker, that every man, woman and child in this province is saddled with quite a debt in respect to telecommunications. If the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) told it like it really is, the comparison used on page 47 of his speech would indicate the cost to a taxpayer based on the figures used would be much, much larger.

Unless I'm really all wrong, the interest which must be paid on money borrowed by or for telecommunications should be added to the cost. Also, Mr. Speaker, I note that on page 48 the Minister of Finance says they will be needing another \$52 million in 1979-1980 for telephones! Another 52 million! Let's take a look at these figures, Mr. Speaker.

I started to calculate how much the interest per person would be at 10 per cent on the \$52 million etc., and got to the point where it was so ridiculous I thought I would leave it

to the minister to tell this House how much telephones actually and factually are costing the users . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

I just love to hear this. You people remind me of a church sermon on Sunday morning. When the congregation starts to squirm in their seats you know the preacher hit home.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Oh yes, I presume the reason for the borrowing and the accumulated debt is because the department decided to go into the real estate business in order to build monuments in downtown Regina to His Worship, the NDP MLA for Regina Victoria, Mayor Baker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — I'm sure the public would really like to know all the facts about telecommunications' adventures into real estate, cable television, etc. I'm sure the public would like to know what really happens! Mr. Speaker, the people in the villages I'll have to wait, somebody doesn't want to miss my . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . speech here. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the people in the villages and on the farms really would like to know what the actual cost of the telephone service would be without the adventures taken by the department of telecommunications.

Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough to state the statistics of \$70 per family as per the comparison on page 47. I am satisfied the public is not interested in what costs are in comparison to other provinces. This is what we are interested in - we want to know what the rates could and would be without the adventures taken by the economists opposite with respect to closed circuit cable television co-ops and real estate, etc.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Why did the government choose a department of telecommunications to be the commercial real estate arm for the new deal for Saskatchewan? Why didn't they set up a commercial property land bank? I'll tell you why Mr. Speaker. They couldn't dictate to the possible tenants, those rotten multinationals, terms like the farmer's land bank is dictating. They hope these multinationals will occupy the commercial space they don't require for plush government offices.

Oh no, Mr. Speaker, there are special rules for all classes under this new deal which the Finance Minister says, and I quote, 'is now a reality'.

I must make clear my term 'rotten multinationals'. Now listen! It is of course the term the socialists opposite usually use when referring to large free enterprise corporations. It would appear that due to the mismanagement of one of our companies, namely Saskatchewan Telecommunications, with their adventures into real estate and gifts to closed circuit television, that our small towns, villages and rural areas will be denied the service of cable television for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad commentary for a public utility that in the past has been one of the best to be used by our government as a front for the commercial land bank operations.

I would like to turn to the Department of the Environment, for which I am responsible as

critic for this side of the Assembly. I do not believe time will allow me to go into all the serious errors in administration of this department, which, in this modern day of technology, is of utmost concern to everyone every day of their lives. Mr. Speaker, it is evident that the hon. member who was the previous Minister of the Environment was exiled to the north for his failure in the administration of the department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Or maybe, it is the case of the present Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bowerman) making such a mess of northern Saskatchewan that the Premier has decided to make him responsible for messing up the whole province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — That's all right, Ted. You can get back at me in about a minute. You're next. Hopefully the Department of the Environment will shape up and commence taking the responsibility seriously and attacking the serious environmental problems that come about from time to time with the sincerest of efforts which these problems deserve. I note that everybody laughs. I don't know why everybody laughs, thinks everything's funny. People in Saskatchewan don't think this business of environment is very funny and I can assure you, I don't. I refer to such problems as PCB spills, raw sewage flowing into the Moose Jaw creek, the quality of the water coming from such sources as Buffalo Pound Lake and others. Even if the hon. member thinks water runs off hills, he'll find out it doesn't. It is not good enough to hear about serious PCB spill only because someone in the media showed enough public responsibility to investigate and get at least some details to the public. No one, Mr. Speaker, on the other side of this House, no matter how eloquent and learned a scholar he may be, can explain away the mismanagement of the Department of the Environment in respect to the PCB spill at Federal Pioneer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — I ask, is this the only one that has occurred in Saskatchewan? Are there others that we have not been informed of in this House? If I was a betting man, I would give odds that there will yet be other incidents of PCB spills in Saskatchewan come to light. Mr. Speaker, I have on my desk proof positive, information about more past PCB spills that have never been made public . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Well, that's exactly what's been done in this province. These problems have been tabled but not by this side of the House. Apparently, where the so-called little spills occur, they can burn the wooden poles and anything else that will burn and dig up small areas of earth and haul it away in sealed containers. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for the power corporation (Mr. Messer) could and would enlighten this Assembly as to whether or not the procedures I have just outlined have been used or would be used in case of small spills of PCBs in Saskatchewan. I think it is only proper for me at this time to demand, on behalf of the citizens of this province, that any minister who is responsible for any equipment or whatever pertaining to PCBs and their possible location should advise this House so all persons will know where such dangers are and will, therefore, be cautious and helpful in reporting any probable spills or possible causes of spills.

I must say that I have found the opposite in regard to the Department of the Environment from the Department of Telecommunications as far as the two documents referred to earlier. In the case of the Department of the Environment, I find estimates

show an anticipated expenditure of \$6,719,000 and some for 1979-80, an increase of approximately \$1 million over 1978-79 and an increase in staff of 16 bodies. Let's, with all sincerity, hope that with an additional budget of \$1 million and 16 staff members they will do a job worth the expenditures because I am quite sure many people in this province feel as I do. We haven't had the best surveillance of environmental hazards we feel we should have had in the past couple of years for half-a-million dollars a year administration.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one more point in respect to environment before summing up.

It would appear the Department of Environment thinks . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Can't hear you, you will have to speak up.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — . . . (that's why I stopped, I wanted you to start thinking) . . . that there is no problem with raw sewerage escaping into Moose Jaw Creek. They say the spring run-off, if and when it comes, will resolve these problems. I would say to the minister that if this is the approach he and his department take in respect to effluence flowing into the waterways, I presume they take the same position in respect to the open ditch which runs from Diefenbaker Lake to the Buffalo Pound water supply.

Mr. Speaker, Buffalo Pound reservoir is a source of water for thousands and thousands of people. It would appear after repeated warnings from officials that the water quality is very questionable for human consumption, particularly at certain times of the year. This government still fails to find the funds from all of their mineral resources, etc., to put in place a pipeline from Diefenbaker Lake to Buffalo Pound. But, Mr. Speaker, they can take moneys out of the so-called heritage fund for the purchase of commercial property, etc., etc. I believe that a safe, sure water supply is more important to cities such as Moose Jaw, Regina, the Canadian air base at Moose Jaw and all other towns and villages served by Buffalo Pound than buying commercial property.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — If the government wants to show us that they put the people before money, let them put their money where their mouth is and guarantee a safe water supply to every human being, not only in Buffalo Pound area but in every area of the province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Good safe water is truly the most important resource we require in this country in order to survive. Let us make sure we start now to improve its quality and guarantee its supply.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says the NDP, the New Deal for People, is a reality. All I can say is I hope and I pray the new decade he boasts about is a decade of full disclosure of facts and information in respect to where he gets his revenue from, which is we the people. I also hope that he assures us that he can only give us back what he takes from us in the first place and what he borrows on our behalf. There are no free lunches and the majority of the citizens of this province know it.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier in his throne speech boasted of records and statistics of the

past 35 years of the NDP. He is right. I commend them for their achievements but for the sake of the record let us just give some Progressive Conservative statistics for the past 45 years in Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No record at all from 1934 to 1975. No record at all - 41 years of nothing. But, Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of Dick Collver the party came from 2 per cent of the popular vote to 18 per cent, then in the recent election from 18 per cent to 38 per cent. Doubled. Don't you people opposite ever forget this. Enjoy your realm. You may not have much time left.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Oh, yes, Mr. Speaker, about the leak. After reading the budget speech - I think the Finance Minister wants to hear this. After reading the budget speech, noting the terminology used, observing the glossy pictures, grass statistics, etc., it reminds me very much of the type of document put out during the reign of the NDP in British Columbia - Mr. John Twig was the economic wizard advisor to the ex-NDP Premier, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Speaker, I undoubtedly will not be supporting this leaky budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Introduction of Cadets

HON. E.C. WHELAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, via the House may I interrupt to introduce some guests. Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to introduce to the legislature 52 cadets of the 10th Field Artillery Cadet Corps seated in the Speaker's gallery. Their Commanding Officer, Major A.T. Joerissen and three other officers, Capt. H.S. Joerissen, Lt. Tweten and Lt. Poissey are with them. These gallant citizens, if I may coin a phrase, are here to observe the democratic process. We plan to meet them and to have a question period with them. The members join me, I am sure, in welcoming them and congratulating them for their interest and wishing them every success in their careers.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. G.R. BOWERMAN (Minister of the Environment): — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of this very welcome budget. I want to firstly thank the constituents of Shellbrook for again honoring me by my return to this Assembly. I have frequently said to members of this House that the difference between the Shellbrook constituency and the other 60 constituencies is that I am privileged to represent the finest constituents in Saskatchewan. I suppose that even some of my own colleagues would challenge my position in this regard.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Speaker, Shellbrook constituency has a long history in this Assembly. Its first member was elected in 1912. Therefore, it qualifies as one of the charter constituencies of our province. Shellbrook was one of the constituencies that did not go through some of the major boundary changes as some of the other constituencies did, but in 1975 the Independent Boundaries Commission did make a significant change in the boundaries by extending us, our boundary almost 100 miles to the east. This again took one of the older constituencies of our legislature. The

constituency that it took into account was the constituency of Torch River. That name has since disappeared from constituency list of names, and I want to suggest to Mr. speaker that I will be petitioning that new Legislative Assembly Act to give recognition to that part of our legislature's history by adding the name of Torch River to any new formulation of the Shellbrook constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate and commend my seat mate, the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) for an absolutely fantastic budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — Both in his presentation and in the content of his message he has again proven that the old CCF and the New Democratic financial and fiscal planning produces both wise social and positive economic stability. The time in our North American history when private enterprise governments have driven our American and our Canadian dollars into an all-time low and when these governments have similarly produced some of the highest unemployment rates in history and have budgeted the annual operating accounts of our countries and the states and the provinces into deficit after deficit. They have budgeted the annual operating accounts, not only of the states and the provinces, but of the municipal governments as well - into their deficit position. And, they also, Mr. Speaker, have increased their unfunded liabilities, while at the same time, here in Saskatchewan, we are only going through what is a minor and manageable deficit of cash flow.

Mr. Speaker, with our unemployment still the lowest, or at least among the lowest of the nation, with increased programming of approximately \$325 million for Saskatchewan people in 1979 and in 1980 with capital budgets of \$378 million for expenditure in 1979-80; with a net tax reduction of \$39.3 million and with a \$116 million nest egg in the heritage fund - what else can one say but a fantastic budget regarding the financial and fiscal planning and management policies of this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — Why should any Saskatchewan citizen follow the Tory suggestion that our Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) should resign?

Mr. Speaker, it leads me to comment further on the opposition stance in this legislature. The Conservative Opposition Leader and his membership in this House have not only embarrassed themselves, but they have embarrassed the legislature and they are embarrassing the people of Saskatchewan. The unfortunate aspect of this situation is that all hon. members of this Assembly are suffering the consequences of this mentality of Conservative Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, it is my suggestion that in order for there to be a more responsible cross-examination of the Treasury benches of the government, you should be recognizing some of the back benchers on this side of the House for some credible public examination, more so than the strawberry shortcake raffles and the water, which the member suggests now doesn't run up hill. He has obviously gone back and done his homework, to realize that the Moose Jaw creek doesn't run into the Buffalo Pound Lake.

One only needs to listen for a little while, Mr. Speaker, to the comments from one's friends and associates outside of the legislature, from the public at large and from the news commentators, to know that even though the Conservatives have become the

single official opposition in this legislature, their image as a responsible, informed and effective Opposition has depreciated to a state of absolute public embarrassment. I need only to suggest that all members should review the verbatim records of Hansard for the memoirs of a nothing Opposition. Matters are supposed to be of some political importance, but instead we have a strawberry shortcake raffle as the lead question from the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Arm River (Mr. Muirhead), who the other day rose in his place to ask a question about what we were going to do about the effluence flowing out of the Moose Jaw Creek into Peter Pond, and this evening suggesting that we should pipe water from Diefenbaker Lake into Peter Pond. Maybe the member doesn't know that the dam in his own constituency (called the Qu'Appelle Dam) is the dam which allows water to run into the Peter Pond Lakes.

The other question that was raised in the House the other day was an interesting question, I thought. They were asking why the Minister of Tourism didn't promote a weekend flight between Saskatoon and Regina, as if that was of major consequence to tourism development in Saskatchewan.

The other question was raised by the member for Rosthern (Mr. Katzman). He engaged in quite a debate here with the Attorney General and wanted to know why the Attorney General couldn't answer questions of interpretation regarding the hon. member's speech in the budget debate.

It would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, for us to turn (and sometimes I trust that members opposite and members of the legislature will turn) to the question period the day the Leader of the Opposition asked the question about the raffles in the Redberry Constituency. It's on pages 305 and 306, if you want the specific pages. Perhaps you can read that.

Mr. Speaker, before I proceed further, let me congratulate you on your appointment for the second term as Speaker of the Assembly. We noticed a traditional struggle, I thought, when you were being taken to your place as Speaker of the House. While you may have lost the battle, I think it is fair for us to say that you may well have won the war because you're there and we're here as your subjects, in this legislature at least. So I want to commend you for that position and for the fairness with which you deal with us in this House.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on the subject of your high office in this Assembly, I would be less than honest if I did not express some personal disappointment and further interest in the deletion that Your Honour makes in the daily recital of the Assembly prayer. I am aware of the considerations that are needed for greater universality and for the ecumenical spirit that goes on these days in our beliefs and in our traditions but I am also aware of our deeply rooted Christian traditions as a nation and as a province. I hope this legislature, on the same note, because of more of a desire for universality, will not cease to recognize and honor the two most celebrated events of our calendar; Christmas and Easter, which are both typically and historically lodged in that same Christian tradition and belief. I personally hope that you might be convinced in fact, Mr. Speaker, that the deletion is a loss not only to the traditions of our Assembly but, as well, in my opinion at least, the best traditions of our living heritage.

Perhaps Mr. Speaker could inform the Assembly at some appropriate occasion how the deletion came to be and whether it is a matter that received the attention of the Assembly or whether it was a matter entirely within the purview of Mr. Speaker's Office.

Mr. Speaker, I did not speak on the throne speech and I would like to welcome all new members to the Assembly and particularly commend my colleagues on this side of the House for their very able presentation and the distinctive contributions already made to the issues of this Assembly.

I would like to turn for a few moments and make some comments on the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and on our Northern Development programs. Mr. Speaker, the history of success of this government's commitment to northern people has yet to be fully appreciated in Saskatchewan. However, I can say with exception of the northern people, that the Saskatchewan model is more praised among our provincial neighboring governments than within our own province. I invite the hon. members, if they would care to do so, to view the Ontario scheme which pours in great sums of money and really doesn't do anything more than co-ordinate activities and the co-ordination is even not very significant.

Manitoba's Northern Development program under the Schreyer government has virtually been stopped and there is no northern development proceeding under the presently new Lyon Conservative government there. Alberta, with all its riches and potential and with the activities going on in the tar sands, still has no co-ordinated approach to its northern development schemes.

I want to express my own personal gratitude for the privilege to have served as our government's first minister of this very important initiative.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — This initiative, Mr. Speaker, has brought some equity and some justice to our northern citizens - the beginning of the end of much desperation, separation, forgotten responsibilities of the governments of the past. There were many consolations during those difficult years of confrontation and years of development - confrontation which came from so many and from such a variety of sources - but 98 per cent of which was from other than bonafide northern citizens. These consolations resulted from major drops in the welfare cases - about 40 to 50 per cent - because of the new opportunities for employment, because of the people's response to personal health and the advent of more doctors and nurses, more conveniences in the home and more new homes. Also a consolation was the personal response to family and economic planning with more social workers having the time for consultation and personal attention to human needs rather than just being issuers of welfare cheques. The response of young people was indeed heart-warming, Mr. Speaker. The response of young people and old persons to new schools and to recreational facilities, including curriculum changes that recognized language and cultural aspirations and particularly in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse which was one of the most emotionally charged and critical of all our problems from 1971 to 1975, and which is the second oldest settlement in Saskatchewan celebrating its bi-centennial birthday in 1976. Mr. Speaker, I am told that Ile-a-la-Crosse graduated its first high school students in its history one year after its 200th birthday. To myself, to the DNS staff, to our government and to the people of Ile-a-la-Crosse this is a most rewarding consolation for the commitment to change. Mr. Speaker, the graduation of those students took place under a locally elected school board. Mr. Speaker, with only a reasonable commitment from the government of the day, after four years 11 Ile-a-la-Crosse students have graduated from Grade 12 in Ile-a-la-Crosse. I invite all members, all of those who were in the House on those occasions and those who were out of the House, to recall some of the accusations, some of the sit-ins, some of the personality vilifications, some of the

threats, and all which were fanned by an ill-informed and sensationally-oriented press.

You will recall some of the remarks in the debates in this House, Mr. Speaker, by the former member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake who used to sit over on that side of the House talking about torture camps; the one who said that the northerners rejected the DNS and talked about under-the-table deals . . . the accusations went on and on.

There was another great consolation, Mr. Speaker, another great consolation. It came in June of 1975 after the hottest three and a half years of DNS existence. The predictions were that we would lose our shirts in the contest of 1975 because northerners they said, rejected the DNS. The results - and everyone knows those results - our New Democratic government was joined by two very successful colleagues; one from the new constituency of Athabasca (Mr. Thompson) with nearly 40 per cent of the total vote against three candidates and one from the newly-formed constituency of Cumberland (Mr. MacAuley) with nearly 45 per cent of the total vote against two candidates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — A greater consolation, Mr. Speaker, a greater consolation still on October 18th, 1978, when our colleagues wrapped up an overwhelming victory in the north.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — In Athabasca, my colleague Thompson, New Democrat, a decimal short of 59 per cent of the total vote.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — My colleague from Cumberland, Norman MacAuley, the New Democrat, a decimal short of 60 per cent of the total vote in northern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Speaker, that was the voice of bona fide northern residents - not the professed, not the transplanted, not the political pundits, not even the Metis Society of Saskatchewan or the northern municipal counsellors (two of whom, in fact, were part of the faint opposition in the 1978 election). Mr. Speaker, anyone would be foolhardy to believe that all of those voters in northern Saskatchewan, fully articulated the science and intrigue of partisan political debate as we understand it and as we have mastered it. Therefore, the final consolation for me, Mr. Speaker, is that northerners viewed the improvements in the bread and butter issues with the benefits brought about by the DNS programs since 1971. Liberals and Tories you'll remember were going to do away with DNS. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition said in the 1978 campaign that he was going to fire all of the employees of DNS and I ask the members opposite who got burnt in the 1978 election in La Ronge?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — I leave, Mr. Speaker, to my colleague, the hon. Mr. Byers, in my opinion one of the greatest human and social economic challenges this side of any third world endeavors which is in northern Saskatchewan today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to another subject which I think should be of considerable importance to this Assembly, that of treaty Indian land entitlements. I am pleased that the subject was raised in His Honour's address to this Assembly and I am pleased, as well, that the hon. member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake (Mr. Hammersmith) raised it. I wish to place on record of this Assembly as succinctly as I am able the significant and historical treaty Indian land debt in Saskatchewan which the federal government has recently called upon the province to settle. It will result in the transfer of approximately one million acres of Crown land in Saskatchewan to Indian reserve status. The very recent public statements of the hon. Mr. Falkner (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) continues to suggest the historically dispassionate attitude of Tory and Liberal governments in Canada for the past 112 years. Their near complete denial of written agreements and understandings, validated in the very foundation of the Canadian constitution and its succeeding governments, are a sad commentary on the integrity of our national government and of the political parties that have composed it, particularly as it relates to the Aboriginal rights of the Indian people in Canada. There are a few dates, Mr. Speaker, a few dates that we should remember and they go a long way back but they are dates which we should take into account.

As early as 1670 it was King Charles II who gave the new land of Canada to the Hudson's Bay Company for the production of fur. It was 1763 when the British parliament passed a royal proclamation that formed the basis of the treaties in Canada and in the United States. Firstly, that proclamation confirmed, Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal rights of Indian people and, secondly, it restricted purchases or settlement of the lands until agreements were made by the Crown to secure the lands from the Indian. In 1867 this responsibility was transferred to the national government at the time of confederation and thereafter Canada has had the sole responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians under Section 91(24) of the British North America Act. In 1870, Mr. Speaker, the new confederation purchased Rupert's Land and it involved two requirements, interesting requirements. The first one was that the Hudson's Bay Company must be appropriately compensated. The second was that there must be agreements with Indians before settlement could take place. It is interesting to know, Mr. Speaker, that the Hudson's Bay Company speedily received a cash settlement of approximately \$1 million and a land grant of one-twentieth of all the lands in the Fertile Belt. The Fertile Belt was considered to be from the Red River settlement near Winnipeg to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and south of the North Saskatchewan River. In Saskatchewan alone, Mr. Speaker, this amounted to 3,352,958 acres to the Hudson's Bay Company. In order to meet the second requirement Canada entered into the sorry number treaties between 1871 and 1906. This Rupert's Land was later to become the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Generally in Saskatchewan the treaties, among other provisions, set aside lands for Indians on the basis of 128 acres per person or one square mile per family of five. By 1907, Canada had designated 1,564,091 acres to Indian reserves within the Saskatchewan borders. There were at least 15 Indian bands who still had not received their full entitlement, according to the records. All Indian treaty land entitlements, if they had been fulfilled at the time when the treaties were being signed and the land grants were being made, would have only required an additional 245,000 acres to complete that commitment. Today approximately 1.2 million acres are required to fulfill the same entitlement.

I would ask you to remember, Mr. Speaker, - 3.3 million acres plus \$1 million in cash to the Hudson's Bay Company (and it was settled almost immediately); 1.5 million acres, plus some other treaty provisions to the Aboriginal race - and in 1979 we are still attempting to finalize those land entitlements. This was a historical shame, in my opinion! It must be further recorded that from 1907 to 1930 Canada deleted from and disposed of 376,686 acres of the already established 1.5 million acres of Indian reserves in Saskatchewan.

There is growing evidence from the research that some, if not considerably large amounts, of these surrendered lands involved fraudulent actions by public officials of the day. The issue of treaty land surrenders is totally unrelated to the unfulfilled land entitlements issue so far as provincial responsibility is concerned. One, Mr. Speaker, what is Saskatchewan's responsibility and two, what is Saskatchewan's position?

Firstly, in 1930 an agreement was reached between Canada and the provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, whereby Canada would transfer full control of the natural resources to the provinces. This included the land. The agreement was embodied in a constitutional amendment in the British North America Act referred to as the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement of 1930. Section 10 of that transfer agreement provides the following general provisions: That the province will from time to time set aside out of the unoccupied Crown lands, hereby transferred to its administration, such lands as are necessary to enable Canada to fulfill its obligations under the treaties with the Indians of the province.

It must be recognized that by 1930 Canada had virtually alienated all of the useful arable land in the surveyed area. Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, only the southern half of the province had been surveyed. The federal Crown had alienated 74.4 million acres out of the total of 79 million acres that they had surveyed by 1930. The remaining 4.7 million acres was either covered with water or was virtually a wasteland. What is Saskatchewan's responsibility? We believe that only those lands which are unoccupied, or which were unoccupied at the time of the 1930 transfer agreement and remain unoccupied to date, are legally eligible for selection to enable Canada to fulfill its obligations under the treaty.

Secondly, what is Saskatchewan's position? In 1975, the Hon. Judge Buchanan, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development requested that Saskatchewan fulfill its obligation under section 10 of the transfer agreement. Mr. Buchanan listed 11 bands where, and I quote:

Lands were set apart under treaty but the obligation was not fully discharged.

And those bands were listed in the correspondence with the province as being Keeseekoosie, Muscowpetung, Piapot, One Arrow, Red Pheasant, Witchekekan Lake, Canoe Lake, English River or Patuanak, Peter Ballintine Band up along the Churchill, Fond-du-Lac and Stoney Rapids in the Athabasca Basin.

In August of 1977, Canada advised of another four bands for which entitlement was also confirmed. And these were listed as being Thunder Child, Nekanate, Little Pine and Lucky Man. This totalled 15 bands, five in northern Saskatchewan in the unsurveyed area and 10 in the surveyed or agricultural areas of the province.

The Saskatchewan position, therefore, is this:

1. That the 15 Indian bands are the complete list of Indian bands with outstanding or unfulfilled land entitlement.
2. That for purposes of land entitlement acres, population figures are fixed at December 31, 1976.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Agreed upon position?

MR. BOWERMAN: — Yes, agreed upon position.

3. That because of the extremely limited unoccupied Crown lands available with any economic potential, Saskatchewan will also make available Crown lands for selection and transfer purposes providing that:

- (a) Canada will make available for selection purposes all federal Crown lands in Saskatchewan;
- (b) Saskatchewan can be satisfied with the selection and potential transfers;
- (c) the user, the lessee or the occupant can be satisfied;
- (d) the provisions of occupancy or the terms of use must be honored;
- (e) the responsibility for payment of the improvements are the responsibilities of the band or of Canada;
- (f) providing the southern bands were unable to satisfy their land entitlements from provincial and federal unoccupied and occupied Crown lands, they must then look solely to Canada for satisfaction since Canada alienated virtually all of the agricultural lands prior to 1930.

Our progress to-date, Mr. Speaker. Since the latter part of 1977, 14 of the 15 bands have selected approximately 715,000 acres. Five hundred and sixty thousand of these acres are from provincial Crown lands; 68,000 are from federal Crown lands and 87,000 are privately owned or patented lands within the province. Approximately 115,000 acres almost exclusively within northern Saskatchewan, have been committed for transfer. These are all provincial Crown lands, both occupied and unoccupied.

Although there have been some 68,000 acres of federal Crown lands selected, no lands have been transferred or committed to that end as of this date.

Mr. Speaker, the legal and moral obligations in settling this land debt appear to be our government as a manner of urgent consequence. We believe that to do less is totally unacceptable. We invite the federal government to get off its game playing and to approach the subject with serious commitment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — As long as there remains 68,000 acres of selected federal Crown

lands and absolutely no response to deal with those selections, then public statements by the federal minister can only be interpreted as insincere and intentionally motivated to deflect public attention from the facts of this case.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn for the few moments that are left to me to the Department of the Environment. It has only been a few weeks, as many of you will know, since I took over the responsibility for Saskatchewan Environment. During those weeks I have understandably spent a lot of time familiarizing myself with many of the special programs and the specific projects and ongoing activities of the department.

In 1971, Mr. Speaker, prior to the selection of our government for its first term, we pledged to the people of this province that we would establish a new department of government to have overall responsibility for pollution control and for maintenance of environmental quality, and that we would set up a monitoring system to measure and report changes in environmental conditions and to provide early warnings of potential air, water and soil pollution problems. We would further establish and enforce firm standards of permissible levels of industrial and domestic pollution. Lastly, we would immediately ban the use of non-returnable bottles and cans from carbonated beverages.

Our first pledge, Mr. Speaker, was kept by the establishment of the present Department of the Environment. Its foundation was the former Saskatchewan Water Resources Commission to which was added a land protection service with branches specializing in water, air and ground related anti-pollution measures.

The pledged monitoring systems have been set up by the appropriate pollution control branches and they are now keeping continued records of water and air quality. To avoid unnecessary expenses and duplication, these monitoring activities are co-operative. Samples are taken by other government departments and by the federal government. Sample analysis takes place in the provincial laboratories and in the federal laboratories and the resulting information is shared among all participants. In addition to monitoring, limits have been set for various pollution levels within the water and the air environments.

Because we share many of our lakes and streams and all of our air environment with other provinces, we have worked closely with those provinces and with the federal government in setting surface and municipal water quality standards. Working back from those standards, we have been setting specific limits for industrial and municipal discharges and emissions of waste which are strict enough to keep quality well within those standards. No question about the fact there will be breaks and there will be spills occasionally but these will occur regardless of what safety measures we implement. The general tendency elsewhere is to set higher and higher restrictions and standards as new anti-pollution technologies are developed and as new developments replace older developments. We are more fortunate than most in that, with the exception of natural nutrients, our surface water starts off being relatively free of industrial and chemical additives. This has made it easier for us to keep ahead of the problem here in Saskatchewan. We do have a problem. We have a problem in the Fishing Lakes in the Qu'Appelle River system which needs our most urgent attention.

As for cleaning up litter we are all aware of the effectiveness of our province's pioneer

ban on non-returnable soft drink and beer containers and our successful insistence upon bottle returning. In addition we have kept public awareness to anti-litter high in the public mind, in the public priority, by our sponsorship, along with Alberta and British Columbia, of the annual anti-litter week which is PitchIn '79. It was announced today that it is already in the organizational phase and that it will become official on the week of May 7. We are very interested with the high degree of participation of anti-litter programs shown to date by municipalities, by schools, by organizations, by block organizations and by individual citizens.

Other pledges, Mr. Speaker, which we made back in 1971 and later, called for engaging in education about pollution. It called for establishing and financing an environmental advisory council for creating within the public service a central planning agency. Part of its function would be to assess the long-term environmental effects of all government programs, regulating and controlling the disposal of pollutants by potash mines and other industrial concerns which adversely affect the rural community and lastly requiring all new industrial developments, new chemicals and new technological innovations to be evaluated for their effects on the environment before their introduction.

Our annual reports continue to emphasize our success in carrying out our educational responsibilities. Requests for information and literature continue to average around 300 inquiries each month. During the last fiscal year it is reported to this House that more than 40,000 pieces of literature were sent out to students, citizens, organizations, businesses and agencies.

Working in co-operation with the Department of Education and the Department of Continuing Education we have worked out courses in environmental studies as curricula options. We have conducted seminars for teachers wanting to stress environmental subjects and have sponsored the production of a number of visual aids to help with such teachings. Public participation in inquiries, public studies and workshops have been successfully encouraged and financial aid has been given to insure that all groups have an equal opportunity of researching environmental issues connected with public inquiries.

We have created and financed an environmental advisory council. This body, which deals directly with the Minister of the Saskatchewan Environment (Mr. Bowerman), is charged with the duty of watch-dogging departmental operations and pinpointing dangerous trends and helping set long-term objectives.

Some of you will be aware of the public hearings that were going on for environment in the '80s.

A central planning agency has been created within the public service which does consider long-term environmental effects as well as other aspects of planning.

We have gone farther, Mr. Speaker. Environmental issues are discussed regularly by representatives of all government departments and agencies through what we call the inter-agency co-ordinating committee. Within that committee Saskatchewan environment has the task of reviewing all programs of other departments and agencies for their potential environmental impact. To the extent that the province's own agencies are themselves project proponents and developers, Saskatchewan environment's right to insist upon proper environmental protection measures has meant that the government departments and government agencies have become more conscious of environmen-

tal protection requirements. This insistence that government departments and agencies practise what the government preaches has also enabled Saskatchewan environment to work out practical environmental assessment procedures for all project proponents in the province.

The job of evaluating all new industrial chemicals for their environmental effects has been a difficult problem. Thousands of new industrial chemicals are being introduced into the North American industrial and commercial activity each year. Not all of them are being used in Saskatchewan. But there is no way, no way, Mr. Speaker, except we set up some sort of border inspections and an elaborate inspection system of other kinds that one province can find out what is being transported into its province or into its borders, or being transported out of its borders or over or through its province at any given time. To make that situation even more difficult there are many cases, where there is no way of knowing in advance what products which seem safe today, may turn out to be dangerous or deadly to some of us later on, as is the case with PCBs. Saskatchewan environment like other provinces is working closely with the federal government in its efforts to spot toxic materials and to set conditions for their use. We are also working closely with the Department of Labor's occupational health experts who are keeping us informed of North American and world-wide situations with respect to worker safety.

One can only assume that any product which is dangerous for people to work with may very well be dangerous to others who come into contact with it and not only dangerous to people but dangerous to plants and aquatic and wildlife as well.

After reviewing this record of achievement from a relatively outside vantage point, I have been tremendously impressed with the scope and the effectiveness of the many programs and the projects and the ongoing activities which have been established by the Department of the Environment. There are those to your left, Mr. Speaker, who will still mindlessly suggest the old cliché that any group of government employees is automatically less productive and less hard working than any group of private sector employees. It is of course quite possible that this charge may be legitimately levelled at some government employees in some jurisdictions but the rating of public service employees is better done by the experts in that field who again, Mr. Speaker, sit to your left.

Mr. Speaker, would have liked to have got into the aspects of the budget, but there are others who are wanting to speak this evening. It's obvious I think from those things which I have said, those concerns which I have expressed and the information which I have placed on the record of the Assembly, that I will be supporting the Minister of Finance in the budget which he presented at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. P. PREBBLE (Saskatoon Sutherland): — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak in support of this budget. I want to first extend my congratulations to you upon your re-election as Speaker of this Assembly. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the many people who worked so hard on my behalf in the constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland. Without their help I know I would not have been elected on October 18.

This is a solid and responsible budget, Mr. Speaker, and I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for its introduction. It is a budget in which we have done our best to ease the cost of living for those hit hardest by inflationary increases. At the same time we have taken a number of initiatives to stimulate job creation in key sectors of the

economy. Moreover, this is a budget that offers at least moderate expansion in many of our health and social service programs. This is noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, especially at a time when we see Liberal and Conservative governments across the country cutting back programs for those who are most in need of support during the difficult economic times that Canada is now facing . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. P. PREBBLE: — . . . times that have largely been brought about, Mr. Speaker, by the policy of consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments in Ottawa who permit more and more economic domination of our national economy by foreign interests. This domination has resulted in an alarming flow of profits and dividends outside of the country. It is also a policy that has left us subject to inflationary pressures from large numbers of items that we import which we could actually be producing ourselves. Finally this foreign domination is a policy that has made it much harder for Canadians to control our own economy and our own destiny.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, members opposite will gradually see that it is the NDP's commitment to gain more and more control over our resource industries and to ensure that the bulk of resource revenues go to the people of Saskatchewan which is permitting us now to bring forward a budget that provides cost of living cuts, employment creation initiatives and offers the best health and social service programs in the country. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, members of the Conservative party perhaps do see this point. They are not blind. Perhaps their difficulty is that while they do not want the public to know this, they have no desire to give up their allegiance to the potash corporations of Saskatchewan, to the oil companies, to Cargill, to the Palliser Wheat Growers. Maybe that's the problem, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . they don't want to give up their allegiance to the other vested interests that have continually tried to take advantage of the people of Saskatchewan whenever they get the opportunity to do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — I'm also pleased with the budget because it is a genuine effort by this government to keep its promises to the people of Saskatchewan. We promised a 5 per cent property improvement grant rebate for renters and it's in the budget. We promised increased support for senior citizens in nursing homes and provision for action in that area is in the budget. We promised the removal of school property taxes for senior citizens and I am very pleased to see that that's in the budget.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — We promised further income tax reductions to ease the cost of living and stimulate the economy. Those income tax reductions are now an integral part of our proposed budget. I promised my constituents that we would seek to provide funding for the establishment of an authority in Saskatoon to protect our very beautiful river bank and there is \$237,000 in the budget for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — I know, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of residents in my constituency are new homeowners. Areas such as East College Park and Forest Grove are expanding very rapidly and I know that they will be particularly pleased with the assistance that is in the

budget to provide them with help in making their payments on home mortgages.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a member of a government that keeps its promises.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — Now with rapid progress being made towards the introduction of a large number of the commitments that we made to the electorate during this last election (with great progress having already been made in a number of those areas) I think we can begin to focus more attention on new steps that we need to take and new initiatives that we could look at accomplishing.

I would particularly like to focus on the problem of cost of living increases and job creation and new initiatives that we could take in that area. Mr. Speaker, I think our government's commitment to cutting the cost of living in Saskatchewan is very clear. We have done this effectively, largely through introducing rebate plans, tax cuts and other redistribution formulas. I believe that beyond these measures we will have to begin looking at more fundamental structural changes.

I want to explain to members opposite that these new proposals I am going to comment on are my own views, and not government policy, just in case they are confused. I have been dismayed at the tactics of the Conservative party in calling for the bringing into line of members of the legislature who expressed views other than existing government policy. The member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) took up this matter again today. He seems to want to place a muzzle on critical thought and freedom of expression. All I can say is that he is misguided on this particular point. I think the reply of the Minister of Health should tell him clearly that our party is committed to ensuring freedom of expression.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — It is because of this that we are continually able, as a party, to bring forward new innovations.

Let me return to the cost of living issue. It is my view, Mr. Speaker, that we must give increasing attention to methods by which we can cut the cost of living and create jobs at the same time, in other words, approaches that will do both those things at once and at the same time will improve the quality of life. Now, I would like to give some examples of what I mean, especially in the agricultural and energy fields.

In agriculture I think we need to work towards policies that will encourage the production of more of our own vegetables here in Saskatchewan. Less than 40 per cent of in-season produce sold in the two major urban centres in Saskatchewan actually comes from Saskatchewan farms. Often, since Saskatchewan produce is sold during the summer time in the fall, it is being sold at the time when the prices are in fact the lowest. The high prices are in the winter when we have to depend on out-of-province supplies; so when we, as consumers, do have to pay more, Saskatchewan people aren't even getting those benefits. I believe that through extending our efforts to provide for winter storage of vegetables and by trying to extend the growing season through the use of waste heat from compressor stations, from generating stations or potash mines and attaching greenhouses to those kind of operations to use that waste heat and through the development of solar greenhouse operations, we could greatly expand the

growing season for vegetable production in this province. Such a proposal would clearly be job creating, Mr. Speaker. We could easily increase production by \$4 million to \$5 million with a multiplier spinoff that would probably be close to about \$20 million. But in addition to the jobs, I think that in the long term such a measure would also stabilize food prices. I do emphasize the long term.

Transportation costs for bringing food in from out of province are clearly going to continue to rise as energy prices rise. There is a good deal of cost that is also involved with a lot of the unnecessary spraying and artificial coloring of vegetables such as tomatoes which come in from the United States. These kinds of measures clearly add unnecessarily to the price of vegetables as well as contributing to a decrease in their quality. Now I think that we could avoid many of these costs by growing our vegetables here and putting them on the market in a fresh healthy state. I am confident that in the long term increased agricultural self-sufficiency here at home will protect us from the continual escalation in food prices because of vegetable imports.

A more dramatic example of how we can cut the cost of living, create jobs and improve the quality of life all at the same time is in the energy field. All governments in Canada continue to give too much attention to trying to increase energy supplies to meet demand instead of taking the opposite approach, mainly taking steps to lessen the demand for energy in the first place. Continually building new generating stations is a very expensive business, Mr. Speaker. As the capital costs of constructing these new generating stations increase, the price of electricity has to inevitably increase. Now if we could avoid having to build these new power stations in the first place we would be very much better off, very much better off. The Science Council of Canada has demonstrated quite clearly that energy conservation is a far more economical approach to take than the construction of new generating facilities. Dr. David Brooks, former head of the office of energy Conservation for Canada, again demonstrated this point in a recent study for the Economic Council of Canada. I believe a wise course of action would be for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to encourage people to insulate their homes by implementing a plan in which people would not have to make any cash outlays in insulating their homes and would be assured that their fuel bills would not rise any further.

Now how would such a plan be implemented, Mr. Speaker? I'd like to explain. Under this kind of a plan, when a home would be insulated, the amount of fuel or electricity as a result of the insulation work that would be needed would naturally decline. Therefore the cost to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation would also decline. SPC would recover the cost of insulation by continuing to charge the homeowner the original bill that he was paying until the insulation expenses are paid off.

I believe that such a program, if implemented on a wide scale throughout Saskatchewan, could avoid the need for some of the new generating stations now proposed and thus avoid energy price increases to consumers.

Moreover, the insulation program would create far more jobs in the construction and operation of generating stations. It is obvious that a great deal of any insulation job involves labor costs that are much more substantial than the percentage of labour which is involved in the operation of a generating station, which is much more capital intensive.

With the large amounts of money all governments are devoting to energy projects it is crucial we choose energy paths that will be job-creating. Energy conservation will

always create far more new jobs than the construction of dams or coal fire generating stations.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that our government has already started to make some positive steps in this direction. In agriculture we have established a Vegetable Marketing Commission and are hopeful that it will play a valuable role in increasing vegetable production.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — In the energy field we have set up a special program for those people wishing to insulate their homes. I was pleased to see, Mr. Speaker, that when the Minister of Saskatchewan Power Corporation announced that price increases would be necessary, he at least ensured that the larger price increases were passed on to the bigger consumers of power. I would like to see us go even further than this and actually consider reversing the rate structures so that the small user pays less and the larger user pays more. Within each particular user category it seems to me that the present system of charging less as more energy is used actually discourages energy conservation. Reversing that system would cut costs for the small user and encourage energy conservation.

Now I would like to turn to some other cost of living issues that are of concern to my constituents. I know they will welcome our major contribution of \$77 million to the municipalities of this province through the revenue sharing plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — This contribution should help to keep the Saskatoon mill rate at last year's level and thus stop property tax increases. I hope these increases on the announcement of provincial and federal capital funding emphasized by the Minister of Municipal Affairs today will also allow the city of Saskatoon to undertake some of the projects my constituents have been hoping to see for several years such as the construction of a badly needed underpass at the Central Avenue railway crossing in Sutherland.

Mr. Speaker, another cost of living issue of special concern to many people in my constituency is a matter of tuition rate increases - an assistance to students to allow them to attend university. I am sure that all university students will welcome the 31 per cent increase in funds available through the Student Bursary Plan and I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) and the Minister of Continuing Education (Mr. Rolfes) for the increases.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — The overall increase to the universities of 7.6 per cent or 11 per cent per student is moderate but I think adequate and far superior to the 4.7 per cent in Ontario or the 5.7 per cent increase in Manitoba. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that I am beginning to become frustrated that the university Board of Governors continually increases tuition rates for students despite significant funding increases being provided for university operations by the provincial government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — This year it appears Saskatoon university students will face another 7 to 9 per cent tuition increase. Saskatchewan has the highest tuition rate in Western Canada, Mr. Speaker, something that I am not particularly pleased about. I do not think we should begin interfering with university autonomy but I would like to see the university give more consideration to the fact that when the Saskatchewan government leads all other provinces in operating grant increases such as was the case last year, it seems reasonable that we should expect very small increases in tuition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — This has not been so and I think students are justifiably disappointed. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the university will reconsider its position and see fit to keep tuition rates at last year's level or at least to a level not exceeding a 3 per cent increase. I want to turn now to some social matters which are of concern to me. At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my uneasiness with the direction our government is taking in its commitment to the construction of new correctional centres in the province costing \$7 million. These are essentially new spaces and not replacement ones, Mr. Speaker. I think it is unfortunate that our response to the nature of the court system and the rise in crime in Saskatchewan is to invest in a lot of new prison facilities. I think that instead we should be putting the money into preventive programs and more job creation projects in areas where the crime rate is rising. I think we should be expanding the fine option program and moving away from imprisoning anyone for a minor offence. If the law needs to be toughened, Mr. Speaker, it is for major offences but minor offenders should not be imprisoned. Instead I feel they should be required to do community work projects in their spare time for varying durations, depending on the offence and should be required to compensate any person who might suffer a loss as a result of the crime committed. I hope the need for more correctional centres will be reconsidered, Mr. Speaker, in favor of alternative priorities that are more preventative and rehabilitative in nature.

As I remarked earlier, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) for ensuring that at a time when other governments are cutting back in an insensitive way, we have seen fit to maintain our health and social programs.

One recent cutback that displays the attitude which the federal government has adopted came recently in Saskatoon, when the federal government announced that it was cutting back on the Saskatoon women's outreach project.

A directive issued by the Department of Employment and Immigration, in the fall of 1978, stated that projects developed to serve women would no longer be considered as a priority for federal outreach funding. Here we have a direct case, Mr. Speaker, where the federal government is, once again, cutting off those who are most in need of help, in this case, single mothers and other women who are trying to enter the labor force and who need extra support in order to be able to do that. I hope this legislature will condemn that cutback, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PREBBLE: — In contrast, Mr. Speaker, our budget, the Saskatchewan budget, provides for sizeable increases in both the women's division of the Department of Labour and in day care funding. I particularly welcome the day care subsidy increases, but I think we need to be aware that our assistance levels are still such that a great number of the day care centres in Saskatchewan are hard-pressed to make ends meet.

Most of the centres in Saskatoon are having a very difficult time, judging from my contact with them. Many women who need to work will still find it hard to do so because of expenses associated with day care, particularly if they have more than one child in a day care facility. I hope that in the next four years our government will choose to embark on a major program of establishing day care centres throughout the rural and urban areas of Saskatchewan. I hope we will encourage government departments and major non-government employers to establish day care facilities at the place of employment. I hope we will also see day care as something that could have a very positive economic as well as social impact, in that many women, particularly single parents are then in a much better position to enter the labor force and support themselves, rather than depending on social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, despite some reservations, I think it is very clear that I am most impressed with this budget. It is most certainly a very positive step forward, an example to the rest of Canada of responsible and compassionate planning.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for the outstanding job that he has done and it is with pride that I add my voice in support of the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. R. ANDREW (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, initially, quite frankly I hadn't intended to speak on this budget. I shall just make a few brief comments.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I wonder if the member would mind waiting a moment, there has been some microphone problems.

MR. R. ANDREW (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, as I said, a lot has been said recently in this particular budget debate as to who is best spending their respective heritage fund, Alberta or Saskatchewan. I believe it was the Premier today who made reference (and I think rightly so) that Alberta does in fact have substantially more money than the province of Saskatchewan with regard to the heritage fund and because of the oil revenues. But I think in fairness as well Saskatchewan does have substantially more revenues from the resource industry than does the province of Manitoba. So when this bickering back and forth goes, I think we should all keep that point in mind.

We believe as a party that we must recognize that growth and development are essential and unless we create wealth, unless we can make some money, then we cannot spend it. If we don't make the money we won't have the highways, the education, the social services or whatever.

I suppose what I propose to do is draw the analogy between your side and our side with regard to the use of the moneys in the heritage fund. It appears to me your side, in fairness, indicates that from that heritage fund we will buy potash mines and we will get into the resource field, into the oil field, we will buy farm land and those types of things. I concede to you that perhaps it would make a few more dollars as far as the operating of your potash mines, but how many new jobs do you create and how much more potash do you produce? That, I think, becomes the important thing. What we are saying is that you must try to do the things that will create more production, that will create more jobs, that will create a larger population for us.

I would like to get into the field of agriculture and try to make that analogy in the field of

agriculture and compare Saskatchewan to Alberta with regard to that program.

1. In this particular budget of this year (and I appreciate that, coming from rural Saskatchewan) that we have \$3 million going into agricultural research this year. The Government of Alberta has committed \$10 million to the research program in the province of Alberta. Now, again I grant the member opposite that Alberta is a richer province but I think we also must bear in mind that in the three prairie provinces, Saskatchewan has virtually as much farm land as do both the provinces of Manitoba and Alberta put together, so that the benefits will be felt throughout the whole prairie region of that \$13 million.

2. The program in the province of Alberta coming from the heritage fund is \$200 million into the area of irrigation, upgrading and new irrigation facilities. The province of Saskatchewan is putting virtually - I stand to be corrected - nothing into the irrigation type problem at least relative to that \$200 million. The \$200 million does create more production. It creates more grain, more vegetables and that type of thing and I think for that everybody becomes richer. I think that's a wise use of heritage fund money.

3. If we are going to increase our production and the Premier referred, I believe, yesterday in the Leader Post that we are going to increase our production of grain. In order to accomplish that we are going to need, clearly, some better rail facilities and a few other things but we are also going to need some new ports. The province of Alberta has committed - and this is not an election promise - \$100 million into the port of Prince Rupert, to upgrade the port. Now I suggest that that again, is a loan to a consortium and the only caveat to that is a member of that consortium must be the Alberta Wheat Pool. How much money is this government committing to the Prince Rupert port?

The third thing I say is with regard to the land bank program. Under the budget we are committing \$20 million to the land bank. I believe today we have committed close to \$100 million into the land bank program since 1971, 1972 or whenever it came into force. The province of Alberta, under the Agriculture Development Corporation which is a vehicle which is used to lend money to get the young farmer started in business; since 1971 has spent \$750 million. This year their commitment is to \$160 million compared to our \$20 million going into land bank. Now the members opposite with regard to the land bank program would tend to think that we are out helping the small farmer and the statistics put out just recently by the Farm Credit Corporation indicate that on the average size of farms in the prairie provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta that the largest farms are in Saskatchewan. In the province of Alberta in 1971 the average farm was 889 acres. In 1976 the average farm was 864 acres. That is a decrease. In the province of Saskatchewan the farm, in 1971 when this government came to power, was 894 acres. It is now 939 acres which is an increase, and I suggest that maybe you should look at that total land bank program. When we are talking about creating small farms, who is creating small farms? So I do say we keep that in mind.

I wish to make only one other point, and that is to again commend the Minister of Finance for the program as it relates to deductibility of mortgage interest. Now, the federal Progressive Conservative party of course has adopted that program or has presented that program. The Leader of the New Democratic Party has referred to our program, our mortgage deductibility program, as a welfare program for the rich. I suggest reading through this proposal which was presented in September 21, 1978, and what that program says:

(1) Mortgage interest payments will be made deductible up to a maximum limit of \$5,000 per year in calculating taxable income.

(2) The deduction will apply to interest paid on first mortgages of principal residents in Canada.

It is very similar to the program in Saskatchewan. The difference, I suppose, is that that program will further go on to say that the first \$1,000 of municipal property tax will also be deductible. I suggest that is also a good program in the sense that it is a double taxation system, and I don't think double taxation is a proper vehicle. This program of course would go in over a four-year period. It's going to be very expensive, and it is going to have a fair draw on the economy. I do take and support that program, and I think it is very very similar to our program which the national leader of your party seems to think is a poor system.

The final point I do wish to make again in complimenting the Minister of Finance with regard to the budget, and I say on those three areas - (1) agricultural research, (2) deductibility of mortgages and (3) the write-off of capital gain on sale of farms. Of course, that has been a policy of the Progressive Conservative party federally for some time and the policy of the Progressive Conservative party provincially. Again, we allowed that program. Having said that of the three things I do support, I do not support the total concept of the direction that the government is going, the direction that it is using in the heritage fund and the using of deficit budgeting. For that, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. A.W. ENGEL (Assiniboia-Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to take part in this budget debate. A week ago I spoke in the throne speech debate, and at that time I talked about some of the new economic activity underway in my constituency, thanks to the policies of our government. Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk some more about these new developments in my riding in this debate because with a New Democratic Party government in Saskatchewan there's always plenty of new economic development to talk about. There are other similarities between the throne speech debate and this budget debate that I should mention. You'll recall that on the first day that the Speech from the Throne was debated, we had an eclipse of the sun. Some of my constituency and a lot of southeastern Saskatchewan was in darkness for a short time and again, Mr. Speaker, on the first day that the budget was debated, it became clear that some others were in the dark, only this time there were just 17 people affected and the darkness shows no sign of letting up. I think the budget will be met with overwhelming acceptance and approval, Mr. Speaker, by the people of our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — The budget is responsible and, at the same time, forward looking. It sets Saskatchewan on a course that can be paid for and at the same time, allows us to do things that governments in other provinces are years away from even thinking about. Mr. Speaker, I have more to say about the budget but first I want to say a few words about my constituency.

As I've said before in this House, I consider it an honor to represent Assiniboia-Gravelbourg in this Legislative Assembly. Assiniboia-Gravelbourg area has a rich and

interesting history. Two of the first Northwest Mounted Police stations on the prairies were located in my riding at Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch. As early as the 1890s, police from these posts patrolled the plains keeping law and order. Wood Mountain, in fact, dates back to before 1850 when it was an important resting spot on the Fort Walsh Trail.

As homesteaders began to settle the prairies, the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg area attracted a wide variety of people from many different lands. Large block settlements of French homesteaders put down roots in the Willow Bunch area in the 1900s, at Gravelbourg in 1906, Courval in 1908 and Coderre in 1910 and of course, many also settled in the town of Assiniboia. A large group of Scottish settlers chose the area just southeast of Assiniboia and a number of Austrian families homesteaded in Fir Mountain and Killdeer area. English, German, Irish, and Scandinavian settlers also moved into the area in the first decade of this century.

Mr. Speaker, those original homesteaders and their descendants raised their families, developed their farms and businesses and built strong and progressive communities, communities that have fought to keep their services. Most of them have done an exceptional job of doing that. These communities have fought to keep their rail service despite the efforts of the old line parties at Ottawa to take it away. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear our finance minister, Walter Smishek, say in the budget speech that the government of Saskatchewan would stand with the smaller centres in their fight to retain their railway service. In my constituency alone, there are numerous examples of the Prairie Rail Action Committee's (PRAC) recommendations causing real hardships. But, Mr. Speaker, the hardship is something that is being felt, not only by farmers east of Coronach and farmers in the Willow Bunch-Radville area who will be losing their railway delivery points but grain producers all across Saskatchewan recognize that this fight is theirs too. They are telling me that if Otto Lang, PRAC and the federal Tories can get together to rob certain areas of their rail service. Now they can do it again later on, on a grander scale and no delivery point in the province will have a secure future. I want to say this to the farmers in small communities which the PRAC report wants to see abandoned. The Blakeney government, unlike the Tory governments of Manitoba and Alberta has established an agency of government and a strategy to work for the retention of the prairie branch line system. Our transportation agency and the influence of our provincial governments are clearly on the side of the local rail retention committee.

It is extremely unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that no support for rail line retention has come from the provincial Conservative Party. In fact, Mr. Speaker, some Conservative members of this Assembly have not even taken time to go to recent meetings by the rail retention committees in their own areas, or the Canadian Transport Committee hearings that are deciding the future of rail service in the area. Perhaps they were too busy, Mr. Speaker, busy watching the stock market prices for shares of the Canadian Pacific go up, as branch line after branch line is abandoned.

The Leader of the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan should feel obliged to go to the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) hearings, because as he revealed here in this House on Friday, February 23, he is one of the large individual shareholders in Canadian Pacific. I wonder how it feels to see your hundreds of shares of Canadian Pacific going up and up in value as grain growers all over Saskatchewan see the future of their delivery points threatened by abandonment plans of the CPR. Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the member for Nipawin, the Leader of their party, be obliged to attend the upcoming CTC hearings and sit with his friends from the railway company and wear

a sign reading 'owner'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — That would be an accurate dramatization of the situation as it presently exists. The Leader of the Conservative Party has been making a killing in the stock market as a direct result of the CPR killing off the smaller service centres on the prairie branch lines. Mr. Speaker, I say that is a deplorable practice and one which will be roundly condemned by the farmers of Saskatchewan. Opposition members are getting in and roaring away at what they would do. The Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) told a story yesterday. I thought I should tell one today. Their roaring around reminds me of a story I heard about a lion and a tiger that were down at the drinking hole. The tiger said, why all the fuss? Why do you have to make so much noise? Yes, and he let out with an ear-shattering roar, why do you suppose I am the king of the beasts? I advertise. A rabbit in a thicket nearby went home and thought this thing over. He stood erect on a mound and took a deep breath and let out with all he could muster, a weak squeak. A fox nearby heard the faint noise and helped himself to a delicious dinner. Members opposite, I have a word of advice, before you advertise make sure you've got the goods.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Collver) and his troops, and in particular the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane), stand up and they squeak. I'm not sure who the fox is in this case but as far as my constituents are concerned they're wishing that they would come up with some goods. Low cheap shots, long-winded talks, is all we've had today. Squeaks and no roars! Squeak about a budget leak. A smoke screen to take the attention of the public away from a good budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — My colleagues have given this House ample evidence of promises kept.

I'd like to at this time address myself to the question that is a little bit outside of the budget and that is the question of the establishment of a grasslands national park.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — As members of this Assembly well know, discussions on the desirability of establishing of a grasslands park have been going on for many years. As members of this Assembly will also know I am in favour of establishing a grasslands national park. I am in favour of a park for two reasons, Mr. Speaker. It is my opinion in the first place that the southwest part of our province is the best and perhaps the only outstanding representative of the original prairie grasslands in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — One of the most important elements of Canada's national mosaic not represented in Canada's national park system is the prairie grasslands of these three prairie provinces. The scenic history and environmental feature of this area provide dynamic contrast to the western great plains. It is an investment in our future to see this landscape, the mixed prairie vegetation and fauna preserved and maintained for generations to come.

But preservation of these unique topographical features and maintenance of vegetation is only one of my

reasons for establishing a grasslands national park. There is tremendous potential for economic development in tourism opportunities resulting from the establishing of a grasslands national park.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — That means opportunities for residents of southern Saskatchewan. This area, Mr. Speaker, perhaps more than any other area in the province, has suffered from the effects of drought, population decline, migration of our younger productive age groups.

I am optimistic that in establishing a grasslands national park as a major destination point for both resident and non-resident tourists, the range of existing and potential water land based tourism and recreation resources in the area can be developed so as to increase incomes and employment opportunities in our area.

But while I feel strongly for the establishment of a grasslands national park, I feel even more strongly as to a decision one way or the other as to whether a park will proceed or not. I urge the federal government and our provincial government to get on with it and deliver that decision, be it yea or nay. Both levels of government must appreciate how this uncertainty preys on residents in the area. Ranching is a hard enough business given only everyday uncertainties and expectations let alone a decision of the magnitude of establishing a grasslands park.

Or can you imagine the difficulty in planning for community developments or planning for highways in the area where such decisions depend on the establishment of this major tourist attraction. Mr. Speaker, I can and do appreciate the difficulties that are involved in such a decision. Transfer of title of lands from one jurisdiction to another is touchy business. I understand the gravity of the decision when such items as mineral rights, oil and gas rights and access bear upon such deliberations. I understand as well the necessity of ensuring rights of present owners, the ranchers and the farmers whose land can, if they so desire become park lands. These are complex questions which take time to resolve. I trust the rate of progress is commensurate with the degree of difficulty of the task involved. Yet, Mr. Speaker, a decision has to be made. I urge again that both levels of government attempt to expedite outstanding issues as quickly as possible.

I am still optimistic about the establishment of a grasslands national park and I think there are encouraging signs. I understand that our agreement between the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) and the province, which will complete initiatives undertaken in the grasslands park area, has been agreed to by officials of both levels of government. I trust the agreement on the grasslands park itself can likewise be reached in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to say a few words on the subject of agriculture. I was extremely pleased to see increased funding announced in a number of areas under the Department of Agriculture. The Land Bank Commission will be getting some more money. I say that makes good sense, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — And there are some other people who say it makes good sense. Sixty-

four farm families in my constituency have been helped to get into farming or stay in farming, thanks to the land bank program.

Mr. Speaker, FarmStart was also mentioned in the budget speech. The FarmStart Program has helped many farm families in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to diversify their operation to make a more viable farm unit. Up to February of this year 102 loans have been extended to farmers to start into beef production. Another 14 loans were made to help start hog, dairy and other operations. Altogether, Mr. Speaker, \$1,880,000 has been loaned to farm families in my area by FarmStart and another \$380,000 in outright grants have also been made. That's the kind of tangible assistance the Blakeney government has been providing that farmers of Saskatchewan are looking for and need.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Farmers will also be very pleased that the Blakeney government has gone ahead with its promise to provide a rebate to capital gains tax on the sale of farms. Another promise that is being kept is the pledge to reduce farm fuel costs. The farm cost reduction program is worth \$16 million to the farmers of Saskatchewan. Phase II of revenue sharing will continue to protect ratepayers from the escalating costs of municipal government. Farmers carry much of the load of financing local governments and they will be happy to know that revenue sharing grants to municipalities will be \$77 million in the coming year and that is money that municipal governments will use to keep property taxes down. I am proud of the record of this government in the area of agriculture. The policy of this New Democratic government is this, Mr. Speaker, when rural Saskatchewan is healthy, all Saskatchewan is healthy.

I want to say a few words about the efforts of the French community in my riding to preserve its culture and language. As I said earlier, the French settlements in my constituency have a history stretching back to the turn of the century, almost 80 years. Some families have four generations. The French language and culture has been kept alive in south central Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, with each generation it becomes more and more difficult the rich French heritage of the original homesteaders. One of the biggest influences on the lives of young people is television and in our area television is in English only.

A constituent of mine in Gravelbourg built a 100-foot tower, and with a sophisticated television antenna he still cannot bring in the French television station in Regina! Mr. Speaker, I've been making an effort to have the CBC extend French language television service to the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg area. I understand there are plans to eventually do that and I would encourage the provincial government to press the federal authorities to move on the plans they have. The French people of Saskatchewan have made great contributions to our society. Among them one of the best and most well-liked MLAs ever to sit in this House and I've often called on my political godfather, is Mr. Thibault, of Kinistino.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is not too much to ask to have the French television signal extended into French areas in south central Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, during this budget address the Minister of Finance talked at length about the sound economic base which has been laid in the last eight years by the Blakeney government. I cannot help but agree and go on to say that when the '79-80 fiscal year is over the provincial economy will be in still better condition, thanks to their responsible and reasonable measure in this budget. I will be supporting the budget, Mr. Speaker.

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, a rather sudden decision to participate in the budget debate.

I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker. I say, and I know you will take it in the humorous spirit which was intended, that you've saved me on many rulings in the past in having to learn Beauchesne's and look up Beauchesne's, and I've always appreciated that effort on your behalf.

I'm pleased to see some of my colleagues from 1971 who for some reason or other missed a four or a three and a half year stretch. The member who just sat down I welcome back. I recall that in Ottawa at one time you had to have so many sessions in and I think if that rule still applies, and if it applied here, the hon. gentleman would be about 90 before he would be eligible for a pension, if he keeps going at the rate he's going. Four years here and four years off and it would be quite a while before he would be eligible. I don't see much change, I might add, in the hon. gentleman's approach from 1971. I do notice though, a significant change in the improvement in the political astuteness of the member responsible for the Department of Telephones. I recall that he had a rather unsuccessful effort in Qu'Appelle in 1975, notwithstanding some numerous predictions on that side of the House of my imminent demise. I can recall I think that in 1973 he announced that he was running in Qu'Appelle, and about a month later I made the same announcement; I think we proceeded to have one of the longest election campaigns in the history of this province. I notice though, that he has got a lot smarter because this time he waited until I announced where I was running before he decided to announce for a nomination rather than jumping in too rapidly. I think that is to his credit, and he has learned; the experience has served him well.

Mr. Speaker, I did miss the election campaign in '75 when the honourable gentleman bought new moccasins to go pursuing across the Indian reserves and ended up picking up a few more votes on that little move. I learned from that. I thank him very much of the political lesson he gave me on that particular day . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They probably work a lot better in Kinistino. The new moccasins are probably a little more broken in, this time around, and he got some success. I congratulate him on it. I congratulate the Premier and some members of the cabinet. I congratulate the government on their election. I congratulate the government on the campaign. I say as well I took some satisfaction in winning Qu'Appelle in that campaign. I think without a doubt, that the government opposite in its election campaign gave a lesson to the people of Saskatchewan on the use of television and the emotional impact of television. I am not one who has been critical of the campaign that the government has run. I as I say, have congratulated the Premier on the campaign and his re-election as Premier and the government in office . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I am not sure that the honourable gentleman who just spoke is quite sure of himself. I can recall I thought I had threats of resignation at one time and threats that he wasn't going to run in the last election. It will be interesting to see next time around whether the constituents that he represents will in fact rely on his promise to resign. I am sure that they are looking forward to it next time, and I am sure that if the honorable gentleman makes the promise again next time the constituents will take it to heart.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to say a few remarks on comments made. I refer to some extent to comments made by the Premier (Mr. Blakeney) in an earlier speech when he talked about the constitution and the constitutional progress that he has made. I have some fundamental differences in provincial tactics with the Premier. I am not a believer, as a member of the western region, in premiers of any political stripe who attempt to go on

the one-man show at constitutional conferences. I don't believe that approaching Saskatchewan's problems in isolation in the western region will have any long-term benefits for the people of Saskatchewan. I've seen the unsuccessful efforts of constitutional amendments in the past because one particular province took positions and did not approach the constitutional amending process or constitutional revision process without regard to their own regional interests. I am satisfied that in my view the proper approach would be to, before we get to the constitutional negotiation process, solidify the regional interests that exist in Canada. I think it fundamental that we, as western Canadians, before we get to the final constitutional debates, have a strong regional consensus among either the prairie provinces or, with good fortune, the four western provinces.

I don't believe, quite frankly that the efforts of the Premier to date, and his seeming relationship with the other prairie provinces, does Saskatchewan any good. If we look at the record of the Premier opposite, Mr. Speaker, in the first four years of his election after 1971, there was a great effort put by the government opposite to prairie premiers' conferences, intergovernmental working relationships and some degree of western co-operation in an attempt to get some consensus and uniformity where it was acceptable to the provinces involved. I haven't seen that for the last two or three years. I've seen instead the one province, the one-man show as the Premier approaches the constitutional conferences and I don't think that approach is going to lead to solid constitutional revision which will be acceptable to western Canadians. I think that the one-province approach without regard to regional interests will simply mean a perpetuation of the unsuccessful system we have had for 112 years.

To show the unsuccessful system that has developed I go to the very words of the Premier himself, when after eight years of constitutional debate, of meetings, even going so far as I might add, to send the Attorney General off on his own to constitutional conferences - which is - how much effort has gone into that? I would like to say in passing I've been in this Assembly for eight years and the Premier's remarks in the throne speech were the first time that I had heard commendation from the Premier of his Attorney General and Deputy Premier. I can see why it took so long, I might add, but I might say that it's the first time that I have seen it. I think the Attorney General is deserving of it. The fact that it came this late in his career perhaps indicates imminent retirement at some point and he's being sent merrily on his way, Mr. Speaker, but obviously the Premier knows something that we don't.

The Premier, of course, is an individual who is very precise with his language and after eight years of constitutional effort and a great amount of verbiage on the constitution and a great expenditure of energies and with the Canadian public's minds directed to constitutional reform, the Premier I think sums up the results when he uses very precise language and he refers to three or four possible changes and he says, very precisely, after all this effort, 'if these changes become part of the Canadian constitution' - if. All we have after eight years is 'if these changes become part . . .'. In other words we've resolved nothing after eight years. The Premier says three things happened at the conferences which 'may turn out to be important' - may turn out. Now, as I say, the Premier is a man who is very precise with his language and I think he was deliberately precise when he uses the 'ifs' and the 'mays' in the speculative position on the constitution to show that in fact after all these years of talk and conferences and expenditure of energies we have proved nothing and we have solved nothing and we have accomplished nothing. I say to the Premier that in fact these constitutional conferences with the one premier and the image politics that have developed have in fact become just that. I say with regret that the constitutional conferences have in fact

become solely an exercise in image politics and have accomplished nothing for the constitutional changes in Canada that are so vitally needed. I say to the Premier that if we had a redirection of efforts back to the regional base (I would hope that the Maritimes would do the same thing, that if they took two years to strengthen their regional position and attain some regional cohesiveness and if we did the same thing in the prairie provinces and the western provinces) we would then be able to approach a constitutional conference from a position of strength, of a recognition of equality, of a recognition of cohesive units attempting to make compromises that are in the beset interests of a strong Canada. I say that this idea of one premier going in performing before the cameras (and he's not the only one, I might add) in fact have accomplished nothing. They are an exercise in image politics. I noticed the Premier's record. He goes down with a shopping list to every constitutional conference, a list of how things are going to go but he always comes back with an empty cart. It's time that we started to judge the Premier and the government opposite on what it is in fact accomplishing for the people of Saskatchewan with constitutional conferences. So far the results are a big fat zero.

When I say that I think it's a tragedy that the Premier of the province, a lawyer, has to resort to cover up the failures by attacking the Supreme Court of Canada as a political issue. I think that that indicates an inability to accomplish change and an inability not only of his own but of other premiers - an inability to come to any solid constitutional change for Saskatchewan and Canada. I suggest that we go back to basics and approach it on a reasonable basis.

Of course what that's going to mean is that the political attacks of the government opposite on their favorite Conservative governments in Alberta and Manitoba will of course have to be softened a little as they now have to work with those premiers. I think that the stridency of the attacks of the government members opposite on the Conservative governments and the Conservative neighbours indicate an inability of the present Premier to work with his neighbours. I think as well he may be able to match wits with Trudeau but I've never seen the advantage of that, considering Trudeau's record. But I guess that's an accomplishment the Premier takes some pride in. The fact is there's going to have to be co-operation among the three prairie provinces and there's going to have to be an attempt to get some substantial change as a region as we approach the constitutional crisis.

I'd like to make as well a couple of comments on the environment. I know it's the tradition of the Assembly that one is not to attack a new member. I am critical of the new member, not of himself, but I think he was elected as a symbol of some opposition - and I think some strong opposition - to further nuclear development in the province of Saskatchewan.

I was most disappointed in the member for Saskatoon Sutherland (Mr. Prebble) who elected on the issue of opposition to nuclear development in the province of Saskatchewan, fails to speak out on the issue in this Assembly. I don't think the constituency that is concerned about the particular issue is restricted to Saskatoon Sutherland. I look through the motions. I heard the hon. member in the throne speech. He did make mention of his opposition to nuclear development. Let me tell him what a previous member of the government side, who had some strong differences of opinion, Mr. Richards, said in this House. He went so far as to make a point regularly of his position and his independence and his concern about the issues that brought him to the Assembly. He spoke out on a regular basis. He may not be around in your right, but he went out of this House with his principles intact and what he believed in being fought

right down the line. There wasn't a member on either side of the House that ever criticized him for that. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . not one motion by the member who was elected on an anti-nuclear development. I am going to make the following offer to see how much courage he has. This concerns the government opposite, when Mr. Richards was so bold to criticize the government for failing to take action on potash nationalization - some of you won't remember that, but the government opposite didn't want to talk about potash nationalization at one time prior to 1975. As a matter of fact, Mr. Richards elected, I think with about seven waffle members, wasn't able to get one member of the government side to second a motion, urging them to consider potash nationalization - to consider it, not come out in favour of it. Here was a waffler only suggesting to consider it. What the opposition did at that time, and I believe it was Mr. McLeod, was to make an offer to the hon. member at that time, Mr. Richards. He said if you want to have an opportunity to speak in this Assembly, I don't particularly agree with your position, but we in the opposition will second your motion to allow you to bring your concerns to the floor of this Assembly.

I make the same offer to the hon. member. If he can't get someone to second the motion of his concerns on nuclear development, and I gather he has been here some three or four weeks and that he hasn't been able to. Then certainly a member on this side of the House will do it, not necessarily agreeing with your position but giving you an opportunity to be heard. Because after the budget speech is over, and you didn't mention it tonight, your opportunity to speak on that vital issue is going to be determined by what motions are on the order paper. It's going to be the only opportunity that you are going to have to speak in that session. . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the record of this government of the environment. We have seen one of the most shameful acts of a government trying to portray its concern about the environment with one of the weakest administrative structures when it comes to the environment, one of the weakest departments of the environment in this country. It's all right when they want to go out and show their concern for the environment and how deeply concerned they are and how they are going to be the saviours of Saskatchewan's fragile environment. But when the crunch comes they are not around. When the largest PCB spill in Canada's history took place, they cover it up. They don't want to talk about it. The public shouldn't know about this. Even the city of Regina in which it happened shouldn't know about it. I think that is an administrative weakness in that department of the environment which does not augur well for the concerns of the member for Saskatoon Sutherland (Mr. Prebble). I look at the fact that it missed completely the radon gas. We saw the former Minister of the Environment standing up here buttoning and unbuttoning his suit as he tried to blame Ottawa for not cleaning up the radon gas problems in Northern Saskatchewan. Then we find out the other day there's raw sewage being dumped into, I believe, Moose Jaw creek. They didn't even know about it. You can take a look at the budget estimates for the Department of the Environment if you want to know the real concern and I challenge the hon. member to speak out in his caucus on this. If we take out the new provision for the mines pollution control branch and we will be challenging before we accept that as having any degree of ability, we will be questioning the hon. member, the minister in estimates, because if it's got the same ability as the rest of your departments that mines pollution department or branch isn't going to be worth anything. In fact it could be a detriment to the people of this province as it too tries to cover up environmental disasters; as it too tries to hide from the people of Saskatchewan environmental tragedies. I'll tell you, if it's based on the administrative people that you already have, that's all we can expect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — If you take that out of the department environment expenditures for this year, and keep in mind that we are embarking on serious nuclear development in this province, you take that out of the Department of the Environment and I think that you've got a budget increase of approximately \$125,000 out of a total budget expenditure of \$5,874,000 last year. I think the hon. member can tell me when he calculates that it's a lot less than 1 per cent and it's a lot less than even an inflationary cost increase which gives you an idea of how much really concerned the government opposite is on protection of the environment.

I say that the environmental groups in this province may well rue the day that they cast their lot with the members opposite. I think they're going to regret the day that they decided they could trust that government and not another political party. Because you're not backing your words with action and you're not backing your words with money when we embark on this new matter of nuclear development in the province of Saskatchewan - one that's fraught with dangers. I think all members will agree fraught with dangers for every member in every part of this province. I think, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg (Mr. Engel) still hasn't learned. He has the same approach to the House he had in 1971. The only thing I forgot to congratulate you for improving your vote in 1971 this time from 32 to 33 per cent of the vote. I thought that showed a great deal of effort and confidence by your constituents. I think that was a tremendous increase, and you're to be credited for that. He's here four years and he's gone four years. You know how it works.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, on the budget I'd just like to refer to the matter of the government's heritage fund. Let's analyze that heritage fund and the approach of the government opposite. The Premier takes pride in the fact that the heritage fund is a good investment as we go into potash and we go into uranium mining and we don't put any money aside. That's basically the approach of this government when we talk about heritage and saving our resource moneys from non-renewable resources for future generations.

The Premier himself, and some of the new members may not realize this, is talking much more confidently about potash as he tries to buoy you up then when he's admitted in this Assembly and admitted publically, that potash investment is risky. There's a great deal of risk. We look at some of the actions of the government opposite when it got into potash. It caused competition to develop in New Brunswick. There's a mine there, competing with ourselves and probably with our support, as we've driven them out and caused them to invest elsewhere - a direct competitor of ours. Admittedly, it, is not going to be a major competitor but an unnecessary competitor.

The Premier (and it's very interesting to note for the new members opposite who believe some of the propaganda) refused to table the studies on the markets for potash. The reason is because everybody in the potash industry knows, and the Premier knows, and the Minister of Mineral Resources knows, that potash is a risky venture. Nations, when they cut back on potash or don't have the funds, often first cut back on agricultural needs such as potash. They're just like the Saskatchewan farmer. One of the first things he cuts back when he doesn't have the money is potash. The underdeveloped nations do exactly the same thing. The hon. members better use that simple example as a recognition that in fact potash development is a pretty shaky leg to be putting into a heritage fund. Trying to convince future generations and the people of this province that in fact the heritage fund has a solid base, is false, because it doesn't. The members

opposite know that it's a tremendously unwise investment on which to be charging our future generations.

I look as well, Mr. Speaker, . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, the hon. Premier now tries to deny that it's risky - he's got the public statements. The fact is that he's admitted that it's a risky investment. I don't believe that any government has the moral right to be taking substantial funds to be used for future generations and to be put into high-risk investments. When you've been questioned about the return on investments you've been found wanting. You've been found seriously wanting. The dissipation of the heritage fund is going to be one of the great tragedies of the government opposite's regime.

I say as well, Mr. Speaker, that there are studies - and I refer to the Meade study as well, Mr. Speaker - which indicates that the massive investments by the government opposite in uranium mining is just as risky and just as shaky. The cost of uranium is going to maintain approximate levels until 1985 and then those in the uranium industry are not sure what's going to happen. It all depends on how many new nuclear reactors come on stream. It all depends how successful the environmentalists are going to be in stopping nuclear reactors and nuclear generation. Yes, and the hon. member over there agrees with that - it is a high risk venture. If it is a high risk venture and if, as the Premier says, potash is a high risk venture, then you have no moral right to be using that as your touch stone of your basis for investment and using moneys for future generations.

I say that the dissipation and the poor investment and the shaky base of the heritage fund is the tragedy of the government opposite. The disappointment and the thing that future generations have to worry about, of course, is that they are going to be the ones to pay the price.

It's fair enough for us to argue in this Assembly whether the investment is a proper one or not, but when government opposite members say that they are admittedly embarking on risky ventures you have no right to invest the moneys of future generations in what are risky ventures.

Mr. Speaker, dissipation of the heritage fund is grounds enough for members opposite to vote against the budget as well as myself and I certainly won't be supporting the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, now that the government side of the House is awake, it is a distinct privilege for me to rise and participate in the budget debate. As there seems to be some tradition I would like to commend the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) for his appropriate and enlightening remarks and his thorough evaluation of the present budget.

Mr. Speaker, the budget concerns me for two distinct reasons: firstly, it is hypocritical, secondly, the government is gambling or banking upon development of uranium resources to bring the necessary wealth to this province to cover its debts and mismanagement.

On the first point, Mr. Speaker, the government of Saskatchewan issued a news release on November 27, 1979 entitled, Blakeney Presents Economic Strategy for Nation. I am

pleased to see the Premier is here. If I may quote:

A six-point economic program to lift Canada out of its doldrums was presented to the First Ministers Conference on the economy today by Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney.

During his opening statement at the Ottawa conference, Premier Blakeney predicted a lower rate of growth in the United States means a gloomy, short-term Canadian outlook. He said and I quote again:

I believe we are facing a lower rate of growth, a lower rate of job formation, higher unemployment and little increase in consumer spending in real terms.

To counter this, Mr. Blakeney presented a six-point mid-term economic strategy. Two of these points were:

1. Continued careful management of current expenses by all governments.
2. (This to me, Mr. Speaker, is the most important statement) All governments must move towards balancing budgets on current accounts.

About the same time as the strategy statements were being made, the Premier's office issued another news release titled Economic Growth Forecast to Continue. The report led off by saying Saskatchewan's economy performed well in 1977 and the outlook for 1978 is for accelerated growth through expansion. Earlier that month from the Department of Industry and Commerce another news release came out titled Rapid Growth Predicted. Saskatchewan Industry and Commerce Minister, Norman Vickar, predicted Wednesday that the 1980s will witness Canada's fastest growth in research development in Saskatchewan. Yet, Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1978, in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, the Minister of Revenue (Mr. Robbins) under the newspaper heading Deficit Seen Wiping Out Tax Reserves was quoted as saying that the province's \$198 million surplus built up during the more prosperous years prior to 1977 could run down to nothing. The minister said the deficits from the past two years together with this year's deficit to March 31, 1979 are likely to run double the \$44 million budgeted coming up and wiping out the accumulated surplus. Deficits for 1977 and 1978 fiscal years have been confirmed at \$23 million and \$40 million respectively. While it was planned that government would run surpluses in more prosperous times, he said, and deficits during the more difficult times, in 22 budgets there have been only three deficits: one in the 1960s and the past two consecutive years, I think it's probably three now. The article went on to say Robbins said earlier this week the province could pull itself out of its current slump by 1980 when a balanced budget and perhaps a surplus was expected.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the minister noted that Ontario was receiving equalization payments and as a result in his words knocks down Saskatchewan shares. If the minister is not yet aware. . .

MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: — What is the point of order?

MR. ROBBINS: — The point of order is I said, there is talk of Ontario getting equalization payments. I did not say. . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I don't believe that is a point of order. It may be a point of correction and I think that the member must take the word of the member in offering a point of correction.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Speaker, it was referred to so often in debate that it is a debatable contest, I guess. If the minister is not yet aware, Ontario along with Alberta and British Columbia, are the only three provinces in Canada that do not receive these payments. This could lead one to believe that this is another example of the government's continuing effort to mislead the public and cover their own sins. The point is this, Mr. Speaker; the Premier of this province on several occasions announced as did his ministers, the economic well-being of our province. These are good times we are living in and yet the Minister of Revenue infers we are in a slump. Firstly, we in this caucus believe there is no excuse or reason for a deficit budget during these good times. I suggest in the strongest of terms the ministers of this government should get their act together. Was it not this government that suggested that during good economic times the budget should be balanced and money should be put aside for more difficult times? This leads me to a second point, Mr. Speaker. We continually hear speculation and the member for Qu'Appelle made references to the uranium development. Members of this government are running around telling the public about the boom our province is expecting to witness over the next several years. I hope what you are telling the people of the province is true. Let me quote a simple phrase, let's not count the chickens before they hatch.

We hear such statements as the Minister of Revenue saying the mining industry is expected to play a major role in appreciably turning things around. I thought we were living in good times. We hear statements from the Premier's office entitled - economic growth forecast to continue. We hear the Minister of Industry and Commerce's department saying rapid growth predicted. Well, Mr. Speaker, what if we are not blessed with the rain and sunshine that we have had for the last several years?

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's right.

MR. HAM: — What if the development of uranium does not take place as expected? Why is the Premier speaking out of both sides of his mouth on national television to other premiers in our country? He suggests to them we should move towards balanced budgets and then comes home and presents a deficit budget. What kind of leadership is that? Perhaps that's a laughing matter too. The obvious underlying need for restraint and balanced budgets is a concern that has been facing our nation for some years, and I believe a responsible province will take a lead to fight this inflation.

Although I have much more to say during debate on my resolution on the order paper, it is obvious to me, Mr. Speaker, that this government does not seriously intend to fight inflation. Inflation is wracking the sick, the elderly and those on fixed incomes. There is no question in my mind that most members of this Assembly probably receive as many concerns and letters as I do about people on fixed incomes facing their shrinking budgets. I believe, Mr. Speaker, we are doing a terrible injustice to those on fixed income. They have no control over what is happening, and surely they did not cause it. I am convinced, as most economists are, that governments are at the root of our inflationary problems.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Right on.

MR. HAM: — It is incumbent upon government to lead, by example, to solve this very serious problem. The time is not next year or years after but now to solve this major concern - not to speak out of both sides of your mouth as members of that government so often do, not to be banking on future development of the resources in our province - but to be realistic and face the problems that so many of our citizens do, who look to us for an example. In the extremes of debate in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, accusations are made of this side of the House about serious government cutbacks. They make political nonsense. We have stated so often in the past and will continue to state that this government simply has a priority problem with its expenditures. One needs only to examine the CPN (Co-operative Programming Network) fiasco on expense and mismanagement and the potash takeover which is totally unnecessary - a risky investment alluded to by the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane). The most blatant example of all, in my opinion, is the government's super Hollywood brainwash programs of last year on the resources in Saskatchewan and the Crown corporations.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, and to emphasize to those of this legislature who wish not to understand the PC resource policy that the PC party put forward in the last election, I would like to repeat the propositions of share certificates in the Saskatchewan resource companies. Please listen! Let's use potash as an example.

The NDP government has invested in excess of \$500 million of taxpayers' money to buy half the potash mines of this province. Not one new job was created by this investment. The \$500 million has since been reinvested by companies that were bought up in other provinces, states and countries to develop mines to compete with the mines in Saskatchewan.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Right!

MR. HAM: — However, the fact is that their investments have been made and it is now incumbent upon us to deal with that fact - the mistake has been made is maybe a better description.

The PC party of Saskatchewan takes the position that shares in government resource corporations should be given to every citizen in Saskatchewan free of charge. They should be free because the citizens have already paid for them through their taxes. In this way the people would really own the resource industries.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the phony bologna issue that the people of Saskatchewan own the resources which this government continues to somehow suggest is a matter of guidance from above - which we have no argument with - the people of Saskatchewan have always owned the resources. They presently own the companies that come into this province to buy the lease rights to these resources. You know it and I know it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They think they're greater than guidance from above.

MR. HAM: — In a real sense they would keep their shares, sell them if they thought it was a bad investment or buy more if they thought it was a good investment. I hope that's simple enough for the members across the way so far . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

To accomplish this we would create corporations that would operate in the private

sector. By articles of association of these companies we would ensure that the corporation's head office must always remain in Saskatchewan, that the board of directors must be Saskatchewan residents. They might even be supporters of this government. No more than a very small percentage of shares could be owned by one individual group or groups of individuals and we would generally ensure that the corporation remained a Saskatchewan operation.

There are many advantages to this exercise in economic democracy. Every citizen would be able to vote for competitive, competent financial measures to run their corporation rather than for the politicians (and I include all of us) who know very little about such financial matters. I'm speaking for everyone here! Every citizen would have a vested capital in the form of shares which we would use as collateral at the bank or for whatever he desires . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Since the debts would transfer along with assets into the new corporation, the provincial debt would drop dramatically. I don't think this government concerns itself with debt though, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

It is interesting to see that since the PC Party of Saskatchewan adopted this policy, the state of Alaska and the province of British Columbia have both announced citizen shareholder projects. The United States Congress . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know what happened the last election. You people just simply didn't understand it. And of course if you can't understand something you can't explain it.

The United States Congress has recently passed enabling legislation for the formation of this kind of corporation. I believe that over the course of the next few years we will see many more governments take a serious look at similar ideas as a way of having citizen participation through ownership without the inefficiencies of state ownership.

Mr. Speaker, this budget in no way comes to grips with many of the problems facing our Saskatchewan citizens. It does not in any way exhibit leadership in the fight against inflation and is a deficit budget during good times. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the budget speech.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak in this debate but circumstance forces me to do it. I could spend a short time replying to the comments made by the speaker just before me from Swift Current but I think I can put my time to better use.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — A member is elected, Mr. Speaker, to sit in this Assembly, perhaps first, because enough of his constituents believe he is qualified and second, because legally he has proven himself eligible to do so. I, Mr. Speaker, and my colleague, the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake (Mr. Hammersmith), had all the hurdles put before us before our election was conceded. First the results on election day gave us the majority. Then came the official count in which I increased my majority. But that was still not enough for the party opposite, Mr. Speaker, so we were forced to a judicial count which ended with very little change in results. Now, Mr. Speaker, that makes the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake and myself the most qualified members to sit here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — That's because we are able to produce full credentials and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, the victory was a sweet one. I am sure I am speaking for my colleague from Prince Albert when I say that we are honored to represent the constituencies where we reside.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak in support of this budget. My first remarks, of course, must be to commend our Minister of Finance, the Hon. Mr. Smishek, on a well-thought-out and a well-delivered budget message.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — Those of us, Mr. Speaker, who are in a position to know the minister well as a result of working very closely with him over the years, know him to be a dedicated man to serving the public. We know him to be hard-working. He drives himself harder, yes even harder, than he expects any of those around him to work. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, what more could we ask of a member? So I compliment the minister, sir, on another solid performance in presenting this budget under what I think were in many ways, unfortunately, more difficult circumstances than necessary.

Also, I want to congratulate our Premier and the rest of the cabinet on another humanity-first budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — Now, Mr. Speaker, my approach and remarks in this budget debate may seem to be considerably different to some that we have listened to. I will endeavour to be as brief as possible in presenting some of my reasons which I consider important.

Our society, Mr. Speaker, has seen a rapid change in the last 25 years. With each passing year it seems that the pace speeds up. Advances in technology, particularly evident in the field of communications, have had a lot to do, Mr. Speaker, with the bringing about of these changes and in some cases even forcing change.

Now don't take me wrong, Mr. Speaker, I don't speak out against change. Our party can take its fair share of the credit for many of the moves forward which were made collectively and democratically by our society.

I need only to draw attention to the field of hospital and medical care. Members will know what I mean. Like any other group of people organized to achieve a common objective, we are human and we have no doubt made some mistakes. About them, we could always say though, that they were ours and that we have them as our mistakes. I think demonstrated we have the courage to admit them and the work to do better towards making them correct.

But change, Mr. Speaker, isn't in itself an objective nor does it always mean improvement. Far from it. I need only to cite television, for example, and its effects on our lifestyles to demonstrate my point. This communication vehicle, if you want to call it that, has tremendous potential to change our lives. There are now studies, as we all know, to demonstrate that it has and not all the evidence is for the better, not by a long way. As a means of recreation and entertainment for many, it has had its effect on physical health, becoming a substitute for more useful and healthful recreation. It has in many ways, Mr. Speaker, encroached upon other forms of entertainment which were

more useful in developing and building better inter-personal relationships and a better sense of community spirits. I say it has substituted and made in a sense an artificial sense of world community and too often shows us only the worst side of the activities of the world community.

Too frequently, Mr. Speaker, we see brutal fashions depicting violence and material greed as the norm for factors characterized as ordinary average citizens. While it's doing these things, Mr. Speaker, the industry is fuelled and financed by advertising which almost always works on human weaknesses such as vanity and human greed for more material possessions. The effects on our sense of community, the attitude towards violence and material achievements are of real concern to me. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and I think a growing number of people are convinced and concerned about the increasing violence that we as so-called civilized creatures are doing to each other.

I want to stress this point even further because I fear too much of the concern is about the material damage. Yes, you can look at a window broken, a stereo stolen or a car fender bent. That concern is, of course, legitimate. So too is the concern legitimate where it concerns meting out punishment, but surely, Mr. Speaker, if we are at all civilized and intend to continue calling ourselves a Christian society, we had better become more concerned about the human damage instead of property damage. We had better become a good deal more concerned about analysing the underlying causes and seeking to correct them. In short, I say, Mr. Speaker, we should put humanity and human concerns first. We ought to be more concerned about the effects of false hopes and expectations which are created with such ease by this medium and which are broken when these hopes cannot be met. We ought to be more concerned about the opportunities for an otherwise decent future for many of our young that are stolen from them simply because values of human compassion and co-operation, Mr. Speaker, have been replaced by unbridled, unrestricted and mindless competition in which violence to other people is almost glorified in satisfying human greed. We ought to be more concerned that too many lives are bent to a course of greater material values instead of greater human dignity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I raise these issues because I think our society should be geared to a course which shows compassion, co-operation and human dignity as greater goals. I refer to these issues in this debate because I think supporting this budget means supporting those goals and not the opposite. I will try to illustrate, Mr. Speaker. You know that trampling on the least fortunate among us has become a bit of a popular sport in Ottawa. The victimizing of unemployment insurance recipients at a time our national unemployment is the worst it's been since the depression characterizes this. I think all of us in this House know which politicians in Ottawa started that campaign and which ones carried it out. I can only say the performance is of no credit to them. This budget goes the other direction, Mr. Speaker. I am proud of it and I think it's a credit to the government. The income tax adjustments are designed to provide a better break in percentage terms to those on low incomes with families than to those with higher incomes. Twelve hundred of those who most need our help as a society will be helped to make ends meet because we won't be asking them to pay any provincial tax. Many of us wish we could do more, of course, but I am sure that we will do more in the next few years. All of us have to understand that we can't be all things to all people all at the same time. If we want to do proportionately more to assist those many who still need our help because of lower incomes, we can not at the same time profess to do more for those fewer in number whose incomes are in the higher brackets and whose standard of living is already a target of too much envy. To suggest that we can do both is impossible

in pure logic and it's not possible financially. What we are doing at this time is possible financially and I think, Mr. Speaker, it is proper philosophically as well. I therefore support it and call on all members to support it. There are further tax adjustments in this budget which I believe are also in keeping with this overall approach. The education property tax rebate for seniors is a good example. This new program, combined with the existing property improvement grant, will provide added assistance to our senior citizens. No one questions, Mr. Speaker, that they have earned it. And furthermore, income figures prove they are most deserving of it.

I checked the figures in the most recent economic review, Mr. Speaker, and I invite other members to do likewise. If they do, they would find as I did, that based on the most recent figures available, pensioners as a classified group of taxpayers, had a lower average income than anyone else at \$9,718. This is not strictly relevant to my point here, Mr. Speaker, but I still say nevertheless of interest. Perhaps some of our professional people, our doctors and so forth, seem to be doing O.K. when you consider those salaries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — Surely that concerns us all. A further check of those same figures also, Mr. Speaker, demonstrates that we in Saskatchewan have been doing something about it. Let me remind you that in 1966 our pensioners were \$342 behind the national average whereas by 1975 that disparity had been reduced to \$44. We've been moving, Mr. Speaker, in the right direction and this further tax credit is another right step in the right direction.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — The new mortgage assistance is a similar tax credit scheme, Mr. Speaker, providing benefits to a maximum of \$250. I am certain it will be welcome, particularly by the many young families struggling with big mortgages. I'll be interested to see if all members support this.

In view of the fact that it is a tax credit scheme with maximums built in it is different from a tax exemption scheme proposed by some other politicians in other places, Mr. Speaker, very different.

The increases in benefits of the family income plan are likewise welcome. In keeping with this philosophy I've been trying to describe, Mr. Speaker, that this program is another first of its kind in Canada. It has proven it can help those who, for lack of better words, are often described as the working poor. In its initial stages this program almost unavoidably experienced some administrative difficulties. This, of course, made it an easy and popular target, Mr. Speaker, for some politicians who ignored the fundamental principles of the program and the good it could do. With a complete disregard, for that, they aimed only at scoring a few cheap political points. I can only say that I am proud that we stuck with this program and I am proud the people of Saskatchewan stuck with us. I am proud we are able in this budget to make it do more, yes, in yet another way, for those who are most in need of our help.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, I could enumerate more measures which reflect the reasons why I think this is another humanity-first budget, why it reflects our outlook that people matter more. That's what we are concerned about. The number of other issues I raised earlier in my remarks relate to this. I have endeavored to demonstrate that we have to

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seriously think if each change we make contributes to a more compassionate and a more co-operative society in which human dignity is the end goal. I say, Mr. Speaker, to the Assembly, that because this budget shows compassion, because it asks all of us to show co-operation, because it puts people first, I am very proud to support it. I am proud to support our Minister of Finance and his motion. With these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate Adjourned

The Assembly adjourned at 9:58 p.m.