

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

December 1, 1980

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

## WELCOME TO STUDENTS

**HON. MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly a group of 34 grade 8 students from St. Gregory School. St. Gregory School is located in Regina North-East in the Uplands area. The students are accompanied by their principal Ted Zurowski and Dan Lundine their teacher. On behalf of the members I welcome the students and express the hope that their visit to the legislature this afternoon has been a rewarding experience. I intend to meet with the students about 2:45 p.m. for a brief discussion, as well as to have some refreshments. Welcome to the legislature.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS

### Western Canadian Separatism

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. Would you agree with the most recent statements by the Prime Minister that western Canadians are fanning the flames of separatism?

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I doubt whether I can profitably comment on the statements by the Prime Minister that I agree with. It would not take long; I concede that. I am not sure what productive value it would be for the House. Generally speaking, if the statement is that western Canadians are fanning the flames of separatism, I would not agree with it.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Mr. Speaker, I would direct a supplementary question to the Premier. I propose, and I wonder if you would agree, that there are two key components creating separatism in western Canada: one is the Crown Prince of national disunity, the Prime Minister himself, and you, the Neville Chamberlain of the national unity debate, alias the weak link in western Canada.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — That's a penetrating question and I think I'll refrain from answering it because I detect it might draw us into debate.

### Tabling of Correspondence re Constitutional Negotiations

**MR. LANE:** — I would like to direct a question to the Premier. The Premier has not yet seen fit to table a concise and comprehensive statement of the government's constitutional position, yet he has said that negotiations are ongoing. I believe as well your government has indicated that the public should be allowed to participate in the constitutional negotiations. Would you now be prepared to table correspondence between either your office and the Prime Minister's office, or your government and the federal government, as to the constitutional negotiations to which you have alluded?

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will be aware of the rules which apply, that correspondence, Telexes and the like in the course of federal-

provincial negotiations are not normally tabled during those negotiations. As the hon. member has already indicated and acknowledged, negotiations are still in progress. If the hon. member wishes our government to table a compendium of the statements which we have made on constitutional issues over the last period of time, we would be pleased to do that. I think they are all available to the hon. member but if he would like us to gather them up and lay them on the Table of the Chamber we would be prepared to do so.

**MR. LANE:** — Would the Premier not admit some significant inconsistency in his position? You have today refused to table any documentation or indication of negotiations and yet you didn't hesitate in the Kelsey-Tisdale by-election to indicate that you had some important concessions on resources. I have the letter sent out. I am sure you signed each one personally and have seen them. I would like the Premier to admit that any concessions are the same ones Mr. Broadbent seems to have taken credit for in Ottawa. Would the Premier not admit that in fact he has not had success in his negotiations and any such important concessions were those gained by Mr. Broadbent, for which he has taken credit?

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I will admit that we are not sure of what concessions may yet have been garnered, nor will we be sure until the resolution is passed through parliament and indeed, I suppose, before it becomes the law of Canada (if in fact it does). We do believe that we have some important indications of flexibility by the federal government in the area of resources and that certainly has been indicated.

### Comments by Judge King

**MR. THATCHER:** — A question to the Attorney General. Mr. Attorney General, about one and one-half months ago I wrote to you concerning a matter in my constituency of Thunder Creek. Judge Gerald King, on the bench during a routine sentencing of a Caron resident on a marijuana conviction, went into a bit of a disclosure in which he accused the village of Mortlach and the communities of Caron and Parkbeg of being overrun by a drug ring. Mr. Attorney General, since the comments by Judge King were by his own admission, not supported by any police investigation, and by his own admission not supported by anything else other than his own findings, I wrote to you asking for an investigation in light of a letter which he wrote to the village of Mortlach, in which Judge King made the comment that the ring, as a result of his comments, had disappeared. Mr. Attorney General, you have received requests for an investigation from the R.M. of Wheatlands, the R.M. of Caron and the village of Mortlach, as well as from myself about one month and one-half ago. I would like today to ask you to substantiate the comments of Mr. Justice King, or the contrary, and make a clear definitive statement as to where your department stands in this matter.

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I think I should point out to the hon. member that I am in no position to justify or not justify the comments of Judge King, or for that matter any judge in the province of Saskatchewan. We do believe in the separation of duties and the judiciary is independent of the government and the Attorney General's department. I have, however, indicated to the member for Thunder Creek that the deputy attorney general has been asked by me to obtain a complete report from the drug section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police into the situation at Mortlach and the Caron area, as well as to examine in detail the transcript of judgments made by Judge King on the incident in question. He is to report to me and to advise me as to what course of action, if any, should be taken. I regret to inform the member I have not yet

received such a report from the relevant authorities.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Attorney General, I am not surprised you haven't received a report because it would appear you haven't been in your office long enough to receive a report on anything, much less on that matter. I would like a very clear statement from you today. I should, I suppose, also ask the question: if the judge is being investigated right now, would it not have been appropriate that he be suspended while such an investigation is going on? Secondly, if his comments are not substantiated in a reasonable fashion, I would like to ask you if Judge King will be removed from the bench?

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, we have to be absolutely careful and precise about what we are talking. We are not Judge King. Judge King is not under allegation of any wrongdoing which would warrant an investigation, nor is he under any allegation or suspicion that would warrant, so far as I know, any investigation in a non-criminal or a non-administration-of-justice way. What we are doing is investigating some of the statements which he has made to determine whether or not indeed there is a serious problem (as he seems to think that there was or is in those areas), in order to determine what action should or shouldn't be taken as a consequence.

Judges make comments, especially in the course of sentencing (I am sure the hon. member for Qu'Appelle would accept and understand this), quite frequently especially in criminal matters. They will point the way to the Department of the Attorney General's carrying out some further investigation or doing something in addition to the matter which they are commenting on. And that's what we're doing. The hon. member for Thunder Creek has rightfully brought to my attention the remarks made by Judge King. I am doing what is only open to me to do, namely to see how serious the situation is at Mortlach and Caron and to do whatever I can to take the thing in hand.

If the judge has overstepped his bounds of propriety in one way or the other, that can't be remedied by me. There is a chief judge of the provincial court whose responsibility it is to deal with the judges himself. I have no way of disciplining, even if I wanted to — and in this case I don't want it even to be suggested that I do have any such intention — but I have no way of disciplining a judge even if I wanted to. That is done by the chief judge of the provincial court. As I am sure the hon. member will agree they are autonomous; they are independent from me and that's the way it should be.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Final supplementary, Mr. Attorney General. Are you telling me in this case, where three communities and all the residents within it have been slandered by an individual — outright slander — that the person who has committed this slander is completely above everything else. In other words, in this case, probably in this case, in fact I'll state definitely in this case, the slander has been committed by an individual who's a blatant, willful liar. Are you telling me that he's above reproach? You can't be serious!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order! I think the members of the Assembly should realize that certain language is permitted in the House and certain language is not permitted in the House. I would ask the member for Thunder Creek to reconsider one of the words that he used in the statement he just made.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Well, I'll rephrase the words 'blatant willful liar' to 'a total lack of precision as it pertains to the truth,' if that would suffice.

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I simply want to indicate to the hon. member that the judiciary of Saskatchewan, in my judgment, is by and large an excellent judiciary doing the best job it can in administering and interpreting the laws of this province and of this country. And quite frankly, in my judgement, so far as I know this also pertains to Judge King. Judge King is not alone among judges who, as I have said in my answer to the previous question, make comments which are commonly referred to as being obiter or outside specifically the particular issue at hand and dealing with in many cases matters of criminal substance.

And all I am saying is that we are investigating to see if there is anything that should be done by way of police activity. When that report is done I'll be no doubt questioned by the hon. member for Maple Creek, if not under obligation to reveal this by myself. The justification or the vindication of the towns of Mortlach and Caron will take place at that time, or they won't, depending on what our evidence reveals.

So, I would simply say to the hon. member that it is unfair of him and I would hope that he on reflection would not repeat the kind of blanket accusation against any one person of the judiciary on any such matter of this or other consequence. These people are independent of this Assembly and of this government, and I say on balance are doing just a first-rate job of doing a difficult task, namely judging and interpreting the laws and the evidence coming before them in this country. I'll give the member a summary of the report once I have received the same from the RCMP.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the Attorney General, in the light of the previous question, is it not true that the act creating the provincial magistrates in the province of Saskatchewan is created in this legislature? Is it not true, Mr. Attorney General, that the Attorney General's office, the Government of Saskatchewan and this legislature is ultimately responsible for the actions of the provincial magistrates? Is it not true that your . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. I'll take the next question. The member for Indian Head-Wolseley.

### **Introduction of Ward System to School Board Elections**

**MR. TAYLOR:** — My question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, it has been brought to my attention that a well-respected Regina educator, Mr. William Hawrylak, at a Balfour reunion this June was speaking with a high official in the Department of Municipal Affairs. This was taking place while Professor de Vlieger was doing his report. I would like to quote what the person from municipal affairs said. He said:

The next time we have a reunion, you are going to be under a ward system.

My question to you is: surely you must agreed that if a government official was making these statements while the report was being heard or being put together, that the decision was made long before the de Vlieger report was tabled?

**HON. MR. McARTHUR:** — Mr. Speaker, I can't comment on the alleged statement by an employee of the Department of Municipal Affairs. I would hope that the hon. member would base his evidence for such a statement on something a little sounder than rumour. But regardless of that fact, employees of the Department of Municipal Affairs have not been involved in the basic decision whether or not to proceed with a ward system

for school board elections. Certainly the Department of Municipal Affairs will be involved, now that the decision is made, with respect to how to proceed with the election procedures. Therefore, I think, clearly the comment (if it were made and I have no evidence that it was made) would have no relevance to the decision. The decision was made after studying the report from Professor de Vlieger and after a considerable amount of discussion and review of that report.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I understand that of the 65 briefs which were submitted to Professor de Vlieger, 35 were opposed to the implementation of the ward system. Of those, 19 came from school boards and 6 came from urban municipal councils. Is it also not true that some of the individual ones were from Mr. Larry Iwan, the executive assistant to the Minister of Rural Affairs? From Mr. Eli Nesdoly, defeated NDP candidate? From Mr. Ken Johns of the Department of Agriculture? Were these not some of the reports which were submitted to Dr. de Vlieger, Mr. Minister?

**HON. MR. McARTHUR:** — Mr. Speaker, Professor de Vlieger, when he undertook to do the study, advertised in newspapers and through the media made it well-known that interested persons, individuals, organizations or whatever, who wished to make a submission, could do so. Accordingly, there were a substantial number of people who made submissions. It would not, of course, be my intent to limit those submissions to certain people. I will say to the hon. member that it is true that a number of school boards submitted briefs and indicated that they did not agree with the implementation of the ward system. Some of those school boards were from smaller urban centres where, on the basis of the report, we have made a decision not to proceed because we do not think in those cases that there is a need for the ward system. But the main purpose of the submissions was to gain information, to gain data and to gain opinions. It was not a poll. I think it was virtually evenly split between those in favour and those against. But the majority of those opposed were from existing school boards. That is correct.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Supplementary, Mr. Minister, to get to the bottom of this, will you table the submissions which were presented to Mr. de Vlieger so that the members of this Assembly can judge whether that ward system should be implemented and who was speaking? Was it the school boards or was Professor de Vlieger simply listening to some of the NDP hacks?

**HON. MR. McARTHUR:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will certainly give consideration to the possibility of making those submissions available. I don't have them myself. I will discuss that with Professor de Vlieger and take that under consideration.

### **Wheat Board Loan to Prince Rupert Consortium**

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, in the *Leader-Post* on Friday, November 28, on the front page was an article, Canadian Wheat Board Lends Millions Free. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give one quote:

The Canadian Wheat Board will lend the Prince Rupert consortium an interest-free \$100 million as a desperate move to get the extra capacity at the British Columbia grain terminal, a board official said Thursday. Larry Kristjanson, assistant chief commissioner at the board said the loan has to

be approved by the federal cabinet, but he said approval was a technicality . . . Kristjanson said the money will come from the grain producers . . . through deductions from the grain payments.

I do not question the advisability of the loan but the lack of consulting with grain producers or even the advisory committee to the wheat board. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: have you made no representation on behalf of the grain producer for this kind of action?

**HON. MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, no I have not. As a matter of fact I wasn't aware of such a proposal from the wheat board until I read it in the edition of the newspaper from which he is quoting.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. It's hard to believe that this could possibly happen when I've had dozens of phone calls from the producers in my area on this great concern. Will you assure me, Mr. Minister, that you will take immediate action on behalf of the grain producers of this province?

**HON. MR. MacMURCHY:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will be in touch with the Canadian Wheat Board with respect to the matter, and seek out the details relating to it and the circumstances under which they feel they are obligated to provide additional funding for the development of the Prince Rupert port. I think the hon. member will agree on the essential nature of the development of that port and the need to get it under way. I'm not sure of the circumstances of the proposal by the Canadian Wheat Board and will be seeking them before considering what action the provincial government should take.

**MR. LANE:** — The government opposite has refused to contribute to the Prince Rupert terminal. In light of the announcement of the wheat board that a \$100 million loan was vital, will the minister not now reconsider the government's position and make a significant contribution to the Prince Rupert terminal on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and the grain producers of Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. MacMURCHY:** — No, our position on the financing of the terminal is clear. We feel we made our contribution to the vement of the grain, at this point at least, in the purchase of the hopper cars, and we have no further plans at this time to extend financial assistance to the whole development of grain handling and transportation.

### **Zenith Space Phone TV**

**MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the minister in charge of Sask Tel. Mr. Minister, in light of the fact that you have had the weekend to review with your officials the new Zenith space phone TV, will you now stand in this Chamber and tell the people of Saskatchewan and this legislative Chamber whether they will be allowed to purchase this new modern piece of technology in Saskatchewan?

**HON. MR. CODY:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the hon. member on Friday, if it's within the regulations to purchase these pieces of equipment and hard-wire them to Sask Tel's equipment or its lines, it will be permitted. If it's not within the regulations, it won't. And if I could refer the hon. member, all he needs to do is go to the legislation where the regulations are and he can find the answer himself.

**MR. GARNER:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, Sask Tel is your job. Now my question to you is quite simply: will you look in to this and can you inform this

Assembly today whether the people of Saskatchewan can purchase this TV set? Yes or no is the only answer I want.

**HON. MR. CODY:** — Mr. Speaker, I once again say what I said a moment ago — we do have regulations. We've had regulations for years. We now have them in a piece of legislation that we didn't have before. And if you can find within that regulation a portion which indicates to you that a Zenith space phone can be purchased and hard-wired to our line, it will be allowed. If you find in the regulation that it can't be, it will be disallowed.

### **Funding of Mediation Diversion Program**

**MR. McLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to direct to the Attorney General with regard to the program in the cities of Moose Jaw and Regina known as mediation diversion, initiated and administered by the John Howard Society. My information is that that program is now short of funds to complete the current year and has not received any kind of commitment from your department or your government as to the future of the program in trying to keep young first-time offenders out of the court system.

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — I assume the question is whether or not that's true, and I believe that to be essentially the case, Mr. Speaker. We have funded this program for the last two or three years, I believe. What has taken place in the last several months has been an agreed-to evaluation involving the University of Regina justice unit, headed by Mr. Otto Driedger (somebody in that shop) to look at whether or not the program is fully a proper and justifiable one. We'd like to know whether or not it is, and before we commit ourselves to additional funding, we are awaiting the assessment. I think the program has some merit, but that's the basic reason for the delay at the present time.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Supplementary question. First of all, could your department not commit funds at least to complete the current year or until the studies that your department is carrying out are completed, so that they can continue with the program during that period of time?

Secondly, as the Attorney General well knows, the area that I represent is an area which has a high incidence of petty crime, vandalism, or whatever you want to call it, and there are other areas of the province with this high incidence. Many people have been watching the program which is in place in Moose Jaw and Regina hoping that something similar could be implemented into the rural areas like the one I represent.

Now will the Attorney General, after that study is completed, come through with an answer and, whether it's under your department or expanded, come with something similar into the rural areas?

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I can certainly answer the hon. member and say yes; after the study is completed we'll come through with an answer. That's the purpose of waiting for a study, in order to give us all of the information to get an answer. I'm very encouraged to see the hon. member ask that this program continue, because we are always being told by the Conservatives opposite . . . In fact in the by-elections in Estevan and The Battlefords and Kelsey they were arguing we had too many programs coming out of our ears, a government that has gone rampant. So I'm pleased to see . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order! I'll take the member for Regina South.

### **Two Consecutive Days Off for Employees**

**MR. ROUSSEAU:** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Labor. Mr. Minister, during the last session your government amended The Labor Standards Act to allow two consecutive days off per week for employees and workers, one being a Sunday. The amendment also allowed by way of regulations certain exemptions from the section of the amendment.

Mr. Minister, has your department at this time approved any applications for these exemptions and if not, when do you plan on starting them?

**HON. MR. SNYDER:** — In answer to the hon. member's question, the department has been working with the regulations related to section 6 (old section 13 of The Labor Standards Act) with the intention of putting the full force of the section into being sometime prior to the end of the year. I am hoping by January 1, or perhaps sometime previous to that, the provision will be made in order to provide for the two consecutive days off to be operative.

You will know that some weeks ago the newspaper carried a number of ads indicating those people who felt that it would cause some difficulty for them should contact the Department of Labor, through the standards and apprenticeship branch, and accordingly we have received submissions from a number of people. Attempts have been made to solve those problems and make arrangements for some accommodation. Accordingly, that has not been fully completed, but I expect in the next number of weeks, hopefully before the end of the year, the provisions will be in effect. Those who will be excused or excluded from the provisions of the two consecutive days, one of them being Sunday, will be given an opportunity to apply for an exemption. There are a number of methods that may be used in order to do away with those problems that may cause some excessive difficulties.

### **On the Orders of the Day**

### **ADJOURNED DEBATES**

### **ADDRESS IN REPLY**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Nelson for an address in reply.

**MR. BERNTSON:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I begin the opposition's reply to the throne speech, but before I begin my remarks, let me offer my congratulations to the three new MLAs who were seated in the Legislative Assembly last Friday. New faces imply an injection of new, fresh ideas and that is something that is much needed on the government side of the House.

The government side, of course, has gone to its favourite training ground to recruit these two latest additions — the provincial civil service. These new members join the ranks of other elevated bureaucrats, including the members for Regina North-East, Regina Lakeview, Regina Centre, Prince Albert-Duck Lake, Quill Lakes, Regina Rosemont and probably more. I only hope that while civil servants these two members did not become so completely indoctrinated that they lost all of their freshness and imagination,



although I am afraid that this is unlikely to be the case.

This throne speech, Mr. Speaker, lacks imagination and freshness. It fully demonstrates how stale and old and tired and entrenched the present administration has become. All we have to do is look at the wording of the speech to see how pronounced the stagnation really is. The best this government can do is continue or expand upon programs which already exist. "We will continue to implement measures . . . we will increase . . . we are considering ways . . . we will study . . ."

All of these words from the throne speech are simply words, not actions. Where is the freshness that characterized this government in 1971 when it came into power? Where are the new directions? The new programs? Gone, Mr. Speaker. This government has run out of ideas. It is old and tired.

Let me explain what I mean. In 1971 this government created the Department of Culture and Youth. In 1971 it created the Department of Consumer Affairs. Now 10 years later, this government seems to be reliving its childhood. Once again the government is creating a department of culture and a department of consumer and commercial affairs. Are these the best ideas of an enlightened government? It's frightening to think that this may be the case.

The Premier himself commented on this a couple of weeks ago when his party had its annual meeting. He said he was afraid that this party had become lethargic and entrenched.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to stay in this rut in which the present government has placed us. Things are happening all around us that we must react to because they will affect us now and in the future. Saskatchewan cannot afford to stand still or worse, to backslide.

Mr. Speaker, 1981 begins the second year of the decade of the '80s, a time of critical importance for not only the people of Saskatchewan but the people of Canada as a whole. Significant changes are coming in our federation, changes that will affect the very shape of our Canadian nation as we now know it. They are changes that will likely significantly alter the place that western Canadians hold in our national framework. In the past few months, the Government of Canada has introduced measures that threaten to significantly alter the face of Canada. These are, of course, the constitutional resolution and the October 28 budget. These two federal measures threaten both the democratic right and the economic system of our country as a whole.

The people of western Canada again seem destined to bear the heaviest burden of these measures as the constitutional recommendations threaten our status as an equal partner in confederation. The budget undermines the foundation of our western economic identity, the natural gas and oil sector.

The people of Canada, and all three major political parties representing their interests, want their constitution brought home from Britain and brought under the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. I am certain there would be few voices raised in objection to this proposal. But it is at that point that consensus breaks down. Last September, all 10 provincial premiers agreed upon the idea of patriation and an amending formula, called the Vancouver formula, by which sections of the constitution could be changed once it had been returned to the people of Canada. But the Prime Minister chose not to agree with these recommendations of his provincial counterparts

and a few weeks later introduced his own document into the House of Commons. The results of such a move are widespread and dramatic.

Six provinces will take the Government of Canada to the supreme court to test the validity of its constitutional plan. Two other provincial premiers back the initiative taken by their six provincial counterparts. Premier Davis has offered his support for the Prime Minister's proposals, and then we have the Government of Saskatchewan which has taken no firm position at all.

We have seen the phenomenon of this government talking about every conceivable position on the matter of the constitution, one minute taking the position that they favoured the major parts of the proposal written in the resolution, then recently attempting to appear hard-nosed and parochial because they realize they are falling out of favour with all elements of the Saskatchewan population.

The constitutional resolution is dangerous. It is dangerous for Saskatchewan; it is dangerous for western Canada; it is dangerous for Canada as a whole. It is dangerous because it introduces a foreign structure into the Canadian federal system.

First of all, it establishes a double standard within Canada. It creates several tiers in the Canadian federal state: a first-class tier, Ontario and Quebec and a second-class tier, the western and Atlantic provinces. The way this works is that in the new constitution any province which had 25 per cent of the population of Canada in 1980 (in essence Ontario and Quebec) has perpetual power of veto over any suggestion emanating from the province governments.

Further to this, with respect to the four provinces which make up either the western or Atlantic regions of our country, to achieve a successful power of veto, two provinces comprising more than one-half of the total population of either region must join together to effect this veto. This in essence then destroys the concept of an equal partnership of 10 provinces upon which our federal system has survived and indeed thrived for the last 113 years.

Second, and by far the most serious danger of the federal proposal is that it has a built-in clause which effectively limits or eliminates the decisions or wishes of the 10 provinces if the Government of Canada does not like what the various provinces propose. Section 42 allows the federal government to call a national referendum on any issue and by potentially manipulating public sentiment, overthrow the will of the provincial legislatures. The result is that the influence of the provincial legislatures will be reduced to virtually nothing. An effective provincial voice must be exercised to counteract this plan by the Trudeau government. The Saskatchewan government can no longer sit on the fence. The government must stand up for the rights of the citizens of this province to ensure that the Trudeau Liberals do not make Saskatchewan a second-class province and her population second-class citizens. The government must take a stand and dispense with the rhetoric in which it frequently indulges.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. BERNTSON:** — The second stage of this two-pronged attack on western Canadian integrity is the October 28 budget. It is essentially designed to allow the federal government to step into an area of traditional provincial jurisdiction. The budget does several things:

First, it allows the Government of Canada to reduce the share of tax revenue that the Government of Saskatchewan obtains by 2 per cent each year. This will amount to many millions of dollars to this province over the next few years.

Second, it will essentially reduce the amount of exploration and development of future oil and natural gas projects in western Canada and will cause the closing down of current operations. The cause of this action is the 8 per cent across-the-board tax on oil and gas revenues.

Third, it will expand the already huge exodus of Canadian exploration and development dollars — the 1980 figure was approaching \$1 billion — to the United States. Estimates which preceded the federal budget indicated that in 1981 the figure would approach \$2 billion. After the MacEachern budget, this figure will more likely be \$3 billion.

The upshot of the whole situation is that the Trudeau government knows that it can count on the passive, if not active, support of the Government of Saskatchewan in its endeavours. The Liberals have heard the present government offer to give 50 per cent of our future old-oil revenues to central Canada. We have seen the Saskatchewan Premier break ranks with the other western Premiers and betray the interests of his constituents and the constituents of western Canada. With its relatively non-vocal attitude towards the federal budget and its fence sitting on constitutional matters, the NDP government is demonstrating just how out of touch it is with matters of both economic and democratic importance to the people of Saskatchewan.

Nine of the provincial premiers have had the integrity and the courage to take a stand on the unilateral moves of the Trudeau government. I include Premier Davis in this list because, even if his position is wrong, he has had the backbone to stand up for what he believes. Saskatchewan is the only exception. This reluctance to take a firm position is detrimental not only to the interests of the province of Saskatchewan, but indeed to the interests of the province as a whole, because, as we all know, the federal government is only too adept at the art of divide and conquer. By taking a wishy-washy position, or none at all, the Government of Saskatchewan is playing right into the hands of the federal government.

Just two months ago, Mr. Speaker, the federal government's strategy in dealing with the provinces was accidentally leaked to the public. That leaked document stated, and I quote:

A solid front of provincial government and parliamentary opposition from the West could pose real difficulties for the Government of Canada. The problem would be increased if Ottawa was locked in combat with the western governments over energy at the same time.

Breaking up a solid western provinces block of opposition is a prerequisite to our being in a position to take action: Saskatchewan may prove to be the key.

The constitutional and energy issues overlap. When I touch on one, I touch both. I want to take some time to pull it together before I leave the subject. The fact is that the Trudeau government proposes to bring back the constitution from the British parliament, an action that in principle we all support. But Trudeau does not propose to first agree upon a formula for amendment of the constitution. Instead he intends that

Ottawa will arbitrarily propose changes — changes that may or may not be damaging to a province. If a province disagrees, Ottawa will simply hold a referendum. A change that could be clearly unfair and damaging to Saskatchewan could be bulled through, notwithstanding the anger and the protests of all citizens of this province.

Trudeau urgently needs apologists in western Canada who will support him on his proposed raid on the constitutional powers and the natural resources of western Canada. The only supporters he had, in fact or in prospect, are the members of the NDP in western Canada. Their principal spokesman is the Premier of our own province.

The Premier is guilty of an unbelievable confusion between the interests of his party and the interests of his province.

Why did Messer leave the cabinet and the legislature? Why did Kramer? What discussions took place behind the soundproof doors in this building under the black dome of confidence? Were there only two members of that cabinet who would protest the Trudeau tricks? There were only two who saw that their leader is not helping Canada or Saskatchewan by being a growling tiger in Regina, only to become a purring kitten when stroked by the centralists in Ottawa. Does our Premier seriously believe that he can build a stronger Saskatchewan on the economic debris of Alberta? Was it only Messer and Kramer who disagreed with this opportunistic posture?

You know, as I know, that the people of Saskatchewan rejected every Liberal in the federal election of 1980, in the federal election of 1979, and in the provincial election of 1978. They cannot be elected here because voters know they do not serve this province. So what is the plan of Trudeau and his puppets in Saskatchewan? It's too simple. Let the Liberals in through the back door. Make a deal with the NDP in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Write a policy that serves the needs of the NDP, even if it does violence to the economies of this province and the other western provinces.

The great new project of Trudeau is to bring Liberal influence back into Saskatchewan through the back door.

How can anyone in the West fail to assault the proposed national energy program? It is a clear challenge to provincial control of the province's resources. Why is the Government of Saskatchewan playing party politics with this vital Saskatchewan issue?

The reality is that the so-called national energy program isn't national at all. It is a program designed to serve the interests of the populous regions of central Canada. It is an Ottawa energy program. It is an Ontario energy programs. It is a Quebec energy program. It is an anti-Western energy program.

That program has four central purposes:

1. It delivers fossil fuels from the producing provinces, particularly Alberta, to the industries of southern Ontario and the St. Lawrence at bargain basement prices.
2. It provides an opportunity for the government in Ottawa and the financial houses in central Canada to capture increased ownership and control of the major western commercial activity — the petroleum industry.
3. It transfers billions of dollars of revenues resulting from the petroleum industry —

revenues that should flow to the people and the businesses of the producing provinces — to the government of Ottawa.

4. Perhaps most important of all, it is a sneak attack on the provinces control of their natural resources.

Let's be clear. I do believe that revenues in Canada should be shared. We believe in equalization. But we do not believe in confiscation and the federal government energy program is confiscatory. The raid is not for Canada; it is for the political heartland of the Liberal Party in Canada.

Let me quote briefly from a statement made in the Senate by that most reasonable man, the Hon. Ernest Manning. After pointing out that Mr. Trudeau was "risking unnecessarily the danger of tearing confederation apart," Mr. Manning went on to point out that:

Of a total membership of 282 in the House of Commons the government party supporters number 143 for a majority of 33 seats. But 72 of the government's members are from one province, Quebec, while 86 per cent of its members are from the two central provinces Quebec and Ontario. It has only 20 members from the eight other provinces combined, only two members from west of Ontario-Manitoba boundary and one west of Manitoba. It is in no sense a truly national government.

The recipient regions themselves do not universally applaud this Trudeau raid. On the morning after the budget, the *Globe and Mail* of Toronto argued editorially that the budget and energy program was motivated by "the desire to make Ottawa increasingly the centre of energy money and power."

What Ottawa will accomplish is a bigger share of a shrunken industry. In the days since the energy program was announced, we have seen the announcements of the cancellation of drilling plans and statements of the intention of Canadian-owned and controlled petroleum companies to increasingly move their activities to the United States and elsewhere in the world.

Let's take a look at Canada and its energy prospects, prospects significantly worsened by the Ottawa energy program, the program apparently supported by the proxy Grits, the NDP of western Canada.

The reality in the energy world of today is that we cannot have any confidence that there will not be interruptions in the international movement of oil far more serious than the one experienced in 1973.

Canada is dependent upon the world market for 25 per cent of the crude we use in this nation. We import 450,000 barrels of crude oil a day. If that flow of oil should be interrupted we would face an immediate oil supply crisis in Canada.

Is it likely to be interrupted?

The most knowledgeable observers of the international market have very little doubt that this is highly probable. Let's face some facts. The Russians are in Afghanistan in strength. Russia is short of foreign exchange and this year is expected, for the first time, to become a net importer of crude oil. Does anybody really doubt that Russia will

attempt to tighten its grip upon the countries of the Persian Gulf, the major suppliers of oil to the world market?

It must be expected that there will be disruptions in the countries of the Persian Gulf. Rumours of unrest in Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest exporter, are rife. Little or no progress is being made in the Israeli-Egypt talks on that thorny issue of Palestinian autonomy. The revolt in Iran slashed shipments from that country. Now the war between Iraq and Iran has stopped the shipments all together. Even when that war finishes, the damage to the facilities of both countries will be so extensive that all agree there will be an extended delay before shipments can be renewed. This is the geographic area and the political environment toward which Trudeau is telling Canadians they must look for secure supplies of crude oil.

We have large oil revenues in Canada. We have some conventional light oil and enormous deposits of heavy crude oil in our own province. Alberta, of course, has much greater reserves and resources. The federal government proposes to move the taxes on oil steeply higher but will not allow the substantial new revenues to flow to the owners and the producers to enable them to expand production. The choice favoured in Ottawa is to draw our domestic crude oil from secure sources in Canada or rely upon the countries of the Middle East, an area of burning fuses, where conflict, war and aggression can interrupt the movement of exports at any time. Ottawa has chosen to pick a fight with Alberta, and by doing so, to increase our dependence upon uncertain foreign sources from 450,000 barrels a day to about 630,000 barrels a day — more than one-third of the supplies we will require.

The policy of the government in Canada, with its 86 per cent from Ontario and Quebec, is as Premier Lougheed phrased it, to club Alberta into submission. It is also to club the industry into submission. The role of the NDP Government of Saskatchewan is to act as proxy Liberals, to turn away their faces, to speak for their national party, and to do nothing that might offend potential NDP voters in Ontario.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to be very clear as to why the NDP is operating as Trudeau's proxy, and doing a very serious violence to the interests of the people of this province. The issue as defined by Ottawa, is the division of revenues. Ottawa is determined to convince the people in their central-Canada constituencies that the only matter at issue is who get the money, that the problem is the greed of the people of western Canada. But the simple fact is that the issue is the control of resources. Alberta chances to be the one that is under attack at the moment, but every province should be concerned. The real battle is for the ability to control the harvesting or exploitation of the resources within a province by the people and the government of that province. The ability to determine to produce or not to produce is inextricable from the right to manage the resource. Without that control, ownership is nothing more than an irrelevant word.

None of us particularly like to see Alberta proposing to cut back the production of crude oil, the people of Canada require every barrel that can be produced in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The alternative is to import from off-shore sources, to contribute to the increasing price of world spot market, to increase Canada's already worrisome deficit on it's current account balance of trade to increase tension between different people in different regions in Canada. No one wants that.

But what does a province have as an alternative? Given that we have a central

government that can regulate interprovincial and international trade unilaterally and that can set the price at which a natural resource is traded, what control will a province have if the central government also takes power to determine whether the resources are produced or not produced? The province would have to produce when told by Ottawa; it would have to sell at a price determined by Ottawa; it would have no control of the resources once they crossed the border of its own jurisdiction; and, it would have to produce at a rate instructed by Ottawa.

The reality is that Mr. Lougheed is determined to confirm that the province continues to have some control over its own resources. If Alberta is unable to control the rate at which it produces its own resources (and that is what is at issue in the dispute between Ottawa and Alberta), if a province has to produce at a rate dictated by Ottawa, sell at a price determined by Ottawa, then we have in effect a unitary state with provincial governments little more than big-budget, municipal governments.

The reality is that Alberta is fighting Canada. It is being forced to a harsh weapon, one that hurts Albertans first and damages the interests of all Canadian. But Alberta has to fight because at issue is a vital point of principle — the principle of maintenance of a division of powers essential in a federal state such as Canada.

Where in this issue is the Government of Saskatchewan? I can tell you where it is. It is sidling up to the Ottawa-Trudeau administration, attempting to make one or two little side deals. It is being the jackal that skulks around the edge of the fighting so that irrespective of who wins or loses, it will have a carcass to pick.

I tell you this, Mr. Speaker, if Ottawa wins that hard battle with Alberta, it will be a very small skirmish indeed with our province. Ottawa understands power even if it understands nothing else. It has singled out Alberta and will fight that province with all the resources and all the constitutional powers it possesses. Once Alberta is down, the rest will be easy.

Saskatchewan must fight the budget; we must fight the so-called national energy program. In doing so I profoundly believe we are fighting for the future of a united federated Canada. The nation, I profoundly believe, will survive. But it must include a western Canada which feels that it has not been exploited, that it is not alienated. That message must be sent to Ottawa with resounding force.

I would like to move on, Mr. Speaker, to the Saskatchewan economy.

Needless to say the above-mentioned federal budget is going to have a significant impact on the economy of our province, Mr. Speaker. 1980 has been a difficult year in Saskatchewan with severe drought plaguing our province in the spring and early summer, followed by an overabundance of rain in many areas during the harvest period. The net results was a dramatic decrease in the quality and quantity of the harvest in many areas. The people of Saskatchewan, this year, have suffered from not only the extraordinary effects which a drought has generated upon their income, but as well have had these incomes ravaged by the ever-present problems of excessively high federal and provincial income tax, inflation running at about 10.7 per cent, excessively high interest rates, and rapidly rising utility and insurance rates.

It is really astounding that the citizens of this province have not buckled under from the pressure, but I suppose once again this bears testimony to the tremendous fortitude of

the people of our province.

Let me add that while there are aspects of the financial problems which we face that the provincial government cannot correct, there are areas in which the NDP contributes to the hardship. The field of utility rates is an example. Saskatchewan's Crown corporations, Sask Power and Sask Tel showed record net profits this year of over \$40 million and \$25 million respectively. Yet the government still allowed these corporations to raise the rates. Their increases were across the board and affected everyone from senior citizens to low-income families to farmers. It is inconceivable that a provincial government which has witnessed the ravages of a drought on our gross provincial product would inflict unwarranted and unjustifiable utility rate increases on a people already financially strained by factors beyond their control.

This government has a demonstrated history of eliminating rate increases in election years, so I fail to see why they could not have stopped the rate increase this past year. Mr. Speaker, a PC government would establish a public utilities review commission to police utility policies and price increases in the province. The committee would be empowered to hold public hearings before policy and rate increases went into effect, and to make the final decision on them.

Saskatchewan resources are in demand in all parts of the world. We have food. We have energy. We have natural resources in abundance. And with proper management — which is not being provided by the present government — we could turn those things around to the advantage of the people of this province. We are in a position to be better off than the people of Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Right now, there is no provincial population better off than the people in our sister province. Although Alberta has more natural gas and oil we are abundantly endowed with other resources that generate a significant input into our provincial economy and therefore potentially into our personal incomes.

We have 40 per cent of the arable farmland in Canada, which produces the majority of Canada's grain supply. We have significant sources of conventional and non-conventional energy, coal, heavy oil, natural gas, and crude oil. We have enormous quantities of minerals and metals, potash, uranium, sodium, etc. We have timber. Yet Alberta has a \$6 billion to \$7 billion heritage fund built up to benefit present and future generations of Albertans with minimal provincial government ownership of these resources.

The people of Saskatchewan, with all this incredible potential wealth, have a tiny paper heritage fund which in reality is little more than mortgage equity in resources that the province already controlled. But the people of Saskatchewan have inherited, thanks to this NDP government, one of the highest provincial income tax rates in Canada, which has increased 35 per cent in the past decade; a 5 per cent sales tax on almost everything we buy; approximately \$3 billion in provincial debt; personal incomes well below the national average; farm income 20 per cent lower than what it was in 1976, while other provinces have shown a 44 per cent increase in that same period. We have led the nation in the loss of family farms. We are the only province in Canada to suffer a net decline in rural population — over 50 per cent of our towns and villages are dying. Escalating inflation rates in our major cities lead the national average because the province now imports milk, cheese, eggs, beef, turkey, chicken, cereals and more and more processed and manufactured goods that were originally produced in Saskatchewan.



As I mentioned above, agriculture still comprises the single largest input into the Saskatchewan economy. It has held this position for as long as we have been a province in the Dominion of Canada, and it should have the opportunity to do so in the future.

The agricultural sector of our economy is currently suffering many major hardships: high mortgage rates; high inflation that has had a profound effect on the prices of equipment; farm supplies and land; and high energy taxes. And 1980 produced a further complication that could be ill-afforded by the agricultural community — bad weather. Our crop started out with one of the most serious drought periods since the '30s and the harvest season was plagued by unseasonably large volumes of rain. The result, of course, we can readily see significantly reduced crop yields in several part of the province. The lack of adequate feed stocks has put undue cost burdens on the backs of Saskatchewan livestock producers.

This, of course, is complicated by perennial examples by both the federal and Saskatchewan governments that demonstrate that either they do not understand or they don't care about the needs of the agricultural community in Saskatchewan and western Canada. let me give you a few examples, Mr. Speaker.

The federal and Saskatchewan drought assistance program serves as a perfect example. Both these levels of government had to be literally forced to take action to assist farmers who were financially stricken by the severe drought conditions. It was only after repeated appeals by the agricultural community and pressure from the opposition and the precedent-setting program established by the Government of Manitoba that action was taken in Saskatchewan or Ottawa.

Further to this, we have seen the Government of Saskatchewan raise the rates for utilities, including electricity and natural gas — both items which comprise a significant factor in the farmer's accounts payable — despite the fact that the Saskatchewan Power Corporation made record net profits and despite the fact that farmers were suffering under the worse drought conditions in decades. this utility rate hike will be further aggravated by a large tax hike on natural gas and oil, which has resulted from the federal budget and will be passed on to the Saskatchewan consumer. This further compounds the impact of the new NDP 20 per cent tax on gasoline.

And then, Mr. Speaker, there is the ever-present thorn in the side of every ardent free enterpriser in the agricultural field: land bank. At the end of this fiscal year, it is estimated that land bank will own well over one million acres of farmland in this province, valued at over \$400 million. In last year's budget, a further \$25 million was committed to buy land for the land bank program. With this combined acreage the NDP cabinet has unofficially become the biggest single absentee landlord in Canada.

Imagine what positive measures could have been put into place with the money directed toward the creation of this state-farm program, had it been redirected to other projects which would directly benefit Saskatchewan farmers. The present government would do well to take note of some of the policies articulated by the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan. They are policies which recognize the problems inherent in Saskatchewan agriculture today and are designed to help circumvent some of them so that they will be reduced or eliminated in the future.

Irrigation is being practised on a very limited basis in Saskatchewan today. In Outlook the farming community has realized and continues to realize great benefits from a

system that has been in place for many years. In light of this year's drought, in light of the fact that drought is a perennial worry to prairie farmers, and in light of the great benefits that the Outlook irrigation project has demonstrated to the people of Saskatchewan, a PC government in Saskatchewan would ensure that the system at Outlook was expanded and that capital grants be provided to family farms to enable them to fully capture the benefits of irrigation in their operations.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. BERNTSON:** — A PC government, Mr. Speaker, would redirect money currently destined to buy farmland for land bank and create instead a Saskatchewan family farm purchase program that would provide a once in a lifetime \$350,000 loan to young people in farming. The interest rate would be 8 per cent for the first five years and 12 per cent or prime, whichever is lower, for the remainder of the pay-back period. Furthermore, we would establish a rural gas distribution system to provide Saskatchewan's rural communities, and particularly farm, with access to lower priced energy for home heating, grain dryers, irrigation pumps and livestock heating facilities.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. BERNTSON:** — We would create a Saskatchewan agriculture and food processing program which would provide investment capital and tax incentives to enable Saskatchewan families to more fully participate in the benefits of a growing Canadian and world market for food and energy. One of the main thrusts of this program would be to encourage facilities to produce grain alcohol for the production of gasohol as an automotive fuel. A second major thrust would be to encourage the re-establishment of secondary industry for the processing of our cereal crops and livestock in Saskatchewan and thereby end the current necessity of having Saskatchewan consumers buying hamburger and chicken processed in Alberta and Corn Flakes and Shreddies processed and packaged in Ontario. It is a truly ironical situation when we consider that much of this livestock and grain originated here in Saskatchewan.

A PC government would ensure that more money was invested into agricultural and veterinary research to enable the Saskatchewan agricultural community to be world leaders in technology and techniques of farming.

Mr. Speaker, we would create a rural community development program to reverse the current trend of dying town and villages in Saskatchewan. The program would support rural development by increasing unconditional grants to local levels of government and by providing tax incentives to the rural, industrial and service sectors. Saskatchewan should not have the reputation of being the only province in Canada suffering a net decline in rural population. This combined with a rural gas distribution system significantly enhance the vitality and viability of our rural communities.

These, Mr. Speaker, are just a few of the ways that a Progressive Conservative government would ensure that the agricultural and rural sectors maintained and indeed increased the very important role that they would play in our provincial economy. Now I would like to move on to energy and resources, Mr. Speaker.

As stated earlier, Saskatchewan is rich in energy and sources of minerals and metals. We still have significant amounts of natural gas and oil in the province. There is a belt of gas and crude deposits extending from southcentral to southwestern Saskatchewan, rising up along the Saskatchewan-Alberta border through Kindersley,

Wilkie and ending in the large, little developed deposits of heavy oil found at Lloydminster. These oil and gas deposits are part of a huge field extending from Alberta into Saskatchewan, Montana and North Dakota.

Significant exploration and development has characterized the last decade in three of the four locations mentioned. Saskatchewan is the lone exception. Careful study will indicate that the states of North Dakota and Montana have had ever-increasing numbers of well drilled and developed over the last decade. We need merely drive into Alberta to see the hustle and bustle of the rapid development of the energy industry and its spinoffs there. Yet there is the contrast in Saskatchewan. Swift Current has virtually died as an energy centre. The city of Estevan, for example, has not grown in population in the last 10 years. Yet we have seen a world energy crisis since 1973. We have seen oil prices rise by 800 per cent in Canada in the last seven years and by 1900 per cent in the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) world. We know we have large proven and potential reserves in Saskatchewan. Why, then, you will ask, Mr. Speaker, have we not witnessed the same rapid pace of development which we have witnessed dramatically in Alberta and in our two American-border states?

I fear, Mr. Speaker, that the answer lies with the policies of the NDP government. the government's own Crown corporation, SaskOil, may be part of the problem. In recent months, we have witnessed several telltale signs that things are not well in SaskOil's operations. First, when other oil companies were making record profits in the past fiscal year, we discover that SaskOil's profits were down by 40 per cent over their previous fiscal year. A few months later, we notice that Bob Craig, president SaskOil, has resigned with a great veil of silence surrounding his reasons for leaving. One can only assume that after coming to SaskOil from Gulf Oil — a free enterprise company which enjoys great expertise in the business of discovery and developing energy sources and in complement enjoys comfortable profits for its endeavours — the transition to a Crown corporation which is heavy on political appointees and therefore likely light on expertise, must have been a traumatic, and in the end, an unpalatable experience for Mr. Craig.

Add the provincial energy policies a federal budget like the October 28 Liberal budget, and you are essentially ending the future development or indeed the future viability of any small Canadian-owned oil and gas companies in Saskatchewan. A recent article on the business page of the *Leader-Post* bears witness to what we will see happen on an increasing basis in the future. The headline reads Local Oil Firms Move to Calgary and concerns two companies, Surf Explorations and Sastex Petro-Minerals. Spokesmen for the two companies stated that the measures introduced in the Liberal budget combined with what the companies called the high taxation and royalty situation in Saskatchewan, made the move necessary. A company spokesman stated that:

We have taken a pretty bad beating over the years always hoping that we would have some understanding from government, that it would realize that the spinoffs from the industry would be good for both western Canada and eastern Canada. Any slow down in the industry would mean a loss of jobs.

The article also stated:

There are also rumours that the Alberta government is considering measures to offset the revenue tax.

In Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government continues to heap disincentive upon deterrent on a Saskatchewan industry. Mr. Speaker, it is about time that both the Saskatchewan government and the Liberal government in Ottawa sat up and started to listen to these spokesmen from our provincial energy industry. Over half the total exploration and development of oil and natural gas in western Canada is done by small Canadian-owned companies. And it is precisely these companies that will either be hurt or will fold under the NDP's repressive provincial programs and the federal money-grubbing policies which indiscriminately hit every oil and gas company regardless of whether they are Canadian or foreign-owned. We know that the foreign-owned companies will survive current budget measures. It is our Canadian-owned companies that will suffer. It is the problems of these companies which should and must be addressed by both levels of government.

If the industry rumours are true, Alberta is prepared to do something to assist affected energy companies with the economic implications of the federal budget. Alberta recognizes that maintaining its oil and gas industry is a necessary and indispensable part of the Alberta economy. It creates jobs in the industry and spinoff jobs in the service sector — in housing, etc — to say nothing of the billions of dollars that contributes to the provincial treasury and to the heritage fund.

Saskatchewan must recognize the same economic and political reality. Saskatchewan energy money invested in Alberta and the United States does not help this province one bit. It creates no new jobs here. It actually causes job losses. It generates no new taxation revenue for the people of the province. Indeed, the province loses money, and in the end the only people who gain anything from the investment capital are the people of Alberta and the U.S.

Members opposite will argue that SaskOil can take over from the oil companies that chose to no longer invest in the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, this may or may not be true but whichever way you look at it, SaskOil, being a Crown corporation, needs taxpayers money to operate. This means that if SaskOil were to attempt to expand its operations it would only be able to do so by two methods: either by going the route of not raising provincial income taxes and redirecting money from other government programs such as health care or social services, or by raising provincial taxes — already among the highest in Canada. Either alternative, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable. This is one of the major problems with a province which is becoming day-by-day more government controlled.

Mr. Speaker, year after year we see one Crown corporation after another being created and each one requires an annual financial transfusion, whether it be to pay off its long-term debt (the money needed by this province to acquire equity) or merely to help pay off the annual deficit. But unlike other resource-rich provinces, Saskatchewan faces an unnecessary economic reality — a tight cash situation. Since we are taxed provincially and federally to the limit already, the government would be hard pressed to raise taxes further. The trade-off appears then to redirect limited financial resources from one program to another. The dilemma the NDP is faced with is where its policy priorities lie: with power or with people.

I would like to say a few words about the environment, Mr. Speaker. The environment around the world is being threatened more and more every year. The imaginations of governments and scientists are being taxed and taxed to an ever-increasing level over how to deal with problems like acid rain, liquid industrial wastes, and uranium mine tailings threatening to contaminate ground-water tables and enter the food chain.

One of the ironies, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, of being only slightly industrialized, as Saskatchewan is, is that we do not face these problems to the same extent as do such places as Ontario, Quebec, and the American northeast industrial states. But that does not mean that Saskatchewan does not have her own peculiar environmental problems. Major sources of acid rain exist both within Saskatchewan's SPC's coal-fired generating stations, and adjacent to our border in northeastern Alberta, such as the Syncrude project at Fort McMurray. The mining and milling process of northern Saskatchewan's uranium mines generates wastes that contain low-level radiation. And we are finding that Saskatchewan must find a way to deal with liquid industrial wastes that have been stored over the past decades in underground storage systems. The fear raised in Saskatoon over the past few months is characteristic of the public reaction in other areas after the situation at the Love Canal in upper New York state.

I would like to say a few words about Regina, and several problems which affect every resident of the city.

First of all, I am pleased to see that after four years of delay and stall tactics by the provincial government, some progress is finally being made in cleaning up the PCB spill at Federal Pioneer. I urge the government to give this situation top priority to ensure that the spill is cleaned up completely and properly, and that no time is wasted in finishing the job. I only regret that the job was not done four years ago when the problem was first discovered. Both public and private costs and public concern have spiralled over the years.

The second problem is with the quality of water that is consumed by the people of this city. It is deplorable. The government and the city of Regina must meet and discuss ways of introducing cleaner fresh water to the city. This could be done by making funds available out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund (Of there is any there), construction of a pipeline to the Buffalo Pound from Diefenbaker Lake, and construction of a new modified water treatment plant.

Before I finish my remarks on the environment, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the government on its introduction of the two bills last session on environmental assessment, and The Department of the Environment Act relating to spills of hazardous materials. It was only after much pressure being exerted by the member for Arm River, my colleague, Mr. Muirhead, that these bills were introduced. And I was pleased to see that the bills contained many of the recommendations made by him.

I would like to speak for the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker, on several areas that relate to the well-being of the people of Saskatchewan.

First a few words on health and social services. The people of Saskatchewan have benefited from the many and varied programs under the umbrella of medicare. It is unfortunate that during the past few years, we have seen a slow but steady erosion of the health care system of this province. Too often, we find hospital beds empty for lack of funding while many people wait weeks for elective surgery. Senior citizens are hard pressed to find level 4 care available in nursing homes and when they do their families are usually forced to take them to towns far from their friends and familiar surroundings. We have lost badly needed specialists from our major centres and many general practitioners from the rural areas. The present government conspires to shift the financial responsibility for health care to the municipalities. If this trend continues, we will see the collapse of our health care system as we know it, and the already

overtaxed municipalities burdened even more.

I look to the future, Mr. Speaker. Health care costs will escalate 50 to 60 per cent in the next four years. The average man is finding it difficult to live with double-digit inflation. With no signs of this trend being slowed down by either Trudeau or the NDP administration, I can only foresee financial restraint.

The improvement of health care delivery is my foremost concern. In order to supply programs needed in the future and to cope with ever-increasing costs, it is necessary to eliminate any duplication or overlapping of services and personnel in the government. Too often we have heard of people caught in the bureaucratic shuffle and turned away for lack of communication between departments or administrators of various programs.

A PC government would at once implement a comprehensive health care program that would provide a continuum of care to the people of the province. For instance, the amalgamation of services for senior citizens under one department is long overdue. The elderly find it especially difficult to be shuffled back and forth between the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services for medical and nursing home care, hearing aids, prescription drugs, and home care. This process is arduous and time-consuming at the best of times, but overwhelming when immediate aid is needed and not easily attainable.

By the end of this century, if the present trend continues, close to 20 per cent of the population of Saskatchewan will be over the age of 65. We are already suffering from the lack of facilities for level 3 and level 4 nursing home care. What will the future bring if we do not begin immediately to build new facilities and to more effectively utilize the ones we already have? Mr. Speaker, a PC government would reorganize the relevant services within the departments of health and social services into a central agency to deal with these and other related issues.

At the same time, a fresh look at the present programs is also necessary, I find it distasteful that a government would force anyone, especially a senior citizen, to dispense of his or her assets to virtually the poverty level to pay for nursing home care. The present discriminatory practice of differing fees for nursing home care levels should be abolished. Many provinces have instituted a bed and board fee schedule that allows the resident to pay a nominal charge that is easily covered through Canada pension or other related benefits.

We will begin to renovate and expand existing nursing homes to enable them to deliver level 3 and 4 care. At the same time, closed beds in hospitals should be considered for the use as an interim measure. Careful consideration will be given to the necessity of continuing to designate hospital beds and allowing them to be used on an acute-need basis.

The continuing role of small community hospitals in rural areas must be redefined and enhanced. To remain vital in the health care system, they must now look toward offering more preventive and rehabilitative medical care. Specialists such as physiotherapists, dieticians, psychiatrists and health educators should be attached on a rotating basis to community clinics and hospitals. We will make a concentrated effort to not only attract these experts but to keep them in Saskatchewan.

For years we have concentrated on what seems to be only one aspect of health — to cure the unwell. Perhaps it is time now to also turn our attention to that much larger group — the well. It is universally accepted that the duty of government is to provide medical care when it is needed. But emphasis in the next decades must also be on health maintenance programs. From an early age children should be taught the long-term benefits of healthy eating and physical exercise and made more aware that many illnesses are a consequence of our own behaviour. How many people are not guilty of overeating, smoking or drinking too much, forgetting the annual medical or dental checkup, and not getting enough exercise? It has been easy in the past to run to a doctor for a pill to take care of our immediate troubles. It is time that we accepted some responsibility for our own health and well-being. Education of our children and a more informed public will benefit us all in the future.

I would like to look at the family for a moment, Mr. Speaker. The family has been the backbone of this province through many years of hardship. Rising inflation and uncertain job markets have compounded the difficulties faced by people trying to cope with the stresses of modern life. The growing fragmentation and disunity of the family has manifested itself in many ways — separation and divorce leading to many one-parent families, the increased incidence of teenage pregnancies and delinquency, battered children and wives, and most recently, the abuse of the elderly.

These are problems which we face right now in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Governments are being forced to deal more and more often with the results of this growing trend.

Perhaps the most tragic victims are the children. They are not consulted or given a chance to decide their futures. Mute and powerless, they are caught in a court system which until recently has not considered them as individuals. Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we have a strong family court system to deal with this and a wide variety of related issues. Children must be granted the right of counsel in legal proceedings. The time of ignoring the rights of children has passed.

It is too simplistic to think we can deal with only the symptoms of the problem without addressing the cause. Yet we must ensure that people have somewhere to turn in time of need. I would hope that the number of local child abuse and crisis information centres, along with transition houses, will be increased.

Community services and educational programs are necessary in order to combat the rising incidence of the abuse of women and children. Too many young couples (an increasing number of which are teenagers) are not ready to accept the responsibilities of marriage and children. The pressures of making a living and caring for a family are too great to handle. Frustrations and disappointments are being released through violence in the home, directed at the people least able to defend themselves. I find it extremely difficult to comprehend the fact that elderly people living with their relatives are now also joining the ranks of the physically abused. Compassion, above all else, must be the guiding force in the day-to-day operations of the government.

The future of this province, and this country, lies with our youth. We must do everything in our power to prepare them to take an active part in further building our community. yet, it is unfortunate that e have let them down in many ways. Our young people leave this province and take up employment elsewhere. Few incentives have been provided them to begin farming or to participate in the business community in Saskatchewan.

Our educational system has failed to provide them with many basic life skills such as financial and household management, parenting, employment search, and preventive health care. But I will say more about this later, Mr. Speaker.

This year, our 75th anniversary, has demonstrated the rich cultural diversity of this province. The fact that this government intends to tamper with this has me greatly concerned. The recent report on by Dr. Gordon Vichert has some far-reaching ramifications, not the least of which is the latest offspring of the fine family of Crown corporations. Many of Dr. Vichert's suggestions are interesting in theory but you will find, Mr. Speaker, impractical in application. We see no practical reason for creation of a Crown corporation to handle such cultural industries as cable TV and publishing. Recently the employees in several government departments have been coerced to push NDP ideas as the best and only ones available to the public. I shudder to think with complete government control of the print and electronic media through a cultural Crown corporation what philosophy will be reflected and broadcast throughout the province.

The habit of this government has been to conceive of an idea and immediately implement it with little or no concern for the people it most closely affects. We had a clear demonstration of this during the last session with the amendments to The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act — better known as Bill 13.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Don't beat a dead horse.

**MR. BERNTSON:** — Saskatchewan has always had an excellent and innovative educational system. However, it did fail on the member for Saskatoon Centre. The past few years have seen a constant reduction of funding from the provincial government. Educators are plagued today with declining enrolments, the loss of rural schools, unrest in universities. Every year we witness our young people leaving Saskatchewan to pursue their education in other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, with the wealth that this province has it is indeed regrettable that we are not able or willing to provide the necessary facilities here. Last year we were promised a system of decentralized technical and vocational schools. Where are they? I have not heard another mention of it. The people in rural Saskatchewan desperately need additional technical training to upgrade their training and to learn new skills. A successful decentralized program is functioning well in other provinces and is long overdue in Saskatchewan.

In some ways the school system has lost touch with the environment in which we live. A thorough review of the curriculum at all levels is necessary to ensure that we are providing our students with a well-balanced education, one that trains the body and the mind and produces a well-rounded individual.

There are a few special groups that must be focussed on. The school system must recognize and fulfil the needs of the gifted, the handicapped and the trainable retarded. All of these groups are to be given the opportunity and training to take their full place in a productive society.

The Department of Education in the next decade must more directly focus on the needs of native and Metis children. For years this government has been paying lip service to the need for new initiatives in this field, but little concrete has come forth. A PC



government will begin a comprehensive program formulated in consultation with native groups to encourage these children to pursue their education.

I would like briefly to turn to labor. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government boasts it is the party which listens to the people. I doubt they have listened much when I look at the record of labor unrest this year. We have already had three major strikes this year and we are in the middle of yet another. Time after time we see the contracts being allowed to lapse without a concerted effort on the part of the government to resolve any difficulties which might hamper the negotiations of the new contract.

The Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association last year went on strike, almost paralysing the province for over one month. The strike was felt in all facets of life in Saskatchewan. Nursing homes were short-staffed. Students in vocational and technical colleges were faced with the possibility of losing their school year. Farmers could not market cattle for lack of brand inspectors. The provincial laboratory was closed. The list goes on. Dairy workers went out in May. Many farmers unable to store their milk were forced to dump their produce. The government stepped in and legislated them back to work.

In midsummer, the already well-known confrontation tactics of the Blakeney government were used once again with the ambulance workers. It was obvious that the current method of funding ambulance service by conditional grants to the Department of Municipal Affairs needed revision. However, once again, the NDP forced the ambulance operators to go to the eleventh hour before taking action. It was evident to all, especially the operators themselves, that the provincial government was uninterested in the dispute. With a sense of responsibility to the public, it was the ambulance attendants themselves who requested a labor conciliator. As a side note here, I find it difficult to understand why the Department of Municipal Affairs has the responsibility for ambulance services. Surely, ambulances are part of medical services and should be under the Department of Health and funded directly by the government.

Today, we are in the middle of yet another labor dispute, this time with the provincially owned liquor board and its workers. The government is trying a new tactic again, negotiating through the media rather than at the bargaining table. How is it possible, Mr. Speaker, that there was relatively little unrest in this province before NDP came to power a decade ago? Since then, we have had a significant number of study sessions, work slowdowns, out-and-out strikes. During the next year we will examine closely why this trend is escalating in the various segments of the labor force in the province.

So, as you can see, Mr. Speaker, we face many problems on both a global level and right here in Saskatchewan. The key to resolving many of these problems is to be prepared to reduce or eliminate their impact before the problems hit us directly. And there are ways of circumventing many Saskatchewan problems, which are not being done at the present time. These preventive measures range from preventive medicine in the health field to preventive mediation in the labor field. These measures include the provision of a contingency plan in the wake of the October 28 federal budget to ensure that present and future jobs and opportunities in the energy field are not lost. Mr. Speaker, it includes progressive, long-term planning in the agricultural field to ensure that this sector maintains its very important role in the provincial economy.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that this government recognize and remember that the reason we are all here is to serve the people. A government which

hangs onto power simply for the purpose of having power is incapable of fulfilling the mandate that it was given by the people. We need only look at the Trudeau government in Ottawa to see living proof of a government which sees nothing of importance but the maintenance of power.

Saskatchewan is still hovering on the verge of greatness, Mr. Speaker. We have everything here which gives us the potential to be economically strong and strong as a people. But all it is is potential. We have to make it happen. We have the population, except our youth leaves to find jobs elsewhere. We have the raw materials, yet they are sold unprocessed to other provinces and countries. We have the potential, yet the present government lives in the past and fails to perceive the future and our place in it.

Saskatchewan is, Mr. Speaker, next year country. But the dreams and hopes and aspirations of our forefathers which this name implies will never come under the present NDP government policies. Unless there is a dramatic return by this government to understanding the needs and problems of the people of Saskatchewan, all of our tomorrows will be yesterdays.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, first I want to offer my congratulations to the mover and seconder in this debate, the hon. members for Yorkton and Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. I want to say to them and to this House that I am proud of their contribution to this debate and I am proud of the fact that our party can produce members of that calibre who continue to make that type of contribution to this House.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Souris-Cannington for the spirited manner in which he read his most interesting speech. I think the speech displayed a very considerable amount of imagination. Some of it might reasonably have been put in competition for the Governor General's award for fiction. I will have some comment on that a little later.

I want to congratulate the member for Souris-Cannington, as well, for the privilege of keeping his position for another session.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Well, at least for the start of the session. I have certainly never been convinced that a change would be an improvement. I am pleased that a lot of people agree with me. I don't think they are all in Estevan. I suspect when I say the member for Souris-Cannington is doing a good job as Leader of the Opposition, and a change would not be an improvement. I suggest that is something that the member for Thunder Creek and I agree upon.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I suspect that it's something quite a few members opposite and I agree upon.

While I am congratulating people and welcoming people, I'd like to say a few words

about our three newest members, the members for The Battlefords, Estevan and Kelsey-Tisdale. Many members opposite, or at least some members opposite, would no doubt be deeply distressed by the defeat in last week's by-election of the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Mr. Grant Devine. The ghosts of many former Liberal members would no doubt be saddened that their undeclared leadership candidate, Mr. Ralph Goodale, could not be with us today. And up to a point (I admit it's not a very high point) I sympathize with these ghosts of Liberals past and goblins of Conservatives present. I, too, would have enjoyed listening to Mr. Devine say on the floor of this House some of the things that I read with a good deal of amusement in the *Leader-Post* from time to time. I get a fair chuckle out of some of those statements. It would be helpful if we had them made in this House so that one could savour them and make the appropriate response.

I, too, would have welcomed Mr. Goodale here in the House, welcomed him as the emissary of that eminence of Ottawa, the Wizard of Oz, who continues to befuddle us here in the West. But, as is often the case in such political battles, battles of epic proportions like the one down in Estevan, the best man won.

I am delighted to welcome to this House the new member for Estevan, Mr. Jack Chapman.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I am equally delighted to welcome his seatmate, the other conquering hero, the member for The Battlefords, Mr. David Miner.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The obvious qualifications of these two members and the proud record of the government brought them success in hard-fought, well-run campaigns. We, on this side of the House, are proud to have them with us.

I would also like to welcome Neal Hardy to this Assembly, the hon. member for Kelsey-Tisdale.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I think he will see that this House is a lively place, that the cut and thrust of debate does contribute to arriving at what I hope, and we all hope, are appropriate solutions to public problems. He has already demonstrated his success. He has actually captured a seat in this Assembly and therefore he will put himself in a strong position to contend for the leadership of his party., should that be under review. I might say that we were disappointed that Kelsey-Tisdale will no longer be represented by our party, but we had a low turnout at the polls and perhaps we underrated the popularity of Mr. Messer. At any rate, we did not win the seat. We look forward to regaining the seat in the next general election.

Some of you people may remember another couple of by-elections. I think there was one in Saskatoon Sutherland, and another in Prince Albert-Duck Lake, where members of the Progressive Conservative Party had victories, even if short-lived victories. Each of them is no longer with us. While we're not wishing any particularly ill luck in a personal sense to the member for Kelsey-Tisdale, we expect that after the next election he will no longer be with us.

The by-elections themselves provided the major parties with an opportunity to outline their principles and their programs. I was personally able to participate in all three campaigns. I heard from the Tories much about principle, about the terrors of the socialist hordes, about the threat of big government and the need for free enterprise. I heard a lot about principles but I heard remarkably few programs. With the Liberals it was the other way around. You could hear all about policies, usually federal Liberal policies, but you heard about them, like the “damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead” policy being embarked upon by the present Prime Minister. But as for Liberal principles, well, I think we’ll all agree the less said on that the better.

In the New Democratic Party we attempted to outline the basic principles of our party and the day-to-day programs of our government. We made some promises in the last general election as we did in 1975 and in 1971. We asked people to review those promises to see whether or not it was a record of promises made and promises kept, and we will continue to campaign on the basis of our making promises and keeping promises, election after election.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — If one listened to the comments of the Progressive Conservative candidate in Estevan, one would get the impression that somehow a vast number of people rejected the New Democratic Party. The better way to put that, I think, was that the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party was rejected by well over 60 per cent of the people in Estevan.

60 per cent of the electors rejected this man after approximately 55 per cent of the electors had supported the previous Progressive Conservative candidate in that constituency. In not one of the three constituencies did any NDP candidate get as small a percentage of the vote as the Conservative leader in Estevan.

In 1978, and I think the members opposite will concede this, we ran well in the general election; that must be conceded. It was to be expected that in the by-elections we would lose support — governments almost always do in by-elections — and we did, but not in Estevan. No single NDP candidate lost as much (or even half as much) of percentage support as did the Progressive Conservative candidate in Estevan, the leader of their party.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I think there is a bit of a message there. Last summer the Conservative candidate in Estevan said he saw a growing bond between the Conservatives and the Liberals. And now he says he sees an unholy alliance between the NDP and the Liberals. It seems to me this man should get his eyes checked. Just consider that election in Estevan if you would. The previous member for Estevan, Mr. Larter, was by all standards an MLA who was well regarded and who was a superior campaigner. Now, what was his secret?

We all know. He had the full support of the Conservatives in his constituency; he had substantial support from the Liberals; he had a good deal of support from the political people in that riding who thought he was a nice guy who did not criticize overly except on a policy basis. He did not indulge in personal criticism, and added to that he was a local candidate. Now we have him edged out of his seat to provide a seat for the Leader

of the Progressive Conservative Party to run in. We start with a Conservative Party in Estevan a little less than warm to seeing their man edged out in that way, so he starts with a little cloud with the Conservatives. Now obviously he has to hold those Liberals. What does he do? Does he set out to hold those Liberals? Not at all. He puts out pamphlets which say that the Trudeau Liberals are the worst kind of people for Canada, that they are in alliance with the NDP. He attacks them on that ground — and mind you, not only the provincial Liberals but these federal Liberals who have just finished getting 30 per cent of the vote in Estevan, and he attacks them front and centre.

Well, having put himself in some trouble with the Tories, and having now attacked the Liberals, he starts issuing statements which alienate all the undecided. He starts attacking personally, and so the new member for Estevan, Mr. Chapman, is very much able to say, “Look, I will not engage in that kind of politics.”

Having disposed of some of the Conservative support, a good bit of the Liberal support, and now of the undecided support, he attempts to deal with the fact that he is not a local candidate by announcing that if elected he will not necessarily contest the next election. And what do you know? After all that, he drops 18 per cent or 19 per cent of the total popular vote; he drops a full one-third of what Mr. Larter had, and he loses the election. That surely involves a touch of genius at that political level.

I think some members opposite ought to ask themselves whether their seat can stand that touch of genius. I look at the new member for Kelsey-Tisdale, and I look perhaps at the member for Bengough-Milestone, who is working on something less than 50 votes, and the member for Rosetown-Elrose, about 500 votes. The member for Meadow Lake has about 200; Arm River, a little less than 200 votes there. They are going to ask themselves whether their campaign can stand that type of political genius.

I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that particular candidate may well have needed to have his eyes checked. I suspect there are some members opposite who would go farther than that. I suspect the member for Arm River might well be among them. He would say that not only does he need his eyes checked, but if he is going to carry on like that he needs his head read.

Mr. Speaker, since the previous session of the legislature three members of the provincial cabinet have resigned from their posts. Two of these members resigned their seats in the legislature as well. I’ve accepted each of these resignations with deep regret, knowing that our cabinet is losing three good men. I also know that the decisions which made them leave public life at this time were not easy decisions for them to make.

I want to make a few comments about the two men who are no longer with us in the Assembly, and also a few words with respect to the member for Regina Centre. I will speak of him first.

He was elected first in 1975, and since that time it has been obvious to all of us that he is a hard worker. His constituents certainly know that. So do his caucus colleagues. And once he became a cabinet minister he was certainly known to all of us. In five short years the member for Regina Centre has been the minister for co-operatives and co-operative development, minister of consumer affairs, minister of government services, minister of education, minister of culture and youth.

The habits which he learned back on the farm where he grew up have served the people of this province well. Mr. Shillington, the member, simply believes that if you have some work to do, you simply do it and when it is finished, you go on to the next job. He has done that consistently and he has served with distinction. As minister responsible for the office of the rentalsman, he was given the difficult task of bringing in rent controls. And no one suggest that that is an easy job. He laid the groundwork for Celebrate Saskatchewan, a project which has been such an outstanding success this year. Concerned with multiculturalism, a unique mix of traditions which we share in Saskatchewan, he established the cultural policy secretariat which has recently completed its report.

Over the years, his enthusiasm, diligence and sense of humour have made him a valuable ally. I am sorry to lose his experience and expertise at the cabinet table, but I am pleased that he will remain with us as the member for Regina Centre and we will have the benefit of his thoughtful advice.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The former member for Kelsey-Tisdale, John Messer, was first elected in 1967. For 13 years, he has been on the firing line in some of the biggest battles. He has played a lead role in many of the biggest fights this government has been in. Jack has always been one to meet any and all challenges head on. As many of the hon. members opposite will well know, a head-on collision with John Messer was something you didn't forget in a hurry.

He has served the people of Kelsey-Tisdale constituency for more than 13 years. He recently decided to resign his seat. I deeply regret that decision, but knowing him I fully appreciate and understand his desire to move on, to move on to different challenges, different fields of endeavour and different horizons. I am sorry that he had left us, but I confess that my reasons are purely selfish. I feel like a coach who has lost one of his star players to a different league.

John Messer has always been a strong, energetic team player and a member of every cabinet since we formed the government in 1971. Early in his career as minister of agriculture, he pioneered such major programs, which we think are of lasting benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, as land bank and FarmStart . . .

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — . . . and a greatly increased crop insurance program which is going to be a godsend to farmers in this year.

While heading the industry and commerce portfolio, he outlined a strategy for the appropriate positions of private, co-operative and public sectors in this province which is still our guideline. He helped formulate new provincial economic development policies of all kinds.

The period he served as minister of mineral resources has been the most exciting and rewarding period in the history of resources in this province since 1905. Power, natural gas, oil, potash, uranium, forest products — he has been involved in them all. He has expertly guided us through the recent period of active growth and development. Time and time again, he has shown that when it comes to the people's resources, he is both an astute businessman and a tough negotiator.

Knowing, as I do, Mr. Messer's desire to keep facing new challenges, I respect his wish to look for different experiences and new opportunities outside of the legislature. I regret that he won't be occupying the seat to my right, but I am confident that in the years ahead Mr. Messer will continue to make an outstanding contribution to the well-being of Saskatchewan and its people.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I am certain that all of you, even members opposite, are by now aware that Eiling Kramer, who represented the people of The Battlefords constituency for the past 28 years, is retired. What can one say about a man who has spent 28 years of his life in the service of this legislature — 28 years of actively working for the betterment of his community, his province and his country?

He was a minister under Premier Lloyd, while some members opposite, I suspect, were still in school. He was minister of natural resources and of co-operatives in 1971. Since 1972, he has been minister of highways. I am not going to talk about Eiling's many accomplishments over the years in these portfolios. There is really no need. His record speaks for itself.

Eiling generally has established the principle that he believes in fair play. But if a fight is to be had, he knows how to fight. Fight he did, for the promotion of good driving habits, for highway safety, for the most extensive network of roads of any province in Canada. He has never been one to skirt an issue, never been one to pussyfoot around. Sometimes a mite blunt, but at least you knew where he stood and what he was going to do. I sat with Eiling in this Chamber for 20 years. His absence on the floor today is strange for me. But I suppose I will have to get used to it. We are all going to have to get used to it. I suspect some of you will find it easier to get used to than I. Every person who serves in the legislature brings something unique to the Chamber. Certainly an able member of the government caucus can be found to fill these three portfolios. But we cannot hope and we should not expect to have someone with the same colourful characteristics as the former member for The Battlefords. He is one of a kind. I say he is one of the very best kind.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to mention one other member of this Assembly who was lost through retirement, the distinguished former member for the constituency of Estevan. First elected in 1975, he returned in 1978. I say with every sincerity that we on this side of the House respected and admired him. He typified, I think, what is good about an MLA and an opposition MLA. He represented his constituents well and they recognized it by supporting him in what we thought were distressingly large number, I must say. They certainly supported him. He criticized the government well. I have often said that with all the good will in the world any government makes mistakes and needs criticism. The role of an opposition member is to remind the government of its errors, but more important to propose alternative solutions to the problems which they perceive to exist.

The member for Estevan proposed solutions. I didn't frequently agree with them. He wanted us to get out of the potash business. We knew where he stood. I suspect we don't know where members opposite stand on that issue, but we knew where he stood. The former member for Estevan was undoubtedly an effective MLA and a fine

gentleman. We wish him well in the years ahead.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Now let me, Mr. Speaker, make a few comments on the remarks of the hon. member for Souris-Cannington. He outlined a very extensive speech. I said that some of it was worthy of a governor general's award for fiction. In the course of my remarks I will try to point out some of the more egregious errors.

Let us turn first to the matter of the constitution. I have a great deal more to say about that tomorrow. The amending formula which is criticized so vigorously by the member for Souris—Cannington is the same amending formula agreed to by every Progressive Conservative government in Canada in 1971 when it was included in the Victoria Charter, and also by every Social Credit government in Canada. It may well be that it is no longer appropriate, but it was certainly perceived at that time to be appropriate as in amending formula . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . A member opposite has suggested that we are not taking a stand on constitutional issues. We have taken a stand and it's a perfectly clear stand. I enunciated it in the House the other day. The member for Moosomin is only able to contemplate two possible positions. It is either black or it's white.

Mr. Speaker, our objective is to see whether or not we cannot get substantial changes in the resolution before the House of Commons and the Senate. If we are able to get substantial changes, we then will have done a great service to the people of Saskatchewan and a service which will not be done by any Conservative government in Canada.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The member opposite is suggesting that our position on the budget and the energy package is unclear. If he does not know of our objections to the energy package in the federal budget he has to be the only one in Saskatchewan who doesn't. I have stated it over and over again, and will state it again tomorrow so that it will be on the record for the people of Saskatchewan.

Let me touch on just a few of the more fanciful portions of the member's speech. One line says the Government of Alberta doesn't own many mineral resources. Not much — just in a proprietary sense the Crown owns 90 per cent of the oil and gas in Alberta and that represents 85 per cent of all the oil and gas in Canada. The Crown, as a straight owner, not in its capacity as a government but just as an owner, owns 75 to 80 per cent of the oil and gas in Canada. If that isn't an impressive ownership package then I don't know what is.

The member opposite suggests we have among the highest income taxes in Canada. That may be, if you make \$60,000 a year. But if you are a family man making \$20,000 a year, income taxes in Saskatchewan are not among the highest but among the lowest in Canada.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — He tells us that our loss of family farms is greater than any other province. The mover and the seconder put the proper figures on the record. I don't know on what basis he wants them. If he wants to know which province lost the



largest number of family farms, the answer is Conservative Ontario. If he wants to know which province lost the greatest percentage of farms, it is Conservative Manitoba. In neither case is it Saskatchewan.

He then went on to tell us what the Conservatives would do with respect to getting industry based upon agriculture. He said money would be provided for packing plants. But the member for Regina South never loses any opportunity to criticize this government (and particularly Sedco) which makes loans to packing plants.

They would provide money for chicken and poultry eviscerating plants. But the member for Regina South never loses any opportunity to criticize the fact that our government has provided financial assistance for poultry eviscerating plants.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — He is going to provide capital and tax incentives for these. But when we provide capital they say, “Of course you provide capital, but not through Sedco.” How is it to be done? Aren’t you going to do it through a corporation? If not, how would it differ from any other corporation of the like of Sedco?

We then have the news the Conservatives would establish Corn Flake and Shreddie factories. The noodle factory is there; the Corn Flake and Shreddie factories aren’t over there in Alberta, you know. If it is so easy to set up Corn Flake factories, why aren’t they in Alberta?

Members opposite are saying that oil exploration in this province is going down. the facts are quite different. I ask you to look at any comparison of the last three or four years. You will see that oil drilling activity is up, up significantly. It’s up not only in Lloydminster, in the heavy oil area, where about 700 wells were drilled last year (which I believe is a record), but also up in southeastern Saskatchewan, where you say there is no activity. The facts are that approximately 1,200 wells will be drilled this year in Saskatchewan (this is speaking from memory) and I say that is very nearly a record if it’s not a record.

The member opposite is suggesting that somehow we have a tight cash situation. Aside from Alberta, there is not a province in Canada which would not like to have our tight cash situation.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The wealthy province of Ontario, with a Conservative government back into eons of time, has not been able to balance its budget for years and years. This year they will have another deficit of about \$1 billion. In Manitoba it will probably be only \$200 million.

Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the hon. member’s speech because it was an interesting speech. He talked about economic development and compared us with Alberta on oil exploration and on economic development. Then he moved on to social programs and all comparison with Alberta ended. All comparison with Manitoba ended. He talked about medicare and said we were having difficulty. Whenever I hear the Conservatives talk about medicare my mind goes back to their proposals to scuttle medicare in 1962 . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — KOD.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The SOS was their particular one too; they had both of them. Some of the leaders of that movement are the very people who are the leaders of the Progressive Conservative Party today.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — If those leopards (oh, but you get the money from the same men and you know them) have changed their stripes, I would be mightily surprised.

I talk about the dental plan. We all know how the school dental plan works. We all know it has been attacked root and branch by members opposite, as being too costly and wasteful and leave it to the private dentists. We know that the dental nurses in the schools spend a lot of their time in preventive health. We know they spend a lot of their time teaching the children how to look after their teeth and how to look after their mouths. Now, members opposite come in here and attack that program root and branch, as I say, and then the leader stands up and says we should be spending more money on preventive health.

We then move on to a consideration of the family and divorce. Once again, no comparisons with Alberta. They stop right there, as well they might. Our divorce rate is significantly lower than both Manitoba's and Alberta's. It may well be that the nostrums urged upon us by members opposite, which they bring from Alberta, are good. But they don't seem to do very well in matters which will protect the family. They have not done the job there. And look, if you dare, at the rates for divorce and the rates for alcoholism and the rates for family breakdown in Alberta and you'll find them far higher than in Saskatchewan.

I move on to transition houses, community services, and the like, and I say while much needs to be done, our services in Saskatchewan are second to none. I say with respect to parenting, and education by parenting, it may not be what we would like but our services again are second to none. When I hear members opposite laud what happens in Alberta and laud what happens in Manitoba and then turn to education of Indian and Metis children, I say look at what happens in those provinces, look at what happens in Saskatchewan. We are a long way ahead of what they are doing. We are a long way ahead of the Tories.

And then I heard him talk about labor. I hope every working man in this province, and in particular every unionized working man, heard what he said about labor because he said, "We've been having a lot of trouble since 1971, and wouldn't it be better to go back to the conditions like they were before 1971 when things were so good for working people? So we did have Bill 2; we had compulsory arbitration and a few little things like that but it certainly cut down the strikes," and that's what members opposite are advocating. Let's go back to the pre-1971 days, when as they say, things were so good. Well they may have been good for the bosses whom they represent, but they were not good for working people of this province. I tell you working people in this province know it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I have an opportunity to comment on some other

aspects of the speech of the hon. member tomorrow, but let me touch on just one point. He seems obsessed with the idea that young people are leaving this province. Of course young people are leaving this province and every other province in Canada. And young people are entering this province and every other province in Canada. But a few figures might indicate in just what numbers they are leaving. In 1973, according to the figures I have here, we had a population of 904,000 people. Today it is 970,000 — 66,000 more people in seven years. In 1973 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I don't want to overstate my case because I'm a very careful and moderate person, and I wouldn't want to overstate the facts. In 1973 there were 343,000 people employed. Today there are 428,000 — 85,000 more jobs for 66,000 more people. Now I don't know where all these young people are going when leaving this province to look for jobs, but I can say an awful lot of them must be coming in from somewhere else because we've 85,000 jobs to spread among 66,000 people. No one I think can deny those figures . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Please look at the StatsCan figures. Please do.

I know that people move around. People like myself who may not have liked the salt spray of Nova Scotia have come to this province; people like the member for Regina South might not have liked the smell of pulp in Fort Francis and may have come to this province. Certainly people move around, but a good number of people come to this province as well as leave this province. You do a disservice to the people of Saskatchewan to suggest that somehow people are only leaving this province. In fact, they are coming in, and they are coming in very large numbers, as the increase in population will indicate.

I want to make one brief comment that I've made in earlier addresses. Our government (as members opposite will know, or at least some of them) was elected in 1971, returned to office in 1975 and had intended to have an election in 1979. We didn't have one in 1979 because there was going to be a federal election as we believed, and we had one in 1978. The results were, by and large, gratifying. But I want to say again that it is our current intention to have another election four years from 1979 — in 1983. If members opposite object to that, I would invite them to object now and not in 1982 and say, "We should have an election; we should have an election." This is not a commitment. No premier can give a commitment . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I can imagine why some members opposite wish the election were in '83 or '84 or just any date in the future. I can understand that the prospect of an early election strikes fear in their hearts. But I'm stating what I stated in earlier throne speech debates — the current intention of the government.

Let me now, Mr. Speaker, make a few comments on my home constituency before I ask leave to adjourn the debate. I've represented the city of Regina in the legislature for 20 years. I remember the first four years. They were good years. In 1964 the SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) building was built and the Sask Tel Building was built; we had started Wascana Centre. Those were good times for Regina. I point to the fact that the hon. member for Souris-Cannington has mentioned some needs in the city of Regina. I remember the years between 1964 and 1971 when the private enterprise philosophy advocated by members opposite had full sway. We saw the full opportunity of private enterprise to bring instant prosperity to Regina. By 1971, Regina was the boarded-up capital of Canada. Its main streets were lined with businesses which were boarded up — boarded up because of private enterprise, boarded up because of the freedom advocated by members opposite: the freedom to go bankrupt, the freedom to put your staff out of work, the freedom to lose your life savings.

I look at what happened in Regina since 1971. We have a new City Hall. We have a new

police station, new sewage facilities, new buses and new ring roads — all done by the citizens of Regina and all done with government help. In recreation we have the AgriDome and the Lawson Pool and Douglas Park and a good number of community rinks, and Taylor Field, which I believe may well have saved the Roughriders this year — all done by the citizens of Regina and all done with government help.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — I suppose you're going to tell us it's named after the former minister of social services.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — No. Taylor Field, I believe was named after one Tipples Taylor who was a hotel owner in this city some years ago.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Is he related to Sam?

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Sam's dad. Sam's dad used to own the Drake. You've got it right.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — I didn't think you were that much older than me.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — I've just been in Regina a lot longer.

In manufacturing and distribution, we've seen major expansions at Ipsco (Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation); another huge expansion is underway. We've seen a big expansion at the co-op refinery. I've been at three openings of Northern Telecom plants. I've been at openings of big warehouses: John Deere, Sears, Federated Co-ops. In many cases, these warehouses served the entire West. Regina is becoming, in a sense, a distribution centre for the prairie West. I see hundreds of units of senior citizens' housing, new senior citizens' activity centres, a massive project to rebuild the Regina General Hospital and the Pasqua Hospital. Steps have been taken to preserve our heritage. The Territorial Building on Dewdney Avenue is restored. The Government House on Dewdney West will soon be open to the public. All of these represent solid progress in the last nine years in the city of Regina.

I look at something which we all know about now, Canadian Western Agribition. The first show of Canadian Western Agribition was in 1971, just after I became Premier. It has grown from a tiny, tiny show to a huge show, one of the big ones in the world — 30 breed associations, 1,200 breeders, 5,000 animals, prize money of \$100,000. I'm proud of what Agribition has done and I'm proud of our contribution to make Agribition one of the greatest farm shows in the world.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The men who built this were men of vision and they included the father of the member for Thunder Creek, the late Ross Thatcher. A great job has been done and its economic effects on Regina have been very, very significant.

Downtown Regina is undergoing a transformation. Cornwall Centre is a major urban development which will ensure, I believe, the continued economic viability of the core of Regina, and the government is involved in that. That development means a good bit, not only for the member for the Regina Centre, in whose constituency it's located, but also the citizens of surrounding constituencies like Regina Elphinstone, because many, many jobs for my constituents will be bound to be found in the Cornwall Centre area, convenient to them, able to go to work without having a car.

I am very proud of the strong community spirit which I see every day in my constituency. I have operating in my constituency organizations like the North Central Community Society, Regina Native Awareness and many others, and they do a first-class job in mobilizing the citizens of Elphinstone to take full advantage of government programs and to take full advantage of working together to make their life better.

I was proud, for example, to see them get together and arrange for the construction of Dewdney Park, and a swimming pool which they did by and large by their own efforts. They organized local citizens to go in and fix the pool and get it going again. This is the sort of spirit which you see very frequently in rural Saskatchewan, but see too infrequently in urban Saskatchewan, and I'm proud I saw it in Elphinstone.

These things were done in that constituency and other constituencies of Regina, because the provincial government is making significant grants to the city of Regina. When we came to office the grants from the provincial government to Regina were \$900,000. This year they will be not \$900,000, but \$18 million — \$18 million, a two thousand per cent increase. I know that members opposite will call that provincial government interference. I know they will say we're intruding in the lives of my constituents. But I tell you, the people of Regina welcome that kind of interference. They welcome those kinds of dollars working for them. Much of that money was provided with no strings attached. It was for cultural, recreational facilities; all was for betterment of life in the city of Regina.

And what I say about Regina we can say about almost every other centre in Saskatchewan. I am giving you the figures for my constituency, as you will give them for yours, but I say there's nothing distinctive about Regina. Other constituencies have got similar benefits. In some cases greater benefits. We're proud of what we have been able to do to support local government and local organizations in providing facilities for a better life for all of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a good deal more about the address of the hon. member for Souris-Cannington. In order to do that, I will beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:47 p.m.