

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 4, 1979

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

MOTION

Select Standing Committee on Radio Broadcasting

MR. P.P. MOSTOWAY (Saskatoon Centre): – Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck):

That the first report of the select standing committee on radio broadcasting of selected proceedings be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): – Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House, a group of visitors from Australia. They are headed by the Hon. Ian Tuxsworth, MLA, who is the Minister of Health and Minister of Mines and Energy in the northern territory of Australia. He has with him some of his colleagues who work with him in dealing with some of his duties as Minister of Mines and Energy. They are here in Saskatchewan visiting some uranium mines and other installations of interest to them. I'm sure that all hon. members would wish to welcome Mr. Tuxsworth and the other members from Australia. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery.

HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley): – Mr. Speaker, I would like (before the oral question) to also welcome the people from Australia on behalf of the opposition to visit our Chamber today.

HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

SGEA Strike

MR. TAYLOR: – My question is to the Premier. Regardless of the outcome of the SGEA (Saskatchewan Government Employees Association) court action concerning the legality of the strike, will you, Mr. Premier, direct the Minister of Labour (Mr. Snyder) to use his influence to call together both sides in the disruptive dispute and to sit down and negotiate an end to this strike?

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, I will certainly ask my colleagues to do everything they can to assist negotiations that will lead to a conclusion of the current work stoppage. I'm sorry that I cannot recommend that the Minister of Labour, himself, intervene in the negotiations. The reason why that cannot be done is that the last time the Minister of

Labour intervened in negotiations between the Saskatchewan Government Employees Association and an employer, an unfair labor practice charge was laid against the Minister of Labour. From this I conclude that notwithstanding the fact that the unfair labor charge was quite without substance, the intervention of ministers is very distasteful to the members of the Saskatchewan Government Employees Association, and accordingly, the intervention of the minister is unlikely to bring about a resolution of the dispute.

MR. TAYLOR: – Mr. Premier I am asking you to have your minister bring them together. I think you realize as well as I do, the people of Saskatchewan are becoming very concerned about this strike and they are wanting a settlement. We have cited instances of senior citizens, of hospitals, of students. And with Christmas coming on, many of the strikers want a settlement.

My question to you, Mr. Premier, is, does the Minister of Labour and your government not accept the responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan to bring these people into a room, get them sitting down and by collective negotiation to bring an end to this strike?

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, hon. members opposite are not more concerned about this work stoppage than we are and I can assure them of that.

Mr. Speaker, our obligation is to use all methods effectively open to us to resolve this dispute. That we are now doing. There is a conciliator who is actively at work. He is Mr. Sig Walter; he is a person of great skill and ability in this field, and I am sure that nothing I could do to bring the participating parties into a room would add anything to what Mr. Walter is now doing in order to resolve this dispute.

MR. TAYLOR: – In my mind, and the minds of the people of Saskatchewan, the responsibility lies with you and the Minister of Labour. My question is this: Is your failure to take action because you and the Minister of Labour . . .

MR. SPEAKER: – Order, order! I think it is plan to all members that we are getting into a debate on this particular issue. There will be plenty of opportunity later today for the members to debate this issue if they wish. I could ask the member to restrict himself to questions.

Leprosy

MRS. J.H. DUNCAN (Maple Creek): – Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

A question to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, I have been advised of substantial concern and emotional reaction to the new of a case of leprosy in the city of Estevan. On numerous occasions, as far back as one year ago, and your department were privately urged by members on this side of the house to address this very problem, yet nothing was done. Do you not agree that had your department acted responsibly and informed and educated the public on this very misunderstood disease and its characteristics, that you would have alleviated the perhaps unfounded fears and concerns running rampant in Estevan today?

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Minister of Health): – Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that I haven't been in Estevan for some time. But I would venture to guess that I have more immediate relatives in Estevan than any person opposite, Mr. Speaker, and I have not heard anything of the rampant fears that the member for Maple Creek is saying are in

Estevan at this particular time.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that there is one individual who, it has been confirmed, has leprosy. I am of the understanding there are about 100 cases in Canada today. These people who come into Canada are screened by the federal government. We have absolutely nothing to say as to the screening of these individuals. It was on the agenda with the federal Minister of Health and the provincial ministers of health in our last meeting sometime in November or October. It was decided at that time that all the provincial governments were doing as much as possible in making absolutely certain that leprosy, or those people who had leprosy would not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I was asked, Mr. Speaker, what we had been doing in this regard, and I am explaining to the member opposite that we have accepted our responsibilities, but we have not gone out and made people afraid of a disease which they should not be afraid of. If, Mr. Speaker, a person who has leprosy is treated by drugs and is actively treated the disease is not infectious. I have made that known to members opposite in my discussions with them. I had a discussion with the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) yesterday in this regard and, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member for Estevan that I appreciate very much that he did to get up in this House and stampeded the people on an issue that they should not be stampeded on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MRS. DUNCAN: – What you just said, Mr. Minister, is what we discussed last week, that it is the responsibility of your department through the public health branch to issue a press release. We told you last week that there were rumors and half truths flying around Estevan. This morning children were being taken out of school. We agree that leprosy is probably one of the world's most misunderstood diseases and probably very foreign to a country of our climate.

My supplementary is, would you not further agree that because of your lack of action and because of the general misunderstanding of this disease, that you have placed the people from southeast Asia under a cloud of suspicion? That's your responsibility?

MR. ROLFES: – Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say I remember well the rumors that were spread last year on a reserve in southwest Saskatchewan. Unfounded rumors!

MR. SPEAKER: – Order, order! I think we are getting into the same kind of problem as we did with the last question. The questions unfortunately do not begin with an interrogative such as who, what, where, when and why. I would suggest to the members of the opposition that they follow the rules that are set down by the members of this Assembly for the question period and that ministers respond accordingly and not begin to dredge up material which may have gone by this House a number of months ago.

MR. ROLFES: – Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate those remarks but I have to put it in context of what we have faced in the past. Let me first of all say that we did take action immediately. This person is under active treatment. There is only one case in Saskatchewan as opposed to about 40 or 50 in Ontario. What we are simply saying to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is that if a person is treated, actively treated, for leprosy there is no concern for the people in the public. The disease is not infectious and, therefore, a statement by the Minister of Health could have added nothing, Mr. Speaker, to what already was being done and that is that the disease was actively treated. Therefore, there was no harm whatsoever to the people in Saskatchewan.

Condition of Highways

MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current): – Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer). Mr. Minister, Sundays and Monday's road conditions in the province, and since your department has minimal staff, how do you expect to handle a major storm with minimal supervisory staff under present conditions?

HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways and Transportation): – Well, Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that we have been advertising for the last two weeks, unfortunately, telling people that we are providing minimal service. There are no emergencies or there were none that weren't taken care of during the last few days or are not being taken care of today. There are 70 units available for sanding and snow ploughing and they are being manned by personnel that are not union personnel. There is a number of union members who are in scope who have gone back to work. They are working. I suggest to member that there are no particular worries at this time. Having said that, I would once again like to remind people that all the highway crews in Saskatchewan will not ensure that there will not be icy conditions. We have always had those. All people ought to remember that they should not go out on icy roads unless there is a dire emergency. If there is a dire emergency they ought to be getting in touch with someone who has a vehicle that can cope with ice. I repeat, there are no emergencies that are causing any public hazard at this time. There is nothing that isn't being taken care of at the present time. Yes, the ambulance plane will be available. It's not on strike. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that there has been a suggestion that union people will come out in emergency. We have not received that assurance from them and those that have been asked, have not assisted.

MR. HAM: – Mr. Speaker, supplementary. The minister knows full well there's not enough staff to handle an emergency. Are you aware that SGEA (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association) has stated its members would return to work if your department officials asked them, in an emergency?

MR. KRAMER: – Mr. Speaker, they have not said that. I deny that being said. Ms. Sorensen said that if the department asked they would consider. That's vastly different from going back to work. They were asked in Saskatoon this morning and they absolutely refused. They considered that some truck stuck on Blackstrap hill was not an emergency. Our sanding crews are taking care of it. The trucks are now moving.

MR. HAM: – Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, how many people have to be killed or maimed before your department takes action in this matter?

MR. KRAMER: – That is the usual twaddle that we get from the member for Swift Current (Mr. Ham). He imagines many things. There has been nobody who has been hurt or killed thus far and I am saying again, warning the public to stay off the roads if they are icy. That's advice that holds anytime, strike or not.

Livestock Marketing

MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie): – Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. MacMurchy). Mr. Minister, since the brand inspectors are out on strike in this province, the livestock that is being sold in the province is being sold on brand manifests alone. Any cattle that are missing from community pastures could have

either strayed or been rustled. What protection is the minister going to provide to the farmers and ranchers of Saskatchewan so that they do not take this loss of cattle, if they are sold by someone else?

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Agriculture): – Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, I have been keeping in touch with the Department of Agriculture with respect to the effects of the strike on their operations. They have reported to me, Mr. Speaker, that while there is a problem here with the issue of brand inspections, they are doing their best to cope with it as much as possible. I have not had a complaint from the public other than this complaint raised by the hon. member to this point. Since it's the first time the issue has been raised with me, Mr. Speaker, I will pursue it as soon as the question period is complete.

MR. GARNER: – Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, after contacting the six divisions of the cattle co-ordinators in the province of Saskatchewan, we have over 500 head of cattle missing or strayed in the province of Saskatchewan today. Would you not, along with the Attorney General's department, ask the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) to do the brand inspections until this strike is over or so to provide the farmers and ranchers of Saskatchewan so that they don't lose again. We're talking about a value of \$30,000 to \$75,000 worth of livestock. And once again the farmers and ranchers of Saskatchewan are hung out to dry by this government.

MR. MacMURCHY: – Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, I'll be glad to pursue the issue as raised by the hon. member. I will do that this afternoon. As I indicated to him I have been in contact on a daily basis with the department with respect to their operations and with respect to this issue, or the area of this issue. I will be discussion with them if there is need for additional assistance in some form, how that assistance might be pursued.

MR. P. ROUSSEAU (Regina South): – Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce (Mr. Vickar). Mr. Minister, it has come to our attention that the government, through SEDCO is doing a planning and engineering study for an industrial or commercial complex on SEDCO property, known as the old GM building on Winnipeg and Eighth Avenue. Will the minister advise us what stage the study is at and when we can expect the official announcement to be made?

HON. N. VICKAR (Minister of Industry and Commerce): – Mr. Speaker, yes, it is very true that SEDCO people are looking at the proposal on the total 35 acre site of SEDCO. AS you will know, Mr. Speaker, that site consists presently of only about two proper buildings. The rest of them are old style, dilapidated buildings and vacant property and there is no reason on earth why we shouldn't be making a study to see what we can do to enhance that 35 acres.

MR. ROUSSEAU: – Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does it involve demolition wholly or in part of the old GM building on which you have already spent millions of dollars on renovations and acquisition?

HON. MR. VICKAR: – Mr. Speaker, that information, of course, is not available at this time. I don't know what it involves and I'm sure that when the study is completed that information will become public.

MR. ROUSSEAU: – Mr. Speaker, one more supplementary. Are you saying you don't know whether it's going to involve demolition or you are not prepared to announce it?

Secondly have you considered the alternative in this project and that is doing it through the private sector?

HON. MR. VICKAR: – No, Mr. Speaker, I do know that there is a study going on and no, we have not considered going through the private sector. The property belongs to SEDCO and there is absolutely nothing wrong with SEDCO people doing the study.

Increased Use of Executive Aircraft

MR. R.L. ANDREWS (Kindersley): – A question to the Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Messer). Last Friday, the Minister of Revenue (Mr. Robbins) provided this Assembly with certain logs of executive use of aircraft. I note that in making comparisons of your flights in 1977-78 with the other years your use of the service increased some 200 per cent. Can the minister account for this significant statistical aberration other than to say that it was used in that period leading up to or during the last provincial election campaign year?

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Mineral Resources): – Mr. Speaker, no., it was not used for the specific purpose of making myself available to the constituency only before and certainly not during the course of the election last year. I think it does, however, indicate that I am attempting to make myself more available to my constituents as I would suggest all members should keep mindful of and, Mr. Speaker, I also want to convey to this House that the use of the executive aircraft by myself, as by other ministers of the Crown, is fully within the policy of use of executive aircraft by this government.

MR. ANDREW: – Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Revenue (Mr. Robbins). Do you not agree Mr. Minister, that certain cabinet ministers – in particular if you look at the study, Messrs. Romanow, Messer and Bowerman – are in fact using the executive aircraft to excess and to the expense of the taxpayers, the people of Saskatchewan? Could the member tell his House if that is one of the reasons why, having had that information in your possession for three-and-a-half months and after 37 telephone calls of which you replied to none, you were afraid to issue that information to this side of the House?

HON. W.A. ROBBINS (Minister of Revenue, Supply and Services): – Mr. Speaker, in the first place, I did answer his phone calls. If he checked with his secretary or ever went to his office, he would find out that was true.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. ROBBINS: – Secondly, I would like to comment to the member for Kindersley (Mr. Andrew) that he's going to develop ulcers by mountain climbing over molehills and persisting in it.

Thirdly, I do not agree with your first contention.

MR. ANDREW: – I would suggest, Mr. Minister, that you did not return any of the telephone calls and perhaps your representation there is about the same type of

representation you had in the other stuff . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Are you saying you returned my telephone calls – is that what you are saying to the House? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that your answer to that particular question was the same as the type of information you provide in all this other material.

MR. ROBBINS: – Mr. Speaker, if the member would check with his secretary, I called at 3:35 on October 29; I called again at 4:45 on November 6; I called again at 5 o'clock on November 12 and he wasn't in his office at any of those times.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

Water Supply Financing

MR. G.S. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): – Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Smishek). In view of the statement made by the Mayor of Regina that he is meeting on behalf of his council with the Mayor of Moose Jaw, in order to make financial and other arrangements to improve the quality of water for the two cities, would the minister please inform this assembly of his intentions for financial assistance to improve the quality of water, thus making it fit for human consumption?

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Municipal Affairs (Urban)): – Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that the water is not fit for human consumption. If the hon. member is prepared to produce factual proof and lay it on the Table, I will give it consideration and get it examined.

MR. MUIRHEAD: – Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. You are saying then, Mr. Minister, that you know nothing about having been asked for any assistance from the city of Regina? Well I say that you have been asked. You have been asked by thousands of people in the city of Regina and you have been asked by the mayor sitting opposite for assistance to do something about the water in the city of Regina.

In light of this, Mr. Minister, I ask you now on behalf of the citizens of Regina and other surrounding areas to take immediate action. I ask you to specifically inform this House as to what type of assistance, how much financial help and when you are prepared to commence.

MR. SMISHEK: – Mr. Speaker, we have as a government, a great deal of confidence in local government. We do not propose to be interfering in the management of our cities. The hon. member has been telling me that there have been specific requests and proposals from the city of Regina for assistance in the supply of water. I invite the member to produce evidence before this House to substantiate his statement, because as a minister, I have not received any specific requests or proposals for assistance from the city of Regina. I would like to inform the member that unless he is prepared to produce proof, he shouldn't make statements of figments of his own imagination.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Solomon (Regina North-West) for an address in reply.

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Leader of the Opposition): – I began my remarks in reply to the Speech from the Throne yesterday and at that time I sensed they were largely wasted on the group opposite. I know the people of Saskatchewan would be interested in hearing some of them at least so I am going to review some the remarks I went through yesterday.

I would like to begin my remarks today by congratulating the two members opposite, the hon. member from Regina North-West (Mr. Solomon) and the hon. member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster (Mr. Long) for their remarks in reply to the Speech from the Throne. To be called upon by the Premier to do the honors of mover and seconder to the motion of adoption of the Speech from the Throne is in this particular case a dubious honor. If I may address myself to the new member for Regina North-West, may I first extend my congratulations on his by-election victory last October. May I further commend him on his thoughts and comments in his moving the motion on the Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne to which we were treated Thursday last was a relatively easy act to follow. I think that the Premier uses his best judgment in choosing a mover and a seconder from among the ranks of his new or less experienced colleagues. The current Speech from the Throne is typical of past speeches by this government – light on content, light on initiatives but very, very heavy on rhetoric. This allows the mover and seconder almost unlimited space in which to manoeuvre when framing their remarks in response. For the member for Regina North-West this affords an opportunity to ease into his new role. Very little defence is required for the offerings of the Speech from the Throne. This is simply because there was very little offered, but you will say this is a serious charge to make and the prosecutor must be ready to defend his charge. This, Mr. Speaker, I will do now and with pleasure.

The role of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, allows me a certain latitude in dealing with the legislation and programs proposed by this government. The traditional role of opposite members is to constructively criticize the initiatives of government. But when the government, Mr. Speaker, this government displays its selfish little attitude in this particular throne speech, they have provided us with an 11 page document which contains precious few items of substance. This therefore makes the first part of my role that of critic, somewhat more difficult. But fear not, Mr. Speaker, I take my role seriously. I have delved deeply into the airy recesses of this document and have found a few items which bear attention.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the act of depriving the people of Saskatchewan and myself of any substantive policy initiatives, makes the other facet of my role as the Leader of the Opposition that much easier. This role is the presenter of an alternative to the government: to provide a sense of direction where no direction is given by government; to articulate new policy initiatives in the absence of government initiatives. The current throne speech indicates no direction, no innovation, no sensitivity to public needs. What is presented is more of the same bankrupt policies which have existed in the past. This cannot continue, as it threatens to bankrupt the people of Saskatchewan, now and future generations. Future generations of Saskatchewan will be carrying a second mortgage because of the incredible policies of this government. Mr. Speaker, it is just unacceptable.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I will focus my attention on the throne speech. It is a remarkable document, Mr. Speaker, remarkable for its lack of direction and its lack of insight. Allow me to expand upon this point for a few moments.

The citizens of Saskatchewan have had their dreams and aspirations frustrated or broken too many times by this government. I suspect that the haul of promises and the grandiose claims of future wealth made by the present NDP administration will do little to satisfy or impress these people who have been let down so often in the past. The cruel and indiscriminate Saskatchewan squeeze, if I may be allowed some literary licence, is tightening a little more every day around the throats of families throughout this province, but the cries of bankrupt businesses and squeezed-out farm families fall upon deaf ears in the NDP camp. The current government does not listen, it merely boasts of how good it is and this is ironic. And this is exactly what we are seeing today, Mr. Speaker, no response from a government that has forgotten or chosen not to listen, no response, Mr. Speaker, to the needs of Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan youth, Saskatchewan workers and Saskatchewan pioneers.

The Saskatchewan squeeze, Mr. Speaker, has many dimensions and it is being refuelled daily by the bankrupt policies of this government. Where are the children? Why do we have the same population today that we had in the 1930s?

AN HON. MEMBER: – . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. BERNTSON: – Did I wake you up Attorney General? Is this a product of the good times of which the NDP government boasts? Why do we have a smaller population now than we did in 1968? Where are the family farms that are the major element in our Saskatchewan heritage? Are we proud of losing 6,000 family farms since the formation of land bank? Where are our skilled and ambitious youth? We spend millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars annually to educate our youth, yet many leave for other Canadian provinces and the United States. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they want opportunity, Mr. Speaker, not guarantees of how little pay they can receive. They want to participate in a society where their contribution has some meaning. Opportunity and competition seem to be dirty words to this present government, especially if it is the individual competing with the public sector in certain areas. Mr. Speaker, our youth will never come home to the policies of the present government. And why, Mr. Speaker, if our annual birth rate is equal to, if not higher, than the national average has the proportion of senior citizens within our population increased so dramatically. Why is an increasing portion of our population suffering from sheer loneliness? Why are 20 per cent of the homes, for example in Saskatoon, occupied by only one person? Such people are literally being squeezed out of their homes – on farms, in villages, towns and cities across the province. Saskatchewan's claim to fame just may be that it leads the nation in 'outigration.' What we have witnessed in Saskatchewan after 30 years of socialist government is the orderly marketing of people – the orderly marketing, particularly of our youth.

We have an agricultural squeeze in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. the feedlot industry has moved despite our natural competitive advantage. The packing plants have closed leaving only one remaining for hog processing. The hog industry has declined dramatically here. The dairy industry has declined to the point where we cannot even adequately supply our domestic needs. Food processing and manufacturing have all but ceased in Saskatchewan, to the point where we now import a major portion of our hamburger from Alberta. I need hardly remind anyone of the price of a pound of hamburger in Saskatchewan.

These were just a few of the accomplishments of the socialist squeeze. Mr. Speaker,

there are more. There is cost squeeze as well. Our retail prices, repairs and services are among the highest in North America. By not encouraging Saskatchewan families to process and manufacture products here, we continue to ship our raw resources and produce to other regions. We send our children to work in other areas, pay for the education and subsequent transportation of our youth to these areas of opportunity. We pay for the transportation and processing of our raw materials in places outside Saskatchewan and then pay to bring them back processed and at higher prices to the Saskatchewan consumer. Then, to top it all off, Mr. Speaker, we pay among the highest levels of provincial income tax on the small amount that remains after we have spent the majority just to sustain ourselves on a daily basis.

I say, Mr. Speaker, this is the legacy of the socialist boast of the current government. There are thousands and thousands of broke and broken families throughout Saskatchewan. There is also a real tax squeeze for citizens of Saskatchewan as well. The cumulative tax rate for the average Saskatchewan resident is over 40 per cent. The average man or woman works from January to June just to pay his or her taxes. Add to this 5 per cent sales tax (made up in part of health tax) on such necessities to family life as blankets, books, clothes, baby bottles, diapers, tables, chairs, stoves, fridges – the list goes on and on. It's incredible.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is a credibility and an accountability squeeze in Saskatchewan. What our current government says and what it does are often two entirely different things. Let me repeat an important example of this. Allan Blakeney, Premier of Saskatchewan, said on March 1, 1972, and I quote:

We will offer support for development but we don't believe that such development warrants massive ongoing public subsidies. We don't believe that it is necessary to pour millions of dollars of taxpayers' money every year into the development of our resources. We believe that much more could be done to promote industries based not on resource development, but rather on manufacturing goods for people here in the prairie basins.

I won't risk our dollars, Blakeney said. But he did and he plans to continue. The current NDP government is full of contradictions and inconsistencies in philosophy and practice. They profess that they want to protect our provincial resources from foreign ownership by foreign multinationals. So how do they protect this, Mr. Speaker? By borrowing from foreign banks, paying Saskatchewan tax revenues out in interest to these foreign banks, paying for an exchange running at about 20 cents on every borrowed dollar, on our devalued Canadian dollar, to borrow these funds. And to what end? To buy back resources which were already ours and were and have been since 1905.

And what is the added price of this economic nonsense? Saskatchewan citizens are not allowed to feel the benefits that sound economic policy engenders – a bountiful heritage fund that is managed for the real benefit of all citizens of Saskatchewan, lower income tax, no health or education tax, lower public utility costs, lower energy costs, increased real farm incomes, population growth consistent with the rate of birth.

What has the socialist squeeze brought us instead, Mr. Speaker? A \$2.5 billion public debt; school closing; direct billing; elective surgery line-ups; high tax at all levels; inadequate environmental protection; hamburger from Alberta; fewer farms; lonely parents and grandparents; unsatisfied, mistreated natives; rampant political patronage; persistent strikes; under-financed and over taxed rural and urban

municipalities; centralized, unresponsive government; broken promises; no real heritage fund; with little hope for change in sight; children with mortgaged futures. The list goes on and on.

I see Saskatchewan today as a strong land with strong people. But under the thumb of a weak, and tired, and callous government. Saskatchewan people deserve a new order and a new balance, a balance that is not evident in the throne speech. The throne speech claims that the prospects for the Canadian economy are not encouraging in the near future. I am an optimist, Mr. Speaker, and disagree with this projection. With the election of a Conservative government in Ottawa last May the prospects for a renewed economic and social strength for Canada soared.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Tough measures were required and will continue to be required to put the Canadian economy on its feet again. It will recover in spite of such counter-productive economic decisions as are being made by the Government of Saskatchewan. Prime Minister Clark had the courage to bite the bullet . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – . . . to call a halt to the Liberal economic decisions that were leading us further and further down the path of economic destruction as a nation. The fiscal policies I'm thinking of, Mr. Speaker, . . . I'm thinking of deficit budgeting, massive government borrowings – often on the international currency markets. It may sound familiar, Mr. Speaker. The decisions in Saskatchewan parallel those of the former Liberal regime in Ottawa. The result, Mr. Speaker, is economic suicide. The prospects for a renewed prosperity are bringing by Canada now. The Progressive Conservative economic thrust is a necessary step in the turnaround of our national financial prospects.

Woodrow Wilson once said, and I quote: "The way to stop financial joyriding . . . (I want you to hear this) . . . is to arrest the chauffeur, not the automobile." The people of Canada, Mr. Speaker, arrested the chauffeur last May. I suspect he will be imprisoned for a long, long time. The current Saskatchewan government should heed Woodrow Wilson's words. They have been driving recklessly for some time now.

I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of Saskatchewan (Mr. Blakeney) and I do not see eye to eye on the prospects for our future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – I think that every year the NDP government rules here the prospects become dimmer and dimmer. Saskatchewan is hovering on the edge of incredible economic potential, and it has been Mr. Speaker, since 1905. The problem is that the policies of the present government tend to arrest this potential rather than make it into real prosperity. I find it incredible and totally unacceptable that we are still considered to be a have-not province. This is probably because the current government has not the economic policies or insights to turn us into a have province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Deficit budgets will not get us there. Massive borrowing on foreign money markets will not get us there. A heritage fund which takes money from non-renewable resources to buy more non-renewable resources that we already own is not making a positive contribution to the future economic viability of Saskatchewan. Owning depleted holes in the ground will not get us there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – The economic prospects for Saskatchewan are bright given new management. It is my firm hope that the people of Saskatchewan rid themselves of the current management before the management bankrupts them.

The government states in the throne speech that orderly marketing (but let's call a spade a spade), that marketing boards and the crowrate are the basis of economic prosperity and healthy rural communities in Saskatchewan. Let us review the healthy of our orderly rural communities. We have led the nation in an orderly loss of farmers and family farms. In fact, as I have stated before, there are 6,000 fewer family farms in Saskatchewan today than there were on the day the land bank program was introduced. We have witnessed orderly closures of rural schools, the orderly abandonment of hospital beds. Our population remains lower than it was in the 1960s and the farms and hamlets and villages have disappeared from the maps of Saskatchewan in orderly abandonment. Some of us fight for our families and their future. I come from a town that won't die. The people of Carievale won't let it die; they will keep it alive in spite of this government and the orderly exporting of rural people. There are approximately 250 families in Carievale and area although I personally know most of them, many of the youth between the ages of 18 and 25 are no longer there to meet. The reason for this is both obvious and sad.

Most of the children of these families do not live in Carievale and area any more. They are only there on the occasional holiday or to visit with their family and loved ones. Recently, I went through the Carievale telephone book and was surprised to find no less than 50 of the children between the ages of 18 and 25 of Carievale and area families that I knew, had moved to Manitoba, Alberta, B.C, for a job. I know of almost as many more that were forced off the land into the cities of Regina and Saskatoon.

The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that Carievale has lost its youth. Less than 20 per cent of our children between the ages of 18 and 25 have stayed in the area. I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that the Carievale situation reflects the situation of the vast majority of rural Saskatchewan. It represents an inordinate and inexcusable threat to our heritage and rural lifestyle. If this is the best evidence that this government can advance in defence of the crowrate and marketing boards, heaven help the crow, heaven help the marketing boards and heaven help rural Saskatchewan.

The term marketing board, in the socialist mind, means state farms and production constraints, and it is precisely because of these sorts of boards and commissions that we have lost our turkey producers, we have lost our egg producers, seen our hog population reduced by one-half, and all in the name of social order. Where is the evidence that orderly marketing has increased the number of family farms or improved the rural way of life?

Mr. Speaker, let's tell the people of Saskatchewan the truth about the success of the NDP rural programs and policies.

The Speech from the Throne boasts about rising farm cash receipts in Saskatchewan due to strong world prices. First of all it should be made perfectly clear to the public, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP can deserve to be criticized for trying to take credit for world price increases, when in fact, they have no influence on the price of wheat; no influence on the price of beef, rapeseed, or any other commodity traded on world markets. Secondly, the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that Saskatchewan farmers have the lowest deflated net income in the prairie province.

AN HON. MEMBER: – . . . and going down.

MR. BERNTSON: – The orderly marketing cornerstone of the NDP farm development policy has resulted in a constant, steady decline in deflated net income every year from 1975 to 1978, whereas Manitoba and Alberta farmers have experienced a positive net income improvement in the year 1978.

Now Mr. Speaker, if rural farm prices are going up and real net farm incomes are going up in Alberta and Manitoba, but they are falling behind in Saskatchewan, who can be to blame? The one key item in the farm income picture that the provincial NDP is responsible for is farm costs. Ask any farmer today what his key income problem is and he will tell you the cost price squeeze, not orderly marketing, but the cost price squeeze.

The Saskatchewan NDP imposed an orderly sales tax on a majority of farm inputs, grain bins, welders and many things designed to maintain family farms. The Saskatchewan NDP threatened retroactive education and health tax on farm feedlots. Ask the family farms at Lanigan if the NDP even knows what a farm is let alone what the farm problems are. They curse the regressive orderly tax burden propagated by this government.

The NDP government has raised the rent on lease land with no regard for land productivity. The NDP government has misallocated livestock in community pastures, so pastures go unused while neighboring family farms sell off cattle for lack of ranging facilities. The NDP purchased over \$100 million worth of land from Saskatchewan farm families and has directly pulled at least a quarter of a billion dollars of accumulated, desperately-needed family wealth out of the pockets of Saskatchewan as a result of increased land values.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – The windfall gain goes into the pockets of the NDP government. That \$250 million of hard-earned family heritage can never be returned to the pioneers that built this province in the first place. It's going forever into the potash holes of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan).

Mr. Speaker, marketing legislation should encourage growth and not be used as a political tool to force people off the land and into the cities, where they are compelled to join unions and to survive in a state-dominated economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has stated that his government is pledged to support the crowrate and will oppose schemes which will transfer additional costs to the farmers. Not only has the Premier imposed hundreds of millions of dollars of additional costs on the Saskatchewan squeeze of rural families, and not only is the Premier out of touch with agriculture in this province but now, Mr. Speaker, our Premier has again compromised his principles and our reputation by proposing to negotiate to trade the

crowrate for oil price concessions with the federal government. By introducing the crowrate into the bargaining negotiations over oil pricing in Canada, the Premier has set the stage to have the crow traded to eastern Canada so that additional oil revenues can be dumped into the NDP bureaucracy. Ask the farmers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, if they are willing to sacrifice the crow for more public uranium or potash expenditures now dominating the minds of the NDP. If our Premier obviously does not understand even the most rudimentary aspects of agricultural life, how can the farmers of Saskatchewan trust him: (1) to put a fair price on the value of the crowrate; or (2) to know where to spend the 30 pieces of silver when he has betrayed them?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Mr. Speaker, I respectfully challenge the Premier's right and his credentials to bring the crowrate to the energy bargaining table.

Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in seeing the contract between the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation and the Canadian Wheat Board. The Hon. Don Mazankowski, the federal Minister of Transport, has urged and pleaded for a spirit of co-operation between all segments of the grain handling industry. We in rural Saskatchewan have the most to gain by this co-operation, but what do we see? The wheat board co-operates; the railroads co-operate; the Wheat Pool co-operates; the governments of Alberta and Manitoba co-operate. But what about the Government of Saskatchewan? That's an entirely different story, Mr. Speaker.

It angers me to hear the Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan (Mr. MacMurchy) crying because he hasn't been able to meet with the federal Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski); there has been no communication between them and the spirit of co-operation is not extended from Ottawa end. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the door to Mr. Mazankowski's office is always open. He made no fewer than three trips to Regina before he was able to meet with our Minister of agriculture. I don't even know whether the Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture ever met with the Murtaugh group from the federal House of Commons.

The Saskatchewan government, Mr. Speaker, did buy 1,000 hopper cars on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. No one will quarrel with the need for this rolling stock. But, Mr. Speaker, what offends me is the list of strings and ties and terms and conditions which were set down by this government as preconditions before they would allow any of these cars to move grain stock within the western system. Saskatchewan grain producers have already dumped hundreds of millions of dollars into potash without having their grain cars misdirected as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Saskatchewan is entering the 1980s with a resource future paralleled by few jurisdictions in the world. This province possesses 40 per cent of the world's estimated potash supply. Oil and gas fields afford us the luxury of not only being self-sufficient in the future, but also guarantees that we in Saskatchewan will not then have to turn to higher risk types of energy supplies such as nuclear power stations.

Coal reserves offer us 100 or more years of supply of fuel for our Saskatchewan power plants and with 40 per cent of the farmland in Canada, the potential for organic energy from various forms of biomass is enormous. The story of the riches we are blessed with goes on and on. But, Mr. Speaker, the management of these resources by the present

NDP administration suggests serious implications for the people of Saskatchewan.

A high level of investment of public funds in these operations could spell disaster for the taxpayers of the province. The fundamental economic logic of this government's almost compulsive nature in spending enormous amounts of the taxpayers' dollars in acquiring these resources, both mystifies and frustrates Saskatchewan people. It is within the government's constitutional right to tax any corporate resident in this province. I fail to see the reasoning behind the government's decision therefore to choose the public acquisition route rather than the direct taxation route.

Mr. Speaker, the decision to opt for public ownership therefore is at once both unnecessary and risky. It is unnecessary in so far as the private sector is both willing and able to operate these enterprises and to live with the inherent economic risks of the cyclical financial nature of resource production.

In spite of the warnings by knowledgeable people in the resource field about the possible soft markets for certain resources in the near future, this government's intent on ploughing full speed ahead into the ever-increasing expenditures of public funds in the acquisition of more of our resource industries. It is my firm belief that the government should not be acting as a player in the market place and it was the Premier's belief as well in 1972. It is the role of government to establish the rules by which the private enterprise operates within the jurisdiction of a provincial government. Public funds should be expended for programs of public benefit.

There is one area of special concern to me, however, Mr. Speaker, and that is the development of uranium in the province of Saskatchewan. The Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Messer) in reply to a question from the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter), stated that it was quite possible that the government, through SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) could have as much as \$500 million invested in the uranium industry before production ever starts. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what happens if the markets are truly soft, as predicted by the experts, until 1985? And what happens if our salesmen do not do as good a job at marketing uranium as the government hopes that they will? What of competition from other uranium producers? The problem, Mr. Speaker, with uranium development as I see it, is that large number of 'what if's.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – I am sure the Premier has given long thought to the number of 'what if's' involved in the development of uranium. I am quite certain that he will never admit it but his government's decision to plan a staged development of uranium industry was likely made in large part from a recognition of the inherent risks of the development in this area. The government should not be involved in such a high-risk venture. The inherent risks and development costs of such an investment place a mortgage on the future of every person in the province of Saskatchewan and generations to come.

Much has been said over the past few years about potash. The question of who should own and develop these mines has been debated time and time again. The present government, Mr. Speaker, made the decision to buy out much of the current potash industry in this province. The sales were negotiated under threat of expropriation. The irony of the acquisition, Mr. Speaker, occurs in the fact that the government states that jobs are created by the acquisition of these resource industries. When the government bought its share of the potash industries no new jobs were created. But the government

created a Crown corporation, called it PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) and overnight created hundreds of new civil servants. The only real increase in employment occurred within the bureaucracy and if there is anyone, if there is one thing that government is skilled at, Mr. Speaker, it is the creation of bureaucracy. A rather wise French philosopher had this to say about bureaucracy and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Bureaucracy is a giant mechanism created by pygmies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Perhaps I will let the Assembly ponder those wise words.

The example of the oil industry, Mr. Speaker, parallels the potash takeover. Bill 42 was introduced in 1972. SaskOil was created and the oil activity ground to a halt. Activity in light and medium oils (other than tie-in wells) is almost non-existent. SaskOil bought its own production and to this date, new exploration by SaskOil (other than in some joint ventures with some big multinationals) just has not happened. Oil production in Saskatchewan has been dropping year after year.

The majority of the 1,000 wells drilled are in the heavy oil fields in the Lloydminster area. The new plant there will not be completed until after 1985 and it will be well into the 1990s before we are capable of significantly increasing our capacity.

Now that the Government of Saskatchewan is in the coal mining business, they are exercising more and more control over the lives and livelihoods of the people of this province.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan is fundamentally opposed to the government's course of acquisition of our resource industries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – It is our position that the people of Saskatchewan would best benefit for these resource industries in our province remaining in private ownership. Taxation of profits by these companies would prove to be the most effective and efficient means of realizing maximum benefits for the people of Saskatchewan from these resource industries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – We don't believe in axing the producers and consumers to buy potash mines; rather we believe in taxing potash companies, and helping Saskatchewan farmers and families to a higher standard of living.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – We believe that by 1990, if the Saskatchewan government followed the course suggested by the Progressive Conservative Party, that the people of Saskatchewan would have had a real heritage fund and that the value of this heritage fund would have been between \$1 and \$2 billion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – I stress dollars! Furthermore, the people of Saskatchewan would not have had to assume any of the risks that they at the moment are assuming under the present policy of the NDP government.

I would like to turn my attention to the environment, Mr. Speaker.

In the Speech from the Throne, in the first paragraph under ‘environment’, it states and I quote:

During this Session, my Government will propose an Environmental Assessment Act. This act will require that full consideration be given to the environmental impact of any project and that necessary litigation measures be established.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the government is finally admitting it has to correct a very dangerous situation. It has been neglecting a most serious problem. It is not acceptable that the Department of Environment should be only a reactive body. To date this department had only reacted when an emergency arose or if someone discovered a past example of environmental contamination. One needs only to look at the past record of environmental contamination to realize the necessity of effective environmental legislation to prevent contamination of the environment by hazardous substances.

The two spills at Federal Pioneer of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyl), would likely not have occurred had the Department of the Environment been enforcing strict regulations on storage and handling of hazardous substances such as PCBs.

Exposure of students to high levels of radon gas in schools in Uranium City should not have occurred had proper environmental protection legislation been enforced.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has done a disgraceful job of protecting the people of Saskatchewan from environmental hazards. On the basis of their record to date, Mr. Speaker, how can we possibly trust this government to effectively monitor such potential hazards to our environment as uranium, acid rain, boron leaching into streams and drinking water of this province?

How can we trust this government to monitor such things as drainage, while their past attitude has been to close their eyes and simply let the farmers and the communities downstream pay for these averse side effects?

With respect to drainage, the whole drainage issue, Mr. Speaker, this government’s attitude to date seems to have been if you had a problem, sue your neighbor. What a terrific attitude, Mr. Speaker, and what a wonderful climate to be creating for relationships within the community.

The Department of the Environment has not in the past, fulfilled its mandate in protecting the people of Saskatchewan from environmental hazards. I think it is safe to say that the people of Saskatchewan will be sceptical of any future policy announcement by this government, until it can prove that it is prepared to do better than in the past.

A very major concern exists over the government's announced intention to become an active participant in the development of uranium in this province. We are of the opinion that sound judgment and reasoning cannot come from a referee who is also one of the players in this development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – And, Mr. Speaker, I think that this can be extended to the government's involvement in all other resource areas – oil, potash and even more.

The arrogance of this government, Mr. Speaker, on environmental issues is amply demonstrated in its decision to proceed with the second unit at Coronach, without the final approval and the final report of the International Joint Commission. The confrontation attitude of this government on the issue of boron leaching with our neighbors in Montana is beyond all comprehension.

The Speech from the Throne goes on to say in the second paragraph under environment, and I quote:

Our province will continue to have Canada's most comprehensive and open assessment procedure – a procedure that is applied to both public and private developments.

Mr. Speaker, that has to be the overstatement of the century. I think the proper phraseology should instead have been 'the most secretive and closed assessment procedures'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – It is our contention, Mr. Speaker, that the polluter must pay the total cost of the clean-up and rehabilitation of an area he contaminates. Comprehensive insurance must, therefore, be compulsory for anyone entering into an operation that is potentially hazardous to the environment. As a further safeguard to the public good, such an operator must be insured by a company other than Saskatchewan Government Insurance. This is the only way of ensuring the people of Saskatchewan will not be required to pay for the clean-up and rehabilitation of an should a spill occur. If the risk is deemed too high to be insured by professionals in the insurance world, what evidence supports the NDP notion that the people of Saskatchewan should bear that risk?

Turning to education, Mr. Speaker, I am a little disturbed by the statement that the social studies program is going to be revised. My concern stems not from the apparent need for revision, but from a basic distrust and suspicion of the motives of the government in deciding to change the program. My suspicions were aroused when I recall hearing the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) in debate last session state that co-ops were a tool of the NDP. He implied they were designed as an offence against free enterprise. I am concerned when I hear Tommy Douglas urging the NDP convention to teach young people the values of the socialist movement. His worry is that young people of Saskatchewan are moving philosophically towards free enterprise. I am concerned when I see that this government will promote student and youth seminars to educate young people in the role of co-ops in our socialist society.

Furthermore, I am concerned when I see that this government intends to observe co-op week in recognition of the importance of co-operatives in our history and economy. Mr.

Speaker, there are 52 weeks in a year. What about a free enterprise week? what about a family farm week? What about a 4-H week? What about a small business week? Have these not contributed to our history and economy as well?

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party believes the Saskatchewan co-ops are an integral part of our free enterprise economy and they should no longer be dogged with pressures of political patronage from the NDP.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Mr. Speaker, to teach all forms of enterprise is education; to teach one form of enterprise is indoctrination.

In summary then, Mr. Speaker, it is readily evident that opposition members are not impressed with what they heard, or did not hear, in the throne speech. Mr. Speaker, the overtaxed, underpaid people of Saskatchewan deserve an alternative to the NDP mismanaged, insensitive administration. The people of Saskatchewan want to leap forward into the 1980s and 1990s with renewed and refreshed enthusiasm for their families and their children. A new economic order based on sound financial administration and on historically proven economic principles is a necessary prerequisite for Saskatchewan to break out of the mould of a have not province.

Mr. Speaker, a Progressive Conservative Party government would put the individual and the family ahead of state control and bureaucratic administration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – We would focus on building a real heritage fund for Saskatchewan's future generations, based on taxing resource revenues, not on taxing Saskatchewan families. Non-renewable resource revenues would be funnelled into constructive, long-run renewable resource production and processing and manufacturing for the benefits of generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, a Progressive Conservative government would not use a heritage fund as a political sham to cover up unnecessary deficits on current accounts or pay undue interest charges on borrowing from multinationals. Resource taxes and royalty dollars would be used to create a foothold on the future, not a multibillion dollar mortgage to be carried into the next century. A Progressive Conservative government would put primary emphasis on reducing the inordinate tax and cost burden the NDP have imposed on the Saskatchewan agriculture. Similarly our government would provide economic incentives to encourage agricultural productivity, not through orderly marketing constraints but through.

1. Public expenditures on irrigation.
2. The creation of a true land bank, where saline and similarly unproductive soils would be rejuvenated with the help of the public sector.
3. Mortgage guarantees which allow young farmers to own their land and correspondingly have pride in their farm's production and improvements.
4. Processing, manufacturing and marketing incentives to deepen the agri-industrial base so essential for farm income growth and viable rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, the successful intensification of agriculture throughout the developed world has occurred as a direct result of sound economic incentives and has never successfully occurred as a result of high taxes, government rebates, government constraints, state farms or state-run marketing mechanisms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Let me quote, Mr. Speaker, from a recent article on the Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics, written by Dr. George Lee, head of the Agricultural Economic Department, University of Saskatchewan, and Dr. Hartley Fertend. I quote:

The Canadian Wheat Board has employed a number of different quota policies to limit supply and thus limit farm income from grain sales. These quota policies have for the most part, limited grain delivery per acres of grain land thus have not been conducive to increased land productivity. Farmers were not encouraged by this policy to adopt land-substituting inputs, such as fertilizer and increased land productivity. Further, the incentive was to increase the number of grain acres over which the quota was allotted.

The United States government limited the supply of agricultural commodities by limiting the number of acres to be planted with no constraints on deliveries per acres, thus substituting technologies. If provincial governments wish to encourage more intensive farming, the quota policy of the Canadian Wheat Board would have to be changed to allow for, and encourage, the adoption of land-substituting technology.

The second part of the grain incomes for Saskatchewan farmers is related to the price received for the grain delivered. The Canadian Wheat Board has maintained that there is a demand for high quality milling wheat. This wheat demands a premium price for those willing to pay. The wheat board has not lowered prices in surplus situations – so that all the wheat produced could clear the market – and has taken this action for good reasons, perhaps. The yield increases in high quality milling wheat have not been as great as those for low quality feed wheat. Thus, if the Canadian Wheat Board allowed high quality wheat prices to drop, to the extent they have control this would encourage more feed grain production. Again, if the provincial government wishes to diversify farming through livestock, etc., it will have to examine the pricing policies of grains by the wheat board.

Mr. Speaker, orderly marketing has not does not, and never will result in the high levels of farm production or income so richly deserved by Saskatchewan producers. The cornerstone of the PC agricultural policy is productivity at all levels of the industry . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – . . . not constraints. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers must be free to make the productivity and efficiency improvements so necessary to compete with the North American market. If our costs continue to rise and our net incomes continue to fall, all the NDP potash mines in the world will not protect us from a rural

depression. Recent evidence in the 1979 winter issue of *The Agrologist* points to the disturbing reality that increases in wheat productivity in terms of yield per acre in Canada – dominated by Saskatchewan which has 40 per cent of the nation's farmland – were only 0.26 bushels per year over the period 1950 to 1979. This is compared with 0.621 bushels per year in the United States during the same period. In comparing wheat yield changes for the period 1963 to 1975, Canada ranked behind the United States, France, the U.S.S.R., and even behind India and Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the kind of evidence that supports the notion that ever-increasing, state-dominated, orderly marketing programs are the cornerstones of viable agriculture. Only a socialist could be excused for such logic – but not indefinitely.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Mr. Speaker, the people of this province demand a new and honest understanding of rural farm and non-farm problems. The Progressive Conservative government would respect the very important non-farm components of rural Saskatchewan and recognize the social, economic and cultural dimensions of rural towns, villages and hamlets. A Progressive Conservative government would not limit its development programs to orderly marketing schemes.

Mr. Speaker, our government would place before the people of Saskatchewan a new freedom in the decades ahead. Co-operatives would be free from the pressures of political patronage. Unions would be free of the inordinate pressures of political patronage. The hog marketing commissions and other producer boards would be producer-controlled by democratically-elected representatives, not administered by political appointments. Local governments would be free to exercise more authority over tax administration and thus free to make decisions. Civil servants would be free to enjoy and to participate in their democratic rights without political harassment. The individual people of Saskatchewan would be given back, in full measure, all of their democratic freedoms under a Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, while we are talking about freedoms, conspicuous by its absence from the throne speech was any mention of freedom of information. I was rather disappointed to see that there was no suggestion that freedom of information be forthcoming in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote from a speech made by the Prime Minister of Canada, Joe Clark, on Thursday, June 22, 1978.

One matter on which we all should agree and most of us do agree, is the importance of ensuring that any government is kept accountable to the people of Canada through parliament. That accountability cannot occur if the Canadian people and the Canadian parliament do not know what the government is doing.

Unfortunately – and for reasons that I for the moment am prepared to attribute more to habit than malice – the Canadian people and the Canadian parliament today do not know enough about what the government is doing to hold the government accountable in any meaningful way.

There are a number of reforms that we have to contemplate in this House of

Commons. One of them has to do with the power of parliamentary committees. Another, in my judgment, has to do with the capacity of individual private members to introduce private members' bills and legislation that will be considered seriously in this House. The most urgent and basic of these reforms is to stop the secrecy which denies public access to public documents. This parliament cannot control what it does not know.

Mr. Speaker, translated to the Saskatchewan context, this argument is equally as valid. I am prepared to be equally as charitable as Mr. Clark. I am prepared to accept that much of the secrecy is rooted and based in habit and not malice. Some in this House would not be so charitable. I think we all recognize that when one party is in office for so long, a practice grows up among some ministers and their advisers of protecting themselves against the inconvenience of scrutiny by denying access to information. My colleague, the member for Kindersley (Mr. Andrew) will be introducing a bill dealing with government accountability and freedom of information, this session. If this bill does not receive fair consideration and if this government continues to ignore the demands of the public for freedom of information, then the excuse that it is a matter of habit will be completely gone and the governing party and its members will be revealed as deliberately denying the people of Saskatchewan the right to know what the government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, the children of Saskatchewan, spread across this country, deserve a better deal. They deserve the right to come home to a province which provides the opportunity to live beside their parents, to raise their families with a high standard of living. Mr. Speaker, a Progressive Conservative government can succeed where the NDP government has failed – failed in the past and logically is doomed to fail in the future. This time the people of Saskatchewan will muster the courage to challenge the system and they will succeed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: – Mr. Speaker, for all of the reasons that I have stated in the last several minutes, I move, seconded by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) that the following words be added to the motion:

But that this assembly condemns the policy of Your Honour's advisers regarding the contents of the throne speech for its failure to exhibit leadership and to come to grips in a positive way with the following significant problems:

1. The erosion of rural Saskatchewan as evidence by the fact we have 6,000 fewer family farms than we had on the day land bank was introduced.
2. The ever-increasing Crown corporation and provincial debt.
3. The lack of government accountability.
4. Failure to announce freedom of information legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

The debate continues concurrently on the amendment and the motion.

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): – Mr. Deputy Speaker, in entering this debate I want to extend my congratulations to you on serving in the capacity of Acting Speaker of this Assembly. You have discharged your duties with ability and impartiality in the past; you have a long-career of service in this House. No one has ever doubted your commitment to our form of government, and your service in the place of the Speaker in these last few days has added to our already very high respect for you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – I think I should quit now when I have the clear approbation of members opposite because I think that approbation is like to be withdrawn fairly shortly.

I want, however, to tender my congratulations to the mover of the motion, the hon. member for Regina North-West (Mr. Solomon) and the seconder of the motion, the hon. member for Cut Knife- Lloydminster (Mr. Long). I was impressed by the contribution to the debate of each of these members and I am proud that our party can attract members of this calibre. I know that their constituents will be proud of them. They give every indication they will be first class servants of their constituents, of this province and of our country. I suspect they will serve with distinction in the years ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, we cover all the bases. I am particularly pleased with the events over the last three months which have caused the mover of the motion to be with us as a colleague in this House. He won and he won very handily a strongly contested by-election. I know that all of the parties fought that election very hard. I know, for example, that the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) personally arranged for 50 people to campaign in that constituency. He announced it at a public meeting in Regina. I am sure he had at least his 50 members there. I am sure that the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) had 50 members there. I am sure that the member for – I guess the University Extension Department – had his people there. The member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) probably had his people there. They probably thought they would better campaign in that constituency than in Moosomin and they displayed a good deal of wisdom in that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Unfortunately though the Conservative Party put a great deal of effort into that campaign, their campaign did not do them credit. Their campaign did them no credit whatever. I am pleased to say, however, that the voters answered that campaign and the answer of the voters did the voters a great deal of credit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – They rejected a campaign that had heavy overtones of racism – they rejected it decisively. John Solomon was elected and the Conservative Party lost their deposit and they . . . (inaudible) . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – The member for Rosthern (Mr. Katzman) suggests that the new leader has no place to run. I'll come to that in a moment. I've got some suggestions for him. I want, however, to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Souris-Cannington, on his selection for that office and I'm sure he will discharge his duties with credit. I am sure that he will discharge his duties with distinction and he did a good job in presenting the case – a weak – for the Conservative Party this afternoon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – I should advise him, however, that like so many other political offices, it does not offer security of tenure. We're about to leave the decade of the '70s and during that decade of the '70s there have been no fewer than seven people who have held the office of Leader of the Opposition. We very much hope, Mr. Speaker, that that distressing trend is over and that the member for Souris-Cannington will enjoy a long career in that office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, I may say that we're glad to see you back in the chair. We are glad that you did not fall victim to any wrath of the monarch and we're glad also that you didn't fall victim to any over indulgence because of the hospitality of the good folk of New Zealand. I am sure that you represented this legislature at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association with your usual distinction.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – May I congratulate also the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan. He defeated two able people: the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) and the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau). I was surprised that one of them wasn't selected. I would not, if I had been in that party, been so lacking in appreciation of the efforts of those two members. I thought they'd been doing pretty well. Perhaps their colleagues know something about these two that I don't know.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – But I do want to congratulate the new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and I want to say we would welcome him in this House but we're not going to promise him any help in getting here. We're not going to promise him any help in getting here in case . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member for Arm River (Mr. Muirhead) suggests that he will give him all the help he needs. I believe the member for Arm River was in helping the candidate in Regina North-West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – We certainly will welcome his help for any Progressive Conservative candidate in the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – However, I think we can leave the help for the new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to the member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) or perhaps the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher). They may well have something to offer, may well have something to contribute to the public life of this province by opening up a seat for the new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Mr. Speaker, in the ordinary course of events, this session commencing on November of '79 would have been the first of our new term of office. Members will know that our government was elected in 1971, returned to office in 1975 and it's no secret that we intended on holding a provincial election in June of 1979. We felt that it as unwise to have a federal election . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, eat your heart out; you wish the polls were that good.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – I can understand why anyone who looked at yesterday's paper and saw that the Prime Minister of this country could command less than 30 per cent of the support of people all across Canada, I would understand why he would look wistfully on a situation where the polls were good.

Mr. Speaker, we felt it was unwise to have a federal election at the time that there was a provincial election. Because of the danger that this would happen, we had our provincial election in October of 1978 and the results fully justified the decision.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – And I don't only mean the election results. I mean the fact that the people all across the province participated – and participated very freely – in that election. I recall the Liberal leader (Mr. Malone) saying that he didn't think the farmers would have an opportunity to participate in the election. All I can say is that the farmers participated in the election; the problem was that the Liberal candidates didn't participate in the election, with the result that the members opposite form the only opposition, the only place that the people of Saskatchewan can look to for any constructive comment. And I must say that is a tragic situation for the people of Saskatchewan!

There was, in fact, a federal election in May of '79. The long delay of that federal election forced two provincial governments, in British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, to hold provincial elections at the same time that it was on. I am glad that didn't happen in Saskatchewan. I believe that on all counts we made the right decision – and incidentally, so did the people of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – It has been a policy of our government to avoid provincial elections overlapping federal elections and just as it has been the policy, it has been our policy to avoid winter elections. We intend to attempt to avoid winter elections wherever possible. We intend to attempt to avoid winter by-elections wherever possible, because we believe that the people of the province ought to have a chance to participate in by-elections. We can see the prospect of having a winter by-election in an urban seat, but when we're talking about rural seats (like for example, Nipawin; for example, Thunder Creek) we would look without favor on the idea of having a by-election in the

wintertime. We just want to make that point.

Mr. Speaker, I take it that the new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has an offer from the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). No? I understood that you were offering to open up a seat and when I think of it, looking at it from just a narrow political point of view, we might be well advised to make a little arrangement with the member for Indian Head-Wolseley to have an election out there in which the Conservative candidate would be the new leader. I'm not sure we wouldn't do pretty well on that trade.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Well, Mr. Speaker, the 1978 election broke a four-year pattern. I want to repeat what I said last year: that my current intention is to have the next general election back on pattern in 1983. That's not a commitment. No Premier could give a commitment, but if members opposite wish to complain about that date – I announced it last year, they didn't complain. I'm announcing it this year. I hope they won't complain – accordingly, when their complaint comes somewhat later, we will all know that it is pure opportunism and has nothing to do with the parliamentary system.

A few comments, Mr. Speaker, on some of the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition during his remarks. He says, where are the children? Where are the young people? was the question he asked. I want to say to him that the young people are out there working in Saskatchewan. They're out there working at jobs created by this government. And not only that, but they're out there working side by side with people who have come from Manitoba to work because there are no jobs in Manitoba!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, I want members opposite, who may be tempted to believe some of those comments by the Leader of the Opposition to look at the recent economic review. I want them to look at pages 15 to 17 to see some of the facts that are there.

Since 1973 the population of Saskatchewan has grown from 904,000 to 947,000 – an increase of over 40,000. During that same period the number of people employed has increased from 343,000 to over 400,000 – an extra 57,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, just consider those figures – 15,000 more jobs than people. The number of people working in this province is 15,000 higher than the increase in population. Now you'll say how can that be? Well, there are a number of reasons that make that possible.

People are out there entering the labor force. The member for Swift Current (Mr. Ham) says more government bureaucracy! Most of them indeed are working in private business; most of them are working in small business; they are working in stores; they are working in successful garages and successful machinery dealers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Well, Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest or the second lowest unemployment in Canada, month after month and year after year. Now these figures would suggest that people are moving into the province and that's true. Most of the

people who are moving into the province are in the working age brackets and that's why it's possible for us to have virtually one new job for everybody who moves into the province.

I've done a little more checking on these figures which I have heard purveyed by people who have not done their homework. I find that in June of '71, 13 per cent of our population was between the ages of 20 and 29. And I find that in 1978, 17 per cent of our population was between 20 and 29. That's where the young people are. They're right here in this province working. You should look at the figures. What has happened to this province is that a very large number of people who used to move out of the province are staying here because there are jobs here and because there are economic opportunities here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – And more than that, Mr. Speaker, people are coming back into this province. I want the members opposite to know some of these figures. Between January and September of '79 (and I'm taking some recent figures) immigrants to this province came from all over the place – 3,500 from Ontario; 3,600 from Manitoba; 2,800 from B.C. and where do you think most of them came from?

Here's the interesting part. From oil rich Alberta in those nine months, 6,400 people came to Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Members opposite conjure up the idea of a huge number of people rolling down the Yellowhead towards Edmonton. All I can say is there must be a tremendous traffic jam up at Lloydminster, because they're rolling back into Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – One more thing, Mr. Speaker. Let me give you one month, one month in September of 1979. Seven hundred and six people came from Alberta in one month between the ages of 15 and 49. Those are people who are going to take jobs and work. These are some of the young people we're talking about. I have no doubt that some of them were people who had left Saskatchewan. In the dark days when we had another government in which the member for Qu'Appelle was an employee. But I know they're coming back, Mr. Speaker. They're coming back and they're coming back in droves.

Mr. Speaker, that's where the children are. That's the answer to the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson). The people are here. In unprecedented numbers the people are here. There are far more people working in this province in the labor force than at any time in history, notwithstanding these allegations of loss of population. We have far more people working than at any time in our history.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Members opposite are saying that they are leaving the province because of sales tax. I like that. Where are they going to find cheaper sales tax except in Alberta? We acknowledge Alberta is richer than we are; we acknowledge Alberta has

more money than any province has ever had in the history of Canada. But let's look at some of these other Tory provinces, and there are lots of them. How about Manitoba? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Manitoba – what is their sales tax? Less than Saskatchewan? Nonsense, nonsense! And good old Newfoundland has a sales tax of not five per cent but 10 per cent – a two-handed operation, Mr. Speaker, not this way but this way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, when Progressive Conservatives say some of the things they've said this afternoon, really somebody ought to make a little bit of a comment. A little bit of a comment on such a thing as dissatisfied natives. I ask members opposite to go to any native organization in this province and ask them whether they like our land entitlements policies, or the land entitlements policies of the Tory government of Manitoba, or the land entitlements policies of the Tory government of Alberta, or the land entitlements policies of the Tory government of Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – I know where you can find dissatisfied natives, in this country. Mr. Speaker, members opposite will certainly want to change the subject. They will not wish to talk about the rights of registered Indians because the Conservative record, wherever they have been in government, on the matter of the rights of registered Indians has been a sorry record.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, I don't know when I have heard such a forthright attack on the principles of orderly marketing as I have heard this afternoon. Such a forthright attack on the Canadian Wheat Board, such a forthright attack on what they call state-run marketing mechanisms. I want to tell you that our party stands foursquare for the Canadian Wheat Board. We are pleased to know that the party opposite stands foursquare against the wheat board, and we'll battle them under the table.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, we had the member for Souris-Cannington outlines what he felt an appropriate agricultural policy was, and he attacked quotas. He attacked the idea of the Canadian Wheat Board quotas. Now, we all know we wouldn't need quotas at this time if the government at Ottawa would honor its pledges to get our wheat moving. We all know there are markets for wheat, and we all know there are sales for wheat, and we all know there's wheat. We all know the sole reason we're not selling wheat is that the grain is not moving, notwithstanding the commitments of the Minister of Transport (Hon. D. Mazankowski) that he would move the grain.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – I want to go forward. I want to analyse their situation a little further. They were saying that we should not have quotas as applied by the Canadian Wheat Board. Rather we should take land out of production – we should operate the way they did with their land bank program (so-called) in the United States. We should thereby get greater production per acre, but take land out of production.

AN HON. MEMBER: – Operation LIFT.

MR. BLAKENEY: – That we have all heard of before when it was advocated by Otto Lang, and he called it Operation LIFT. There's no doubt, presumably, that if we took land out of production, paid people not to grow grain and told them that they could grow as much on their assigned acres as possible, we could indeed increase production per acres. But surely that is not the way to operate agriculture in western Canada! Members opposite are certainly saying that, I invite all hon. member to re-read (you had one chance to read it while you were flipping the pages) but you could re-read what the member for Souris-Cannington said and you will see that what is being advocated is another lift program for Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, the member for Souris-Cannington suggested that somehow we were not supporting the crowrate and that in my remarks at the energy conference last month I somehow was offering to barter or bargain the crowrates. All I can say is that I am very pleased that that particular conference was televised and that the people of Saskatchewan are perceptive enough to know what I said and to know that the characterization of it by the member for Souris-Cannington is totally false and totally perverse.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, one or two other items (will say some more tomorrow as you might guess) but I want to just touch on one other point that he raised. He is very, very strong on the fact that governments should not own resource enterprise.

AN HON. MEMBER: – Right on!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Members opposite say right on, exactly! We shouldn't be in the business of generating electric power because that's a resource industry! We shouldn't be in the business of mining and producing natural gas because that's a resource industry! We shouldn't be in the business of distributing natural gas because that is a resource industry! We shouldn't be in SaskOil because that's a resource industry! We shouldn't be in uranium because that's a resource industry! Notwithstanding the fact that the Conservative government of Canada continued in uranium production all the years when John Diefenbaker was prime minister, we should now leave that; we should now divest. Even though John Diefenbaker believed in public ownership of uranium, even though Alvin Hamilton believed in public ownership of uranium, this new crop of Tories are so far right that they would repudiate Diefenbaker; they would repudiate Hamilton and they want to join up with Steve Roman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – When it comes to choosing between the policies of John Diefenbaker and Steve Roman, they unhesitatingly select Steve Roman.

Mr. Speaker, almost every other country in the world can have publicly owned resources. We had the Margaret Thatcher government there with a 50 per cent interest in British Petroleum but they don't want to have anything to do with a left-wing government like Mrs. Thatcher's. We had the Dutch government with a large interest in Royal Dutch Shell. We had the French government with interests in Aquataine and Total. We had the Italian government with an oil company but somehow what the French do, the British do, the Dutch do and the Italians do and the Norwegians do is bad for us!

AN HON. MEMBER: – Socialists all!

MR. BLAKENEY: – We are not bright enough to run an oil company. The Italians can run an oil company. The Norwegians can run an oil company but not us. We have to leave it to mother Exxon. We have to leave it to Imperial and Shell, because we wouldn't know how to run an oil company. So that, Mr. Speaker, I know is the view of members opposite but I can tell you we have some confidence in the people of Saskatchewan. We believe they can operate an oil company just as well as other people in the world and we're going to act on that belief.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, we don't believe that the Canadian people should be forced to part with their assets in Petro-Canada. We don't believe that that should be privatized or piratized or whatever it has been called. We believe that energy security for Canadians is the key. We believe that Petro-Canada has made a major contribution to energy security for Canadians, and we believe that the opponents of Petro-Canada are in essence, opponents of energy security for Canada. We make that very clear . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale (Mr. Romanow) is talking about tweedledee and tweedledum and he is applying that title to two of the Progressive Conservatives. I think we all know that both of them should have the 'dum' label and not the 'dee' label.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, I will add some further comments tomorrow but I want to say a few words before I close about my constituency of Regina. I have represented Regina in this legislature for about 20 years and I remember the years between 1960 and 1964. They were pretty good years for Regina. Wascana Centre was established and prior to that I was the responsible minister and I am proud of what happened there. The Saskatchewan Power Corporation building was built; Sask Tel building was built. Regina enjoyed pretty good times. I remember the years between 1964 and 1971 when the dictates of private enterprise held sway – years that were tougher and tougher . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I note that the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) and the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) are perfectly familiar with these because they know what happened to Regina in those years. They do know, and they were tougher. In 1971, and no one can deny it, Regina was the boarded-up capital of Canada. The main streets were lined with places of business which were boarded up which had closed their doors. The city of Regina did everything it could to cope with some pretty difficult economic times, and I want to say that it wasn't confined to the city of Regina. The city of Saskatoon had vacancy rates of 20 per cent in 1970. The number

of houses built in 1970 in this whole province was 1,700. In a better year like 1977 the figure was over 13,000. This gives you some idea of what free enterprise had done, so called, between 1964 and 1971. We had seven years of so-called private enterprise, free enterprise, which meant freedom to go bankrupt, freedom to lay off your staff, freedom to lose your life savings and dozens and dozens of people in this province enjoyed that freedom

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – For the benefit of the farmers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: – Order, order, order. I want to take this opportunity to say a few words about the rules. The decorum of this Chamber is a subject of concern for me and I hope it is for the members of the Assembly. Now, I may have missed something in missing the first three days of the Assembly but I can only speak for the time I have been here. Today, when I was here, I listened carefully to the member, the Leader of the Opposition, deliver his address, practically without interruption. Maybe there is something going on here that I don't know about – that happened before I arrived. However, I am having trouble hearing the President of the Executive Council at this time when he is speaking and I think he has every right to be heard as do the members on the other side of the House. I think we should keep our interjections down to a level which is commensurate with the decorum of this House. I think also members should avoid calling from behind the rail because no one is allowed to speak from behind the rail and if the members must speak, I think they should come and sit in their seats and take part in the debate when the time affords them an opportunity. I recognize the Premier.

MR. BLAKENEY: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think, Mr. Speaker, what happened in Regina since 1971 . . . The city government has a new City Hall, a new police station, new sewage facilities, a large transit garage, many new buses, new ring roads – all done by the citizens of Regina and all done with provincial government help. In recreation, we have the Agridome and the Lawson Pool and a good number of community rinks. We have Taylor Field expansion, the home of the Roughriders. In manufacturing and distribution, we have major expansions to IPSCO (Interprovincial Pipe and Steel Company) and a new one is underway. We've had a major expansion to Co-op Refinery. In those eight years, I've been at no less than three official openings of Northern Telecom plants. We've had new, big warehouses established by John Deere and by Sears and by Federated Co-ops. Regina is attaining a status of being the distribution centre for much of western Canada and I'm pleased to see that. Many small and medium-sized manufacturing plants have been set up and expanded and I think of Degelman, Westank and others. In Regina, I see hundreds of units of senior citizens housing new senior citizens activity centres, a massive project to regenerate the Regina General Hospital and the Pasqua Hospital and I may say Pasqua is in my constituency. We've taken some steps to preserve our heritage, the Territorial Building on Dewdney Avenue, the Government House out on Dewdney West, are well along in restoration, significant reminders of a colorful past.

Canadian Western Agribition had its first show in 1971 and I had the honor to be there at the first show. It has grown from a tiny beginning to one of the great livestock shows in the world. I previously paid tribute to those who established Canadian Western Agribition and to my predecessor, Premier Ross Thatcher, who with the others conceived this idea and carried it forward. The new facilities which have been added make this show possible: the Agridome, the Agribition Building, the Ag-Ex pavilion link give us the best facilities for a

cattle show in Canada with the possible exception of the Toronto Royal. We are, I think, now the premier agricultural working cattleman's agricultural show (livestock show at least) in Canada. There's no doubt that Agribition has become one of the great livestock shows in North America.

AN HON. MEMBER: – Better than Denver.

MR. BLAKENEY: – Agribition has had a great impact upon the city of Regina, on hotels and restaurants and anybody who tries to get a hotel reservation around here towards the end of November knows that and there are many, many new hotels and restaurants in this city since 1971. I want just to report to members that there is no doubt that this has meant a significant amount to the reputation of Saskatchewan as a great agricultural province.

A couple of months ago, I was down in Perth, Australia at the biannual meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth. There I met many people who had been in Regina two years ago in 1977. They still recall this as the greatest cattle show they have ever seen. that cannot help but assist us in making our mark as a great producer of cattle.

This year when I was in the Soviet Union, I invited the Minister of Agriculture to come here. He was not able to come. he sent his deputy and a number of other officials, the deputy minister of one of their states of Kazakhstan and others. These people are seeing what we have by way of cattle. We are very hopeful that we will sell them some breeding stock in the next few years as we have already sold it to Czechoslovakia, Romania, Japan and Korea. It's not a great industry. Export of breeding cattle is not a great industry but it's significant and it's cash and we have the reputation of having the best cattle in the world for certain types of climatic conditions. So we're pretty proud of Agribition and every right to be – not as a government but as the people of Saskatchewan I think are.

I look at Regina and I see the transformation which is taking place in downtown Regina. The Cornwall Centre is a major urban project which is going to mean that the downtown core of Regina is going to be commercially viable for decades. I don't think that was clear before Cornwall Centre was committed. There are now other projects – the Royal Bank project and others. I see this as firming up the downtown core of Regina. Rail line relocation may well add ore to the downtown area of Regina. We don't know that. We have proposals before the federal government. We have had commitments now from the previous federal government that they would get an answer to us and the current federal government that they would get an answer to us. They have not yet done so. It is perhaps too soon to be irate but it is soon enough to be anxious because we were promised an answer in 60 days.

AN HON. MEMBER: – It is now 120.

MR. BLAKENEY: – Well, we are 60 days late. We anxiously await that decision to know whether that project is going to go ahead. In all this the needs of a constituency like Regina Elphinstone are being met. Now Regina Elphinstone is not in downtown Regina; it is at the edge of downtown Regina. The exhibition grounds are in Regina Elphinstone. Pasqua Hospital is in Regina Elphinstone. but what the firming up of the downtown core does to a constituency like Regina Elphinstone is this: it means that people can live in Regina Elphinstone, be close to their work, be able in some cases to walk to work, in other cases be able to have a short bus ride to work and have an opportunity to live in

fairly close association with the core of the city.

No, it is no secret that around the core of some of our cities there were problems; there were areas which were showing signs of blight. Nothing does more to erase that than a firm commercial core making it attractive to people to live in these areas. That's what's happening and I see my constituency of Regina Elphinstone firming up. I see the NIP (neighborhood improvement program) in the Albert-Scott area doing a great deal to improve that constituency. I see community organizations like the Albert-Scott Neighborhood Improvement Association and the North Central Community Society and the Riel Cresaultis Elders Society and others, deciding that they're going to take affairs into their own hands and organizing their citizens to improve that constituency. I'm proud to see that happen. Many of these things were made possible by the provincial government.

Let me give you just one statistic; I won't give you many. In 1971, the grants to the city of Regina were \$900,000. In 1978, the last full year, the grants were not \$900,000 but over \$18 million. And that means that the city of Regina can enjoy some of that autonomy talked about by the member for Souris-Cannington. Not much point in talking about autonomy by passing laws that say municipal governments can do things if they only had the money. The real autonomy is to give money to municipal governments that they can spend in an unfettered way. That our government has done and it shows in Regina and it's all to the good.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, there is certainly every evidence of good sound husbandry in the city of Regina. Taxes in Regina have gone up very little compared with incomes. I would think (and I haven't checked these figures) that if you look at average incomes, average weekly wages in Regina in 1971, and the taxes on a house and then looked at average weekly wages now and the taxes on a house, that in relative terms, the taxes have probably been cut in half. That's a pretty good performance by a municipal government and at the same time there has been a steady upgrading in the level of services, of streets and sidewalks, recreational facilities and the like. So, we can be pretty proud of the way in which our municipal governments have used the autonomy we have given them. What's true of Regina is true of many urban centres. What's true of Regina is by no means distinctive; it is rather typical. We are proud of what has been done with real local autonomy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe that Regina is going to enjoy a bright future. I believe it's going to enjoy a bright future because we are going to see in this province economic opportunity which we have not seen in the past and which we would not see if policies advocated by members opposite, policies that would mean that all the head offices would be outside this province, policies that mean that all the sales offices would be outside this province, policies that mean that all the research would be outside this province, if we followed those policies, we would see Regina be just another little branch office. I look at something like the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and I see 160 head office jobs. I wish they weren't in Saskatoon. I would rather have them in Regina, but I would much rather have them in Saskatoon than in Denver, or in Chicago, or New York, where they were before.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: – Mr. Speaker, I think the evidence is there for all to see, the evidence

of success, the evidence of success which cannot be gainsaid and that cannot be gainsaid by any criticism the like of which we've heard this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things I want to say on this throne speech and with respect to the remarks of the member for Souris-Cannington and accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: – Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:54 p.m.