

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
MAY 19, 1981**

EVENING SESSION

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 119 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (continued)

MR. ANDREW: — Prior to 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I was trying to draw an analogy between what we are talking about in this particular debate and what we are talking about in the constitution, namely the whole question of the process by which we are determining what pay or what benefits will be paid to the members. This has happened two years out of three since I have been here. We are prepared to wait until exactly the last moment to bicker back and forth as to how much money we are going to have. We are going to bring it in exactly at the last moment and have some kind of deal that says you shouldn't speak about it or you shouldn't question this or that.

Mr. Speaker, I say the whole question of the process which we have to look at is that exact problem. I suggest that we are doing no service to ourselves, as members, and to the institution, by standing up and proposing this way of setting our own fees. I think the people are clearly cynical and should be. I think it is fair to be cynical. What I see in this particular bill is this: with the committee of internal economy, perhaps this should be the last year this happens in this Assembly. I think that is a positive sign. I think it is something to look forward to. I suppose time will tell if, in fact, that is true.

I suppose, when one really comes down to it, this particular bill has many parts which are very good. In fact, as a personal member (not speaking on behalf of caucus) I think I could support the entire package were it not for the per diem question. I think the per diem question is wrong. Those people who live in Regina and do not have to keep two homes, (and that's really what we are talking about, the requirement of keeping two homes) should not be entitled to that extra \$25 or \$30, for board and room or hotel room, whatever it is. I don't know what it is. I think, if you look down, you are talking about \$1,600 or \$1,700 or \$1,800 of tax-free money. I think it's wrong. I think the members of the Assembly should look at that and appreciate its shortcomings.

We are not really handling the discrepancies which exist today between one member or the next member. I take the situation of the Attorney General, who, I assume, keeps a house in Saskatoon and probably keeps some accommodation in Regina. I see this bill as not affecting that. Yet, some other member could live solely in Regina with no other accommodation and he will get the entire benefits. I think that is wrong; I think that is inappropriate of this legislature. I would simply say to the members opposite, if you pull that per diem thing, you would have my support on that whole package.

The question of the assistance to members, I suppose, is a very difficult one to handle. Some people obviously see that as a pretty expensive cost at a time of high inflation and high interest rates to vote to ourselves. I think the total will come to between \$350,000 to \$400,000 for that particular package.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What! What a bunch of hogwash.

MR. ANDREW: — Well, if the member for Regina Rosemont wants to look at the figures, that is, in fact, what they are. I look at that particular type of thing and say, should we

have that in these inflationary times? I think that is a question we have to look at. Many things that came from the rules committee were adopted; some were not adopted. These people obviously do not look at that. I think that there is some merit to looking at the entire question of research and that of where members stand vis-à-vis this or that. I don't think this does it. I don't think the process is very good on it.

Now I hear the Attorney General talking on the radio that we are going to bring in an opting-out formula. That's fine, if he wants to bring in an opting-out formula. I think that's a poor way to go, quite frankly. He can bring it in, but as far as I'm concerned the opting-out thing doesn't matter to me one lick. The thing I would question, though, is this: where we are going to go once we bring in opting-out legislation on this particular thing? Where else do we go with opting-out legislation? I think, surely, if you say to the members opposite (and I think that's basically what you are saying to our people) if you are going to vote one way then you can't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If you are going to say that you can't opt out, if you are going to vote this particular way . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Principles, nothing.

I simply say this to the Attorney General: if you want to bring in the opting-out formula, it's fine with me. I oppose the per diem. I have no strong views one way or the other with regard to the superannuation question. Quite frankly, it doesn't matter to me. With regard to the secretaries or office secretaries, it doesn't really matter to me one way or the other, either. I think the per diem is wrong. But I also think the principle of opting out is wrong, because if opting out applies, you are basically saying that you can't vote this way, you shouldn't vote this way or if you do, you are going to vote yourself out of money. And that's fine.

If that's acceptable, then let's apply that rule to a lot of other situations. Let's apply that rule so that if you bring in a program and I'm against it, then I have the right to opt out of that program as well. If you have that right (if you are going to talk that way) then let's say to the teachers of this province that I want to opt out of my particular pension plan. Okay. If you want to talk about the teachers, I'm not opposed to that type of thing. I say to the Attorney General, I welcome him to bring in the opting out, and I'll show you whether or not we can opt out of it, Mr. Member for Regina Rosemont. And that's exactly what we're going to do. You bring in the proposal with regard to opting out of the superannuation, I could care less one way or the other. But I talked . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Opt out.

MR. ANDREW: — Okay. I will, and I welcome the Attorney General to bring that type of legislation in.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I'm opting in. You opt out.

MR. ANDREW: — Okay, go ahead. All I simply say to the Attorney General is if you want opting out on the superannuation, then bring it in. Quite frankly, I don't think it's the way to go. If you do bring it in, Mr. Attorney General, it doesn't matter to me. I will opt out, if that's the way you feel and if you feel that's the way to go. I'll make this particular commitment to the member for Regina Rosemont: you bring in the opting-out formula with regard to superannuation, and I, for one, will opt out on it. If you say, it's a question of your principles, then that's exactly what I will do.

With regard to the bill though, Mr. Speaker, I must say that you look at that bill any way you want. All I simply say is that, as members of the Assembly, you can hoot and howl

all you want.

I wonder how many people on that side of the Assembly are proud of the way we go about setting our own fee schedule — whether it was back in 1979, or this year. Maybe it's not a fee schedule; maybe it's something else. How many are proud of the fact that we're going to do it at the last minute of the session? How many people are proud that we are prepared to look after ourselves in the dying moments of a given session? How many people are proud of the fact that we try to negotiate a deal that says, "Hey, you only speak quietly about this", or "You only raise a couple of speakers"? That's really what the question is. How many people are proud of that? How many people in this Assembly are proud to stand up and tell the people, "Well, we don't think you should really know that. We're going to slide it by the people out there"? That's really what the question is, Mr. Speaker; that is exactly what we are talking about.

We talk about cynicism; we talk about the people out there being cynical in the way they look at us. I think they have a right to, and that's clearly a principle that we have to look at. All I say, Mr. Speaker, is that I hope this is the last time we have to face this. I hope this is the last time we address that type of question. I hope that in the future we are not caught with that same type of situation.

I take it we are going to have a very lively debate tonight, Mr. Speaker. From the reaction of the people over there, I am sure a lot of people want to get up and speak. When they do get up to speak, I want them to answer this very simple question. Do you think it's proper, when we are going to set either our salaries or some extra benefits to ourselves, that we should do it as quietly as possible; that we should do it at the end of the session; that we shouldn't do it up front; that we shouldn't allow it to come earlier in the session to show what that bill is going to be? I want you people to stand up and address yourselves to that question.

I say to the members opposite, I'm sure there are lots of other people in the same position that I am in. I come in to this Assembly and, quite frankly, this business costs me a lot of money as compared to what I used to make. I suppose everyone could say, "Well, I should have more money here or I should have more money there, to bring it up to where it was before." Quite frankly, you feel that way lots of times. I very often think the members of the Assembly and politicians are underpaid; I think we should be up front with that particular thing. But I suppose you have to ask yourself how many other people in this province could ask the question, "Should I have more money? Am I worth more money than I am being paid now?" And that's exactly the type of question we have to look at.

I have no qualms about the fact that I think the members of the legislature are underpaid. I have always stood by that and I have always stated that position.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What are you going to do about it?

MR. ANDREW: — I don't have any choice in what I do about it. I do exactly what you people advance to us.

All I say to the members opposite is that I am not talking about the dollars and cents increase. What I am talking about is the process. I challenge the people over there, when they stand up, to stand up and defend the process that we're acting under now, to stand up and defend that process as being the way to pay the package.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, all I'm basically saying is this: I propose to vote against, first, the amendment to the superannuation. I'm prepared to opt out of that, if you wish to bring in that type of legislation. I'm going to vote against the per diem because I think the per diem part of the package is wrong. I support, basically, the entire package and particularly the committee of internal economy because I think that is right and that's the right direction . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member for Regina Rosemont would seem to suggest that you can't support one part of the bill and not support another part of the bill.

I support the committee of internal economy. I do not support the per diem. I do not support the superannuation increase. I don't think that's the way to go. It doesn't cost any money to bring in the committee of internal economy. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that is the way I am going to vote on this particular package. I ask you to bring in anything you want with regard to opting out and I would simply opt out on that.

MR. ALLEN: — Mr. Speaker, I am going to keep my remarks very brief because I see the Attorney General and the Provincial Secretary giving me the evil eye. However, I don't think you can let the kind of hypocrisy which we heard from the member opposite go unchallenged.

Mr. Speaker, I recall scarcely one week ago sitting in this House during the Premier's estimates. The member for Kindersley questioned the Premier as to when the provisions of this bill were going to be brought into this House. He demanded that the Premier bring in these provisions. And, now he gets up and complains that they have been brought in, that there has been no consultation, that we've rushed the bill. He seems to intimate that there is something in this bill which benefits individual members of this legislature and I would like to know where that is.

He talks about voting increases in the last days of the session to members of the legislature. Where are the increases for members in this bill? There aren't any and what's more, he knows there aren't any. The only provisions in this bill which affect members whatsoever financially — and not directly at all — are provisions for staff. What does that provide? One puny position for a half-time secretary. I'm appalled. I'm appalled at the bill. I'm appalled that we're worthy of one lousy position for a half-time secretary. He knows, as I know, as we travelled around this country on the rules committee, that the members of this legislature get darn little to serve their constituency in comparison to other members in this country. Darn little!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ALLEN: — We had \$500 before. I ask the member for Kindersley: what does it cost to rent an office in the town of Kindersley? Can you get one for \$25 per month? Not likely. It's costing you pretty close to \$500 per month just for the office in the town of Kindersley. In Beechy, Saskatchewan, I understand they're \$425 and Beechy isn't that big a town. So, what is he talking about? This tremendous extra increase is for the position of half a secretary so we may serve our constituents better.

Mr. Speaker, I have consistently argued that members of this legislature should never see that money. We should have an office provided; we should be able to hire a secretary who would be paid directly out of the Department of Finance and receive the benefits which other secretaries in the public service receive. That's my argument. This isn't enough — and he say that it's too much, that we're padding our own pockets. Well, I don't know what the members opposite are doing with their \$500. I don't know

what you're going to do with the \$700. I have no idea. But, I know for a fact that I'm not going to be padding my pocket with the extra money.

Now, there are a couple of other points I want to make before I sit down, Mr. Speaker. I travelled with a number of the members opposite across the country. We worked, I believe, very hard to come up with the report of the rules committee. We have encouraged the government to act on the committee report. The member for Kindersley demanded that the Premier act on the report. This bill, Mr. Speaker, is the result of that work. This bill is the result of that commitment demanded of the Premier on behalf of the government scarcely a week ago. I believe that every member of the House, in clear conscience, should be supporting this bill as they did a week ago when they asked it to be introduced.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the discussions as brought forward by the member for Kindersley and the questions he asked. I noted, for example, when he spoke of the per diems, he talked about tax-free money. The member should check the forms which he filled out for his income tax. He will find out it isn't tax free. If he claimed it as such, he has a rude awakening coming in three or four weeks, or whenever his taxes arrive back from the federal government.

The member spoke for some time about the opt-out provision and how it was not a good idea. In many ways I agree with the member. It was brought forward at the request, if not all, of some members opposite — nothing more nor less than that with respect to the opt-out provision. He asked whether or not he thought it proper for a member to be setting salaries or benefits. That has always been the task, whether good or bad, of members of legislative assemblies and members of the House of Commons. I would think that the people of Canada and Saskatchewan would, with some reservation, basically concur that the members have not done either a great job or a bad job but an average job in dealing with a rather difficult area. It is difficult to know who could have done the operation much better than it has been done in the past, and, I suspect, it will be done by members in the future in various legislatures from various political parties.

I think the area I had the most difficulty with, in listening to the member for Kindersley, was his argument about this being a sort of last minute bill sprung on the people of the country and one on which there was not a lot of debate and discussion.

I think with respect to this particular bill (Bill 119, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act amendments), if I am not mistaken (and I haven't counted them), I have seven drafts of this bill. The seven drafts deal with various combinations and permutations that have been around, as a result of discussions with members opposite, and quite frankly with members in our own caucus as well. That is the one that surfaced.

The member says he hopes that the board of internal economy will somehow solve these problems. All I can say to the member opposite is that the issues, the problems and the concerns of the members of the board of internal economy will be exactly the same. Those issues, problems and concerns are: what are the circumstances the members of the Legislative Assembly face today? What are the changes that need to be made, should be made, or are desirable? Which ones will, when they hit the Assembly, have some semblance of support or of opposition? Which ones are good and which need to be changed? On which ones do members on this side of the House differ with members on this side? The debate and discussion in the board of internal economy will be exactly the same as the debate and discussion that led up to the introduction of this bill some time ago.

It doesn't matter what forum one puts those discussions in. They are going to be, in my mind, the same sort of discussion, and they will from time to time have the same sort of results as we've seen in the House this afternoon and last Friday. Whether those are desirable or undesirable, I suppose, depends on the members' point of view. They are facts of life. They won't change by having a board of internal economy, nor by changing some of the individuals in this House, whether it's on our side or your side. They were the same from 1964 to 1971. There were different actors, different parties, different sides of the House, different issues, but the same discussion. I suspect (and I don't know because I wasn't involved) that they were the same prior to 1964.

I look at the remuneration for MLAs, cabinet minister, speakers, deputy speakers, House leaders; you pick whatever category you want. I'm sure one could make arguments that particular segments or, indeed, the whole group, is either overpaid or underpaid. Certainly members are free and able to do that. One can argue (as I did when I was talking about the allowance in this bill for chairmen of public accounts committee and the Crown corporations committee, the deputy chairmen of committees, the House Leader of the opposition, the deputy whips and the whips) that it was difficult to relate one to the other. We had to make some adjustments to try to come up with what we thought (or I thought; I don't care, put the blame on me) was a reasonable or a rational relationship. Certainly there is nothing magic about it. In the end it is purely and simply arbitrary as to whether the deputy chairman of committees is worth as much as the opposition House Leader who, in turn, is worth as much as the chairman of the Crown corporations committee who, in turn, is worth as much as the deputy whip on either side of the house. It's all very arbitrary.

When the member for Kindersley speaks with respect to per diems for members resident or not resident in Regina, I frankly admit that it's purely arbitrary. We have some members resident in Regina with seats outside of Regina who maintain a second residence in their ridings. Some don't. Where you draw the line, I frankly and freely admit, is purely arbitrary. There is no rationale from the best debater you could find on either side, or both sides of the House thrown in together, that would work out so that someone couldn't take a shot at it, or mount an argument and say that it's not a particularly good point of view because here is something that is not quite fair. So, I admit it is arbitrary. But nevertheless these decisions have to be made.

Most of the decisions in this bill (the great majority of them), monetary and non-monetary, arise from the report of the special committee on rules in which members on both sides of the House took part. The exceptions are some rules with respect to the per diems and (I guess the major one) the secretarial expenses which are allowed for MLAs equal to a half-time clerk-steno.

I, for my part, find my constituency office very valuable. I do have my constituency office staffed three days a week, if I'm not mistaken, by a person who is paid by my constituency association. Now, I will have my MLA office staffed and, if this bill passes, paid for out of the Legislative Assembly and the person identified. I have no problems with that. That's how it will run.

I don't think that the particular bill before us does much in the way of adding to the remuneration for individual MLAs, or for MLAs collectively. The basic thing it does is deal with one-half dozen committee chairmen, or the equivalents thereof, and provides for part-time secretarial or other staff services to all MLAs of the legislature on an equal basis. And, therefore, Mr. Chairman, I will be supporting the second reading of this

particular bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole later this day.

YEAS — 28

Blakeney	Pepper	Allen
Kaeding	Romanow	Smishek
Tchorzewski	Baker	Skoberg
McArthur	Rolfes	MacMurchy
Mostoway	Vickar	Hammersmith
MacAuley	Engel	Byers
Cowley	Cody	Matsalla
Poniatowski	Johnson	Long
Nelson	White	Chapman
Miner		

NAYS — 13

Berntson	Thatcher	Birkbeck
Duncan	Lane	Taylor
Rousseau	Swan	Hardy
Pickering	Muirhead	Andrew
McLeod		

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 116 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, with great pleasure, I move third reading of the bill.

MR. THATCHER: — Yeah, I imagine there are a few groans over there. I'm sure there will be a few more after I'm done. The Attorney General had sort of a bad week, and he has had a bad day.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Somebody else had a bad weekend, I hear.

MR. THATCHER: — Brilliant shot from the Minister of Health. That sort of typifies the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I wonder if we could have order from the member for Qu'Appelle. Order, order! I wonder if the member for Thunder Creek could direct his remarks to the bill before us. That would no doubt expedite the debate to take place this evening.

MR. THATCHER: — I think that is a fair comment, Mr. Speaker. When you hear such ignorance expressed in this Assembly from a government member, and a supposedly respected cabinet minister, you will pardon me if I succumb to the temptation to respond . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I hear a lot of ignorance expressed in this Chamber from time to time on both sides of the House. I am asking the member for Thunder Creek to speak to the bill which is before us. It is Bill 116; he has not said one word about that bill yet.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, as we look back in this session of the legislature which started last November, I think it is a fair comment and I think it is reasonable to look at our accomplishments, at what we have done for various sectors in the province, for the economy and for the people of Saskatchewan. I would respectfully suggest to members of the Assembly that this has really not been a barn burner as far as the accomplishments of this legislature are concerned. I would suggest to members in this Assembly that, in many respects, we are facing problems which have not been faced in a good 30 years — weather, economy and interest rates. The list goes on and on.

If you look at the issues we have dealt with in this Assembly, they are not very momentous. What have we done for anybody? Have we helped out the old-age pensioners on a fixed income? I don't really see it. Have we done anything for the consumers in this province? Well, we have raised the price of gas and we have put on a heavy sales tax on gasoline. Have we done anything at all to help somebody who must buy something in this province? I really doubt it. Have we done anything to help these first-time home-owners or home-owners period? Have we helped them to buy a home? Have we done anything to make their monthly payments.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! Perhaps I'm on the wrong bill. The relevancy of what the member is saying has to do with an appropriation bill. What the member must state has to deal with Bill 116, which is the superannuation act. I wonder if the member can relate his remarks to that. I have not been able to establish a relationship between what he has been saying to the bill which is before us. I would ask the member to hasten to get to the principle of this particular bill.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, I fully intend to do that. I think my remarks will become very relevant. I'm going to relate them in my normal fashion, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect. I'll do it in accordance with the style of the Assembly. You may interject all you want, but you are not going to provoke me into something. I am simply going to relate to this particular bill and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I will ask the member for Thunder Creek to relate his remarks to the bill, not to provocation of the Chair, discussing some other debate or something that's irrelevant to the bill that's before us. He must relate his remarks to the bill that's before us, which is third reading of An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979. I have heard nothing yet that I can relate to this bill that's before us. I'll caution the member once again.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, having gone through some of the non-accomplishments of this Assembly, that brings us very dramatically to the bill which is before us. We, on this side of the Assembly, with the sort of session that we have had and our lack of performance in so many areas, cannot possibly support this bill.

I ask you, as fellow legislators, if maybe it isn't time that we took a look at ourselves. Here we are, dealing with a superannuation package that does not have to go in this particular session. That's not to say that the day will not come when it should be dealt with. It may very well have some relevance. But I suggest to members of this Assembly that that time is not 1981 and it is not May 19. I suggest that to you in all sincerity.

Mr. Speaker, in all conscience, when we see the problems that are in the province today (and in Canada — maybe all over the world), where we have (as has been talked about in question period and in committee) people on fixed incomes being destroyed by interest rates and you look at the sort of legislation that we have dealt with in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this is the inappropriate time to deal with something like MLAs' superannuation.

I think in all clear conscience we, on this side of the House, have no alternative but to oppose it with whatever means we have at our disposal. Mr. Speaker, how can we, as legislators, change the superannuation package when there are people in Regina and Saskatoon (old-age pensioners, senior citizens) having to subsist on pet food? And that is a documented thing in the newspapers. How can you possibly change your superannuation package when, in so many respects, the economy is falling down around our ears and the government in Ottawa appears to be either unwilling or unable to do anything about it or even make much of an attempt? Acknowledging, of course, that what we can do in this Assembly may very well be limited, nonetheless, are we not obligated to make some sort of effort? Is changing the superannuation package for 61 MLAs the best we can do? Is that the crucial legislation? Is it crucial to change it so that a retired MLA, who may be drawing his pension and has received a call from heaven to chair a board or a commission, should receive full pension benefits? Is that what we are here for? Is that what we have been here for since last November? Is that the best we can do? If that is the best that we can do, then maybe it's time the people of Saskatchewan tossed us all out. If that is our sole contribution, then maybe it is time we all took a look at ourselves; more importantly, maybe it's time the people of Saskatchewan took a look at all of us.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member for Thunder Creek is getting along very well and is in order. I want him to be able to proceed when he is in order. So, if the rest of you will be quiet, we can let the member for Thunder Creek go on in order.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, I think what is most objectionable to me, personally, about this legislation (and I'm saying nothing that I haven't said at varying time when similar legislation has been introduced) is the way that it is handled by the government and by the House Leader over there. I am so fed up with the degradation that we have to go through in this Assembly, when there is something like this coming down. Never once have I seen the House Leader introduce this legislation in the first couple of weeks, or the first month or the first couple of months. Every time something like this comes down, it is when we are closing down and we are rushing to wind down the committees, the Crown corporations and the committee of finance and get through the bills. Every single time something like this comes, it is introduced either the last day or the next to last day and the wheeling and the dealing goes on — the wheeling and

dealing. Listen! This or that — no fuss, no muss. You let it go through all in one day.

I remember (to a great deal of disgust) a couple of years ago an MLAs' pay package (and that was the worst time I've had as an MLA) being introduced into this Assembly at 11:45 p.m. and receiving first, second and third readings between then and 12:45 a.m. What I find so abhorrent about this legislation (not so much what it does) is the usual timing. You sneak it in at the end, hoping that you are going to sneak it by the press and that it won't receive very much debate. You tie it to something else. That is the part to which I object.

Just once I would like to see the Attorney General (the House Leader of the government on that side) bring something like this in at the start of the session. Make it front and centre. Bring it in before the budget. Let it be debated properly. Let the people of Saskatchewan know what we are doing and that we can have something intelligent — front and centre and there's none of this backdoor approach. I think that is the most abhorrent thing I find about this bill.

I would like to make a comment and tie it into this bill for the benefit of the government across the way. I think you should pull this superannuation bill. I think you should drop it. It may very well be an excellent piece of legislation to be used after the next election. In fact, we are into a situation now where I think we could see a precedent which may be an excellent one for whatever legislatures may follow us. Now is the time that we should be setting the salaries, the indemnities and whatever benefits for MLAs after the next election. Here is the ideal time that we can do this front and centre. We can say, "All right, this doesn't affect us, but after the next election the salary for an MLA is going to be X number of dollars. His expense account is going to be Y number of dollars." And you can lay that package out right now. And we can probably pass it unanimously because we aren't partisan to it right now. We are not directly affected.

Before we were affected we would have to face nominating conventions. If we were successful there, then we would have to face general elections. Anyway, those who were going for nomination in any party would know exactly what they were walking into. They would know what their pension package and their per day package were. They would know everything front and centre. And it would have been established on a non-partisan basis. It would be a fair ball game for everyone. You would come in there and the salary would be set for four years. Build in whatever packages you want. I think the public would accept that. But instead, what are we doing? We are doing the same old disgusting, degrading procedure of bringing it in on the last day, trying to sneak it by the public and the press. And what is even more abhorrent at this point in time is that every other section of the economy is suffering.

I ask the Attorney General, who has had quite a bit to say tonight from his chair, to reflect on what we have done for anyone. What exactly have we done for anyone? I watched the government. This afternoon they could have done one small thing for some children in this province. They couldn't even do that. We've done nothing for senior citizens and virtually nothing for farmers. We haven't done anything for consumers. We haven't done anything for anybody. But tonight we are doing quite a bit for MLAs and former MLAs. Mr. Speaker, let me say categorically, so no one makes any mistakes, there was never anybody elected to this Assembly that didn't want to be. Anybody who ever got into this place and got to sit down here wasn't here because somebody held a gun to his head or because they said you have to go or because they said it's your duty to go. He was here because he wanted to be here. And chances are he fought for a nomination. Chances are he fought a tough fight in a general election. And

he did it because he wanted it. He didn't do it because he had to or because he was forced to. Frankly, I never have subscribed to the theory of the marvellous 10 or 30 years or 30 years of service. You did it because you wanted to do it, just like other people do other things because they want to do them.

Mr. Speaker, I consider this bill to be an indictment of the Assembly. I consider this bill to be ill-advised at this point in time. When I say it's an indictment of the Assembly, I do not believe, at this point in time, it is appropriate for us to be looking at this sort of legislation. As I indicated here in this Assembly last Friday, I believe very strongly that we better look after the people who we were sent down here to look after first and look after the MLAs secondly. I will be voting against the bill.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, in closing the debate on this bill . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. There is a slight matter of order here. The member for Biggar moved third reading of the bill. He has therefore spoken to it. He can conclude at the end but he can't speak now. If he is speaking now I will give the warning.

MR. MOSTOWAY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to be very brief and the form of what I am going to say would probably be best expressed as a question just prior to my sitting down.

I listened to the member for Thunder Creek and . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — It was good.

MR. MOSTOWAY: — Yes, there were some good points there but somehow I don't think it's appropriate that those words which we heard should have come from the hon. member for Thunder Creek. I could accept those words coming from any number of members opposite, but somehow, it galls me to have to listen to that.

I do want to go on record as more or less asking, if the hon. member for Thunder Creek was the only Conservative member who did not ask for a tax credit for political donations similar to the scheme which the federal government has. I know and all members in this House know, that they asked for that. I want to know where the hon. member for Thunder Creek stands in regard to that request. He made no mention of it when he was speaking and was making it look as if he would be the last member in this House to take advantage of anything which might be offered. I want to go on record as saying that there are members here who are wondering if he is the only one who said no to the provincial tax credit scheme which the Tories requested, even demanded of the House Leader a few days ago.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have a few words to say. I listened with interest when the member for Thunder Creek spoke of those MLAs who got their call from heaven needing this bill. I don't know about the members on his side of the House, but certainly any members on our side of the House who have had a call from heaven aren't going to make any use of this bill.

The bill does not, for the most part, deal in any substantive way with members of the current Legislative Assembly. Basically what the bill does in monetary terms is deal with present or existing members who are already superannuates and provides supplementation to their existing allowances. I listed to the exposition of the member for Thunder Creek of the terms of the bill. I know it is difficult for him to deal with this (in his kind of split personality) because if I'm not mistaken there is only one former

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Conservative who is receiving a members of the Legislative Assembly pension. No I guess there are two — the former member for Estevan, I believe is a superannuate as well, and the other one would be Martin Pederson.

I don't mean to say anything about those two, but there are numerous Liberals who are former members of the Assembly and receive pensions, and obviously numerous members of the CCF and New Democratic Party as well. Those are the people who we are dealing with or their spouses, as the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg reminds me. It's not the 61 MLAs sitting here; it's those members. And I guess that's why I find it so difficult to accept the arguments I have heard in the past two days of the sitting of this House from three or four of the members opposite, the member for Thunder Creek being only one. It seems to me they have put their arguments as something which this group of MLAs are "doing for themselves," when, in reality, what this bill deals with (for the most part, if not totally, in a monetary sense) is people who have, in most cases, long since ceased to be MLAs.

As I said on Friday, I make no apologies for moving this bill. I'll be more than happy, in my riding and throughout the province, to defend the terms of it. I think it's a reasonable and a rational approach to it. I'm even prepared, four or five years hence, if called upon by the Premier, to introduce a similar bill again. He may choose to call on some other member of the Executive Council, but at least I rest easy knowing he'll have the job of calling on someone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division and bill read a third time.

YEAS — 26

Blakeney	Pepper	Allen
Kaeding	Romanow	Smishek
Tchorzewski	Baker	Skoberg
McArthur	Gross	Rolfes
MacMurchy	Mostoway	Vickar
Engel	Byers	Cowley
Cody	Matsalla	Poniatowski
Johnson	Long	Nelson
Chapman	Miner	

NAYS — 13

Berntson	Thatcher	Birkbeck
Duncan	Lane	Taylor
Rousseau	Swan	Hardy
Pickering	Muirhead	Andrew
McLeod		

Bill No. 95 — An Act respecting the Stabilization of Returns to Beef Producers in Saskatchewan

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 95 be now read a third time.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to read verbatim a telegram from the president of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association. He asked that this be read into the record in the Assembly. This is from the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association and the 6,000 members they represent with their affiliated membership.

To the Hon. Gordon MacMurchy: Please read in the House. The Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association is not in favor of the proposed beef stabilization program. It is completely unworkable in any practical or beneficial way for beef producers. Al Cochrane, president.

Mr. Speaker, that basically sums up the position of the beef industry. I don't know what else we can say. I don't know what the industry has to do to show you that they don't want this, that they don't trust your government and that they are extremely apprehensive of you. I believe it is a fair comment to say that most people can accept the idea of a voluntary marketing board. If a group of producers want to set up a voluntary marketing board, that is their right. I guess it comes down to a question of credibility. Your credibility with livestock people is very low. In fact, I suppose it's very close to zero. If they could believe that you would leave it as a voluntary program, there would be no objections. Regrettably, the industry is all too familiar with what your tactics and your mode of procedure will be in the future — voluntary today (get a foot or ankle in the door), and compulsory in the near future. That is what the industry finds so abhorrent about you — the compulsion. Compulsory this and compulsory that. And they know very well that you will treat them in the same fashion that you treated the hog producers. You'll set up a cattle marketing board and have a government commission (not a producer-elected marketing board but a government marketing board) and the results will probably be as disastrous to the overall beef cattle industry as it has been to the hog industry.

Your track record in the hog industry is there for everyone to see. The stats are self-evident. Production is down. The number of producers is down. The number of hogs produced is down. Everything is down in the hog industry and has been for several years. As a matter of fact, I think it is fair comment to say the hog industry has gone down hill almost ever since you introduced that hog marketing board. Very little good has happened to the industry since you brought in that board. Your track record in that industry is pathetic.

Contrast that to Alberta where, sure, they have a marketing board which the producers wanted, with producer control — a vastly different thing from what you have in Saskatchewan. What's the difference? Well, they have a lot of packing plants there vying to buy and kill the hogs. They have a lot of producers. The number of producers is up, production is up. Contrast that with the sorry record in Saskatchewan. That, Mr. Speaker, is what cattle producers fear will happen in Saskatchewan. Under the guise, I suppose, of orderly marketing, and the guise of the attacks that have been made on the cattle marketing system in the past four to five years, we have seen a great deal of the cattle industry migrate to eastern Canada. Much of that is because of federal programs. Part of that has been because of the lack of initiatives or the lack of trust that the industry has in this government. Where have our feedlots gone? They have vanished, disappeared. Where have our packing plants gone? Canada packers left, Intercontinental Packers left. Where have they gone? They have just picked up and gone to Ontario and Quebec.

As this government sits very smugly across the way, perpetrating what amounts to a

thinly disguised fraud on the industry, Quebec is very slowly picking up the pieces of the feedlot industry, and in a very real fashion is in the process of taking away what has always been a western industry — and that's the cattle industry. As you sit back smugly across the aisle, Quebec is moving very quickly to take over much of the packing industry, the feedlot industry and the bulk of the dairy industry. They are not taking your approach. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is merely muddying up the waters in a difficult situation. The minister has indicated that \$5 million is going to go into this program. I suggest to this Assembly that \$100 million couldn't even approach the problem. Yet the minister would hail this as something useful with a minute fraction of that amount. I have been through it before as to the concern which I have on the potential ramifications of our dealings with our neighbors to the south. I won't go through that one again.

My primary concern, not so much as an MLA, but more as a producer, is that I fear very much that there are people who try to enter into forces of which they are not fully aware or fully cognizant. Frankly, they don't understand the business and how it works. It is so easy, by putting in your red tape and your programs and your band-aid approaches on a random basis, simply to muddle the entire situation.

I point, for example, to the railroad industry, the grain-hauling business — look at the subsidies and counter-subsidies, disincentives and red-tape entanglements. To ever straighten out our transportation industry and the railroads (the dollars — where they come from and where they go) it would take a team of Harvard-educated economists. It has just become such a morass that it almost can't be cleaned up.

Take a look at what we have done at our grain-handling industry today. We get hung up on the crowrate over 12 cents a bushel. Yet, fine, we let elevator companies take profits out of a bushel of grain that if the railroads tried on the crowrate, there would be marching in the streets. Yet, fine, as long as it's somebody else who takes it, we can accept that. I suggest that the best thing you can do for the industry, for the cattle industry, is to stay away from it at this point in time. I believe that the best thing the industry can do is to allow its producers to react normally to market conditions. I suggest that programs such as this, as they become mandatory, and as they become introduced, will cause a perpetual introduction of oversupply. When you get into oversupply, there's only one solution and that is simply to cut down that supply. If you are subsidizing it, the taxpayers can't handle that thing indefinitely. The next thing is, "Well, we're spending too much of the taxpayers' money; we have an oversupply situation, we have to cut back." Then we come into supply management, better known as production controls. That's what this will lead to.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the history of supply management has been one of chaos wherever we have seen it. Supply management inevitably leads to dumping here, dumping there — that which may go through the board regulated artificially high, but then there is a black market where you can buy it on the side. We haven't had to go through that in the cattle industry yet. We have gone through it in eggs; we've gone through it in poultry; we've gone through it in dairy.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this government (which according to the Premier has taken the lead in so many things) take the lead in something else in agriculture and that is: be one of the few governments not afraid (and I invite the minister to do this on behalf of the Premier) to stand up and say that our farmers need a profit with a capital P, that our farmers are no different from anybody else, any businessman, any corporation and they need a profit. They can't live without a profit. Instead of introducing

stabilization, instead of throwing roadblocks and of saying what they need is a built-in production factor, a built-in increment for a return on the labor, call it by what they need — profit. Everybody else needs a profit. I don't now why, in agriculture, it is such a dirty thing to say that they need a profit.

I have suggested that the Minister of Agriculture go to work on his federal counterparts and invite their aid for the passage of the meat import law. I invite him to go down and talk to the members of the New Democratic caucus in the House of Commons and urge their support of this meat import law. I suggest to the minister that if he does that and that law gets through the House of Commons, he will do far more for the cattlemen of Saskatchewan than this beef stabilization bill will ever, ever do.

Mr. Speaker, I have challenged anyone on that side of the House, who thinks that the Western Canadian Grain Stabilization Act stabilized anything or did anything for any farmer to stand up if they really believe it. I note that they have all declined to do that. I suggest to you that beef stabilization is nothing more than that was. That was a political football put forward by another political party, supported by the NDP, that would solve all the problems of the grain farmer. He would be stabilized and in times of depressed prices he would receive that averaging out that was going to keep him in business. I repeat, does anybody over there suggest that that factor has been accomplished? Does anybody over there believe it?

I don't think you believe it any more than I do and, regrettably, I'm ashamed to admit I'm in the blasted thing. Talk about falling out on your principles. I went in it. I went out of it and then I went back in it; call it consistency. And I'm disgusted with myself; I'm thoroughly disgusted with myself! How could I have been so stupid?

Mr. Minister, beef stabilization we don't need. But you know, in the Swift Current agricultural research report, a couple of very prominent people at the Swift Current agricultural station made the comment, "To save the beef industry, you've got to stabilize the forage supply. You have to do it by irrigation." You know, Mr. Minister, irrigation has been brought up in this Assembly many times, more prominently this session because of the drought. I suggest to the minister, instead of this stabilization thing, what if you took that \$5 million (and I ask you to speculate) that you're putting forward to this plan and said, "Here is \$5 million I am going to put into irrigation"? I'll grant you that that doesn't mean you're going to turn every quarter section into a lush hay land, but just irrigation the impact if you said that \$5 million is to be used in a certain fashion for irrigation. What would that do to the cattle industry? I ask you to think about that.

Take your stabilization thing and shelve it and put your money into irrigation. How does this government respond to that? They say, "If you're going to irrigate, we're going to raise your taxes." That is where I have such difficulty accepting the philosophy of the people across the way. In Alberta, where that government has taken that attitude (the precise attitude that I've just described) and they've got 15 per cent of the arable agricultural land, they now put out more in farm cash receipts (and that's the only way to measure the total growth) than we do in Saskatchewan with 40 per cent of the agricultural land. It's because they farm more intensively; it's because of irrigation; it's because they haven't said, "We are going to stabilize the cattle industry," when they can't do it. Their attitude would be, "All right, we have \$5 million — put it into irrigation, or put it out into something else to make our agriculture more intensive." Mr. Minister, that is the difference between your philosophy and ours.

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Yours is that somehow government can, by some magical process, stabilize things that are beyond its control. You can't do it. As far as stabilizing the cattle industry is concerned, for all the impact you are going to have on the overall industry, you might as well take that \$5 million and blow it up in smoke. But you can take that \$5 million and do a heck of a lot of good things, an awful lot of good things. But the approach you are taking is wrong and unproductive.

Mr. Minister, you know one of the great tragedies of the past 20 years is that ever since 1900, people have held up the South Saskatchewan Dam as the potential savior of southern Saskatchewan. People thought once we got that dam everything was going to be wonderful and we were going to have 50-bushel crops forever after. Well, we got that dam 25 years ago. And what do we have to show for it? Not very much — not very much.

Mr. Minister, what do you think the Americans would do if they had a dam and water supply like the South Saskatchewan River down in Arizona or in Utah, or one of their other desert regions? Can you imagine what they would do with a river like that and a dam like that? They would irrigate for hundreds of miles around. Goodness sakes, they go down four miles to bring it up from way down in the earth. Imagine! Imagine what they could do with that dam. What are we doing? We are sitting here with almost a gift from God in the view of many people in the world. Imagine what your \$5 million could do around that area.

Mr. Speaker, I rambled on a little longer than I had intended. We intend to oppose the bill. I wish to make the following amendment, and I would move, seconded by the member for Souris-Cannington, that all of the words after "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

Bill 95 — An Act respecting the Stabilization of Returns to Beef Producers in Saskatchewan be not now read a third time, but that it be read six months hence.

I so move.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 12

Berntson
Duncan
Rousseau
Muirhead

Thatcher
Lane
Swan
Andrew

Birkbeck
Taylor
Pickering
McLeod

NAYS — 24

Blakeney
Kaeding
Rolfes
Cowley

Pepper
McArthur
MacMurchy
Matsalla

Allen
Gross
Byers
Poniatowski

Romanow
Skoberg
MacAuley
Nelson

Tchorzewski
Mostoway
Engel
Chapman

Baker
Vickar
Johnson
Miner

MR. MINER: — Mr. Speaker, I have listened during the entire debate with respect to the stabilization bill. I've listened this evening to the members opposite and they have been consistent in only one way, that is that they are completely inconsistent, inaccurate and without fact. The only unfortunate thing that I can say about the previous speaker, and that is the member for Thunder Creek, is that his comments while inconsistent and inaccurate were, unfortunately, not incoherent.

One of the things that seems to shine through quite clearly is that Conservatives seem to have a consistent characteristic about them that comes surfacing forth, and that is that they can recognize six months beyond the time that it becomes abundantly clear to everyone else that there are merits in a bill. That may very well be the reason why the member for Thunder Creek wanted to examine this six months later so that he could find out after everyone else had, that it, indeed, has merits.

He refers to people who are in the industry, who know something about the industry, and talks about those individuals who should know something about the livestock business and who are going to be making the decisions with respect to this bill. Now, Mr. Speaker, this bill does not in any way attempt to stabilize the beef industry in Saskatchewan except as it applies to price. That is something that the hon. member for Thunder Creek doesn't seem to understand. It is only dealing with price. And it is a completely voluntary bill. That means that the people of Saskatchewan, with what I would call seed money of \$5 million, have the opportunity to participate in a stabilization bill that will give them the opportunity to level out the humps and the hollows of the prices they receive for the livestock they produce. Everyone in the industry can participate if they so desire, in a manner that they so desire, and to the extent that they so desire. All of those things are voluntary.

We have, on numerous occasions over the last 15 to 20 years, heard the same hue and cry of "voluntary today and compulsory tomorrow." But that is unlikely to be the case in this instance, any more than it has been the case in the past, and there is no evidence that it has been the case in the past. It is the last gasping breath of those opposed to a progressive move, a piece of progressive legislation that will offer the opportunity for people in Saskatchewan to stabilize their incomes. This is something which we, on this side of the House, believe they should have an opportunity to do, and something which this bill very effectively gives the opportunity to do.

We will look to the west, as the member for Thunder Creek suggests, at the livestock industry in Alberta. What we find is that the most consistent difference between Alberta and Saskatchewan is a little thing called rain. Last year, they had lots of it — so much of it that their hay was rotting rather than there being an abundance of it. We don't need in this country, any more than they do in Alberta, to be concerned about the ability to produce a consistent crop of hay, year in and year out, but we need the ability to be able to keep the hay when there is an abundance in order to be able to provide when there is a shortage. That is exactly the same principle as stabilization.

In other words, you pay a little when you are getting a lot of money, and you get a little when you're not getting quite as much, in exactly the same manner as if you were to

build your own haystack and keep your own hay. So we have to have a consistent supply of hay, and that is being provided for by the South Saskatchewan irrigation project, the irrigation project in the southwestern part of Saskatchewan, including the Rush Lake project. It is being provided by FarmStart loans to people who want to get into the business today.

There is a very general (and massive, I would say) thrust on the part of the Government of Saskatchewan to provide the people of Saskatchewan with the opportunity to do for themselves those things which they desire to do, with the tools that this government has provided. That's what this bill does. It doesn't in any way lack response to the needs of the livestock men.

The only thing I can say about whether the Minister of Agriculture has the respect of the livestock industry or he does not, is that I would be much more willing to place substantial bets on the Minister of Agriculture than I would on anything the member for Thunder Creek had to say.

I would suggest that if the stock growers' association truly is opposed to this bill (which is a progressive piece of legislation that again, as I have already said, offers livestock people an opportunity to stabilize their returns to that industry) then it must be because they are like the member for Thunder Creek, that they think like Conservatives and subsequently, won't recognize the benefits until six months after they have gone past.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is any doubt that anyone who is thinking in terms of the best interests of the livestock producers of Saskatchewan will not support this bill. The members opposite oppose it for reasons other than the benefits it offers to the livestock industry or the province, and the people who are in it. I would suggest, therefore, that I quite heartily support this bill, and I am quite confident that the people in my constituency, who are totally reliant upon agriculture, will be quite thankful that we have introduced it because it will not only stabilize the prices that the farmers receive, it will stabilize the returns to the industry and, in that way, benefit the constituency that I represent in a very significant manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — I don't want to spend a good deal of time wrapping up the debate on this very important piece of legislation on this very important plan. I don't want to spend time, Mr. Speaker, talking about who is in favor and who is opposed although I think I might make the comment that clearly there is some question about who speaks for the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association — whether it is their president, the member for Thunder Creek, or Don Perran. I note in the *Western Producer* he wants to wait until the beef stabilization board is in place and they have an opportunity to come forward with the regulations and the details of the plan before he is going to put forward his position on the beef stabilization plan.

What I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that since I have held this office as Minister of Agriculture, this is the first key issue that the opposition members have had to deal with. Mr. Speaker, I know they dealt with the Saskatchewan grain hopper cars. I know they had trouble with that, but they voted for it. Mr. Speaker, I know that they had trouble with the agricultural ownership of land, The Saskatchewan Farm Ownership Act. They voted for it, Mr. Speaker, but they had some trouble and some reservations. They said, "We wouldn't do that, but we will support this legislation; we support a graduated land tax." I know that in this Assembly in this session they voted for the research program, although the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley said it was a political program and

they would have to watch the politics of this program very, very closely.

Now, it comes, Mr. Speaker, to the bill before us — the stabilization bill — a plan to implement a stabilization program for beef. Mr. Speaker, what are we doing here? Well, they are opposing doing something for beef producers. As the hon. member for Thunder Creek says, “We should let the free market take care of beef producers. If there is a surplus and the prices are down, sell off those cows so that the price will go back up, and around and around the cycle should go.” They are voting against the principle of stabilization. Mr. Speaker, they are voting against a program to provide \$5 million in this budget to beef producers. That is what they are doing. That is issue number one.

Issue number two, Mr. Speaker, is: why are they doing it? Why have they voted three times on their feet against the stabilization plan? I point out to the hon. members that they are going to have a fourth chance to stand on their feet and vote against the stabilization plan because we are going to call for a standing vote on third reading. Why are they doing it? Mr. Speaker, they are doing it because the hon. member for Thunder Creek came into this House and he said with all of the negative adjectives he could muster, “It is a bad plan. Therefore, I am not in favor of it. Therefore, I oppose it.” If hon. members will read in the debates of *Hansard* the statements of the hon. member for Thunder Creek, it was always “I” — not the position of the Conservative Party, not the position of the Conservative caucus opposite. It was always “I.”

Mr. Speaker, they are opposing the plan because the member for Thunder Creek stood on his feet in this House and said, “I am opposed to it.” That is why they are opposed to it. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the opinions of the hon. member for Thunder Creek have no credibility outside this legislature. They have no credibility with the farmers of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I thought in this Assembly there was no credibility in here, that the utterances, the positions put forward by the member for Thunder Creek were not supported by any member in this Assembly. Therefore, over the past two sessions I have let him go; I have not argued with him. I participated in debates with the hon. member for Thunder Creek because it gave me an opportunity to put forward the positions of this government as contrary to his positions.

I say, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, that they should consider very carefully this vote on beef stabilization, because not only are they voting against beef stabilization but they are voting for the utterances and the opinions and the position put forward by the member for Thunder Creek.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — What are those positions, Mr. Speaker? Those positions are anti-orderly marketing, anti-wheat board, anti-country elevator system, anti-crow, anti-stabilization, anti-SHARP, anti-western grain stabilizations (which he is participating in) and anti-crop insurance, which is stabilization against weather. That’s what they’re opposing. I want the hon. members to think very carefully about their vote on beef stabilization because the hon. members opposite, to a man, are identifying with the position and the opinion of the hon. member for Thunder Creek.

I will go into every corner of this province, along with all of the members on this side of the House, to tell what the policies of the hon. members opposite are with respect to the issues of stabilization, control, Canadian Wheat Board and country elevator system. Mr. Speaker, it’s an important vote with which to identify and an important vote with respect to this bill. This bill says we’re going to do something for the beef producer.

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They say we should not. This bill says that we approve of the principle of stabilization. This bill says that we're going to provide in this budget \$5 million for beef producers. I think based on that, the hon. members should reconsider their position and reconsider for a final time how they should vote, because we're never going to let the farmers of Saskatchewan forget how they vote on The Beef Stabilization Act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division and bill read a third time.

Yeas — 25

Blakeney	Pepper	Allen
Kaeding	Romanow	Tchorzewski
Baker	Skoberg	McArthur
Gross	Rolfes	MacMurchy
Mostoway	Vickar	MacAuley
Engel	Byers	Cowley
Cody	Matsalla	Poniatowski
Johnson	Nelson	Chapman
Miner		

NAYS — 10

Thatcher	Birkbeck	Duncan
Lane	Taylor	Rousseau
Swan	Pickering	Muirhead
McLeod		

Bill No. 70 — An Act to amend The Education Act

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, I move the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to on division and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 117 — An Act to amend The Statute Law

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I move the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 115 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

Sections 1 to 6 inclusive agreed.

Section 7

MR. LANE: — I wonder if you would explain section 7. My reading of that is that I am one of those members who benefits and I shouldn't benefit by the particular provision. I live in the city of Regina; my riding surrounds Regina and includes a lot of the city. My view is that those members who choose to move to Regina make that choice willingly and shouldn't be compensated therefor.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — I guess the rationale here is with respect to members outside the city of Regina. The member for Qu'Appelle is in somewhat of a unique situation, as I am in Saskatoon, in that part of his riding is within the city and part is without. My riding in Saskatoon is mostly out of the city with part within the city. The rationale was that we have some members in the Legislative Assembly who are ordinarily resident in Regina, which is the term used now, but who also maintain a residence in their riding where they are not ordinarily resident.

As I said during second reading, there is no perfect answer to this. This is the option we came up with in terms of attempting to deal with it. I don't argue that it is particularly rational; neither was the other system particularly rational. I use myself as an example of a member ordinarily resident in Regina with a riding (the largest centre of which is 225 miles away, which is Biggar) where I spend some time. I spend time there on constituency business, staying in the Westwinds Motel, or some other such residence. It is not on government business and is an expense to me. I'm not making a big thing of that but I think that whereas some members have an expense in coming to the city of Regina, one could argue that some other members have similar expenses because they are residents here and must go out to their ridings.

There is nothing perfect here. I agree with the member. I don't know what the halfway measure is. This was an attempt on our part to overcome a couple of problems where members would be defined as ordinarily resident in Regina, but who maintain, as well, a residence in their constituency. And it's not just members of the Executive Council; it's non-members as well. We do have, as I am sure the member is aware, some members of the Executive Council who are not resident in the city of Regina ordinarily, by the definition of the term, but are resident in Saskatoon, or for example, the former member for Kelsey-Tisdale, Mr. Messer, who lived in his riding. This was an attempt to solve some of the problems. I suspect it creates as many as it solves, so you can be in favor of it or opposed to it. There is no magic answer here.

MR. LANE: — I hate to say this (and I'm sure the Hon. Provincial Secretary is in the same boat), but it has been 10 years, and I think a lot of us are getting sick and tired of the way this is handled. There are some inequities and I'll be the first to grant you that. People who are appointed to the cabinet should have reasonable compensation to make up for the fact that they have to maintain two homes. I feel that that is a proper and fair way to go. Backbenchers who choose to give up their riding, or choose to live in Regina and represent a riding from outside don't, in my view, deserve an consideration, and I include myself in that category.

It would like to see a system where those who are appointed to the cabinet or in the case of the opposition, to the Leader of the Opposition, where they are forced by virtue of the office to live in the city of Regina, to have some type of protection so that if they are

forced to acquire two residences, they are compensated. I don't think they should make any speculative income if that is subsequently sold, but I think the fact that they are forced to maintain two residences should be compensated.

As I say, those who choose to move to Regina without having been appointed to an office requiring it don't deserve any special consideration. That is a choice. The way this is going, I don't think is solving the real problems. I have made suggestions to members opposite and others. The absolutely foolish provision is the fact that where members (the cabinet ministers or the Premier) are on legislative business, they are not allowed to take their wives. I think that is absolutely ludicrous when members of the cabinet or members of this Assembly are required to go on official functions and it is expected that the wives will be there. I think it is absolutely foolish that everybody has to sneak around and that provision is not made for that — that is a poor choice of words. I didn't mean it in those terms. The fact that the spouses are second-class citizens strikes me as being foolish.

The idea that we are coming back every year with this basically slush fund, piecemeal or two-bit approach . . . The member for Thunder Creek said it is demeaning — certainly it is demeaning. Anybody that doesn't think it is demeaning has his head in the sand.

In no way have we taken into account the actual legitimate travel expenses; in no way have we taken into account the actual MLA expenses; in no way have we taken into account the extraordinary expenses of cabinet ministers by virtue of the office or the Leader of the Opposition or the Speaker. We keep coming back with this two-bit approach every year. Expenses have gone up roughly fourfold, I think, in the last five or six years. It is demeaning and ludicrous.

I have made a couple of suggestions where I think there is an inequity which we don't take into proper consideration. It is the first time since I've been elected in '71 when I have seen the opposition vote and argue against pay raises. I tell you it makes it easier for future oppositions and future years. I predict it is going to be much more difficult for the government to start bringing in these piecemeal salary increases and benefits. I just suggest, and I have said it in this House before, that I would certainly like to see before an election our bringing in a pay package and everybody could ride on it. If the people of this province are prepared to vote us back, they will know full well what they are paying their elected representative. They can decide whether they are going to pick a candidate and get their money's worth.

I suggest that this whole process is demeaning. I don't think anybody in this Assembly feels too good about the way the process has been developed.

Section 7 agreed.

Section 8

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Chairman, I want to briefly add my voice to the remarks of the member for Qu'Appelle. I think they are appropriate. I think they are accurate. I guess my comments are tied to those that I made earlier on the superannuation package. I think the entire process and method that the government has used, certainly since I have been in the Assembly, is open to question. I can't help but think that about 1936 we had the same population in Saskatchewan that we have in Saskatchewan today, roughly 940,000 people. Back in 1936 there were something like 46 or 47 MLAs. I wonder if they are represented any better today than they were back in 1936 with the

46 MLAs. They didn't have offices. They didn't even have the same kind of roads to get around on. I wonder: are the people represented any better now than they were back in 1936? I don't mean politically, but I mean mechanically by their elected representatives.

We are now moving to where the same 940,000 people are going to have 64 MLAs. This government in its wisdom has decreed that these 64 MLAs need an additional allowance to have a constituency secretary. Is it necessary? Are the people going to be any better represented by those constituency secretaries than they were back in 1936? Are they going to have better representation because of these secretaries? Have we not got something better to spend our money on, to spend the public purse on, than a salary for half a secretary? Have we become so bankrupt in this Assembly that the best we can think of to do for the people we represent is to add a part-time secretary to an MLA's staff? Is that the best that we can do in this Assembly after three months?

I'm waiting for the minister to get up and say no. Give the standard answer. "No, we are really fortunate because we don't have health premiums in Saskatchewan and that they do in Alberta." That's the stock answer for everything. That's the best we can do. And I guess if eulogies are ever written for this session of the legislature, I would have to deem it as the prairie lily session, and point to the "me too-ism" of the MLAs. It's with considerable sincerity that I suggest the people of Saskatchewan should take a very close look at what we've done in this Assembly — our productivity in this session of the legislature, what we have accomplished for them. And you know, frankly, I think if they ever do take that good, close look at what we've done in this session, I suggest that the 61 MLAs in this Assembly may very well be found wanting. Certainly, and not at all to be disrespectful, 45 over there without question would be.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words if I might — not necessarily on section 7, although I realize that we are there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I shall endeavor to keep my remarks as close to that as I can. I heard both the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek argue that they oppose what is before the House. The member for Thunder Creek says it's because of the process but really appears to base his argument on substance. But in any event, I'll take his words at face value, i.e. because of the process. Mr. Chairman, it is simply incorrect to be critical of the process in the terms that have been put forward by the members opposite. I want to remind the Legislative Assembly that since 1971 (I stand to be corrected on this), there have been at least two full, complete, independent reviews of what members of the Legislative Assembly should get by way of pay and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That is simply incorrect. The hon. member is talking through the top of his head. He doesn't know what he is talking about, which is always the case. The trouble with the hon. member opposite is that he always thinks that by simply shouting, the facts somehow come out by virtue of the loudness of his voice; they don't.

Mr. Justice Hughes had input from most of the members who saw fit, I think in 1973 and in 1977 or '78 (I'm talking off the top of my head now in terms of the dates) and he made the recommendations on pay and on the perks of the MLA. The basic structure of The Legislative Assembly Act, as we have it before us, is based on the independent review, including the question of the per diems. What we're doing with respect to the per diems is implementing in law what has been thought to be the process or thought to have been the objective that was achieved at the time that amendment was brought in two years ago. So it is incorrect to leave the impression that somehow this is decided in

the back rooms of the members' offices or in the corridors behind the rails. That is simply not the case. Point number one.

The second point I want to make about the process is that two other key aspects of this legislation come directly from the all-party committee on rules — the board of internal economy and certain additional pays for the Leader of the Opposition, matters relating to the deputy chairman and the like. Where those matters were not implemented, it was to the detriment of some of the members. I point again to the House Leader of the government who does not have any additional pay or perk as a result of that, contrary to the rules report. But that process was also arrived at over a period of several weeks or one might even say several months.

That leaves only the issue of the part-time secretaries, when we talk about process. Here, I suppose the process argument has some validity. But I want to tell the hon. members, if you get \$500 a month to maintain an office and you can't afford out of that to maintain any secretarial services, it doesn't make very much sense to be putting out of the public treasury \$500 a month for the maintenance of an office without being able to really adequately furnish it. And I don't think anybody in this House can tell me that on \$500 they can adequately maintain a constituency office. It simply cannot be done.

I personally hold the view that we're here to serve. That means being available to listen to representations from people in Saskatoon Riversdale or in Beechy or in Rosetown or in Maple Creek. They don't have to come all the way to Regina in order to be heard and that requires some form of a part-time secretary, paid for and vouched for from the public purse. Is that an abuse of public funds? I can hardly believe that it is an abuse of public funds. Surely we all want to have a better capacity to take the complaints, to take the suggestions and to communicate those suggestions in this particular House.

Mr. Chairman, I want to close by saying I invite the members of the public to take a close look at this House. I think that this was not the most spectacular session; that is correct to say. But it was a very good working session. We have 120-125 bills and you can list them off, from beef stabilization to jury acts to trust and loans acts to medical profession acts to education acts. These are major pieces of legislation which you may not agree with, but they are. You take a look at any other Legislative Assembly, certainly in the West, and tell me where they come forth with 125 pieces of legislation each and every legislative session. It simply isn't done. Alberta is at 50 or 60; B.C. is at 40 or 50; Manitoba is about the highest with about 70 or 80. That's not to say that volume means quality; I acknowledge that. But we work doggone hard and we do it in 66 sitting days, or maybe more. We can certainly do the public's business in that period and do it reasonably well.

We can't expect every session to be a confrontation of high ideology or policy, and if it isn't, as much as we're to blame, so is the opposition to blame. I frankly think that we have done a creditable job straight across the piece.

Let me close, Mr. Chairman, by simply saying this is not a perfect bill. Those who represent it (I will correct the word — misrepresent it) as somehow an additional substantive financial advantage to the members of this House do a disserve to this House, to the public and to themselves. You are doing a disservice to yourselves and the responsibility you have and the job that you do. That is the simple fact of the matter. As far as I am concerned, I think we want to continually work for this Assembly to be a

place not only for millionaires or people who are well-to-do, not only for those who do it for a hobby, not only for those who don't need pay or pensions but also for all sectors of the community — working men, farmers, young professionals or senior professionals or whatever.

While I disagree with your policies or lack of policies (goodness knows there are very few policies that one can get an identifiable handle on with the Conservatives opposite), I would not say you don't do your job. You come here and at least try. You criticize the government and the process after two Queen's bench judges' reviews and after an all-party committee review. I tell you that you are doing a discredit to yourselves. That is not the way we should be conducting the business of this House.

Mr. Chairman, I simply wanted to intervene to say that it is incorrect to talk about the process in those terms. It simply ignores the basic fact of Hughes.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Chairman, in responding very briefly to the Attorney General, his comments, I think, sum up his government's action through this long session. I recall the tirade which the Attorney General went through on one particular occasion when the bells rang for six hours. I would respectfully suggest to you that that day when those bells rang for six hours had about as much productivity as about 45 to 50 of the days which we put in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I would say about that. Our productivity level if it is ever measured . . . Of course, you govern that; you introduce the legislation. We can't introduce money bills or things which pertain to money. Otherwise, it would be a vastly different session because there would be some useful things.

Your government has, frankly, become bankrupt. You are getting a little bit old-looking on that side. There are getting to be a few bald heads. Your legislation tells people where you are. Some of your best people are gone. As much as I may have disagreed philosophically with Flying Jack, he was a good, hard and tough minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, I'll be right back, Mr. Chairman.

The Attorney General's comments are indicative of the government. You have not done very much this session . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . One hundred twenty-five bills of what? About 110 of them are nothing. On the last night of the session, as the economy is falling down on everybody's ears, we're talking about secretaries for MLAs. The Attorney General tells us that is progress. Mr. Attorney General, it tells us something else. You can brag about your 125 bills. I suggest to you that without about 125 of them the people would have survived until next year. Probably they would have survived if they had not seen them.

This session, and maybe the last session, gives some credibility to what I think is one of the weirdest procedures I head of until I had been in here. You know what they do in Texas? Every second year they go 140 consecutive days and then shut it down. Maybe there's a lesson in that for us, because we have no limit. Our productivity and what we have accomplished for all segments of the economy have been highly suspect. I suggest that we have a government which has simply run out of ideas and is rapidly running out of the quality people they had after 1971.

I suggest to the Attorney General and this government that you had better have your election. Another session like this and you're going under.

Section 8 agreed.

May 19, 1981

Sections 9 to 15 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed on division to report the bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 109 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, I move the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

APPROPRIATION BILL

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill No. 120, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year Ending Respectively March 31, 1981 and March 31, 1982, be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and bill read a first time.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some brief remarks on this appropriation bill. I think I can describe, to some degree, what I want to say this evening is a bit of a story of two budgets.

On March 5, I had the privilege of presenting the 10th consecutive budget of this New Democratic Party government. This budget is the culmination of an outstanding decade of progress for the province of Saskatchewan. It is a decade of which every Saskatchewan citizen can feel proud and it is a decade which lays the foundation for an even brighter future.

Our budget outlined four major objectives — a diversified economy with a strong agricultural sector as its core; expanded educational and employment opportunities for our young people; continued improvements to our health and social services; and an enriched community life in which all Saskatchewan people can attain their fullest potential. The 1981 budget provides the initiative that will help achieve these objectives, initiatives such as a new beef stabilization program, which the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, voted against — not once, not twice; they had to make a point of voting against it several times during the process of this session. As the Minister of Agriculture indicated earlier, we shall not let the farmers of Saskatchewan forget the position that the members opposite took on stabilization for the agricultural community, and more particularly the people who produce beef in this province.

We introduced a new farm housing program and a new revenue-sharing capital grants program for northern Saskatchewan which members opposite never even mentioned once. Also an expanded dental care program was introduced. Included in the budget was a 30 per cent increase in funding for the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation.

We have a strong commitment to health and health care. There was a 40 per cent increase in the maximum benefit per child for the family income plan. We have a concern about the plight of low income families because of inflation and because of the need to maintain an adequate income to raise those families. We had an increase of nearly 30 per cent in nursing home funding and the Minister of Social Services will be announcing in the near future a new structure and a new arrangement for the funding for people who have to be in our nursing homes.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives, and many others in our budget plan, are particularly significant when one looks at the broader context. I invite the opposition members to consider, in a fair-minded way, the range of benefits offered by this budget. And then I ask them to consider these facts:

1. A balanced budget in the consolidated fund;
2. A surplus of \$300 million set aside for investment in the heritage fund;
3. A cut in the corporate income tax for small businesses from 11 per cent to 10 per cent;
4. A cut of 2 points in the provincial personal income tax rate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was the budget in Saskatchewan. Tonight, there was another budget presented in Canada. Tonight, there was a budget presented in the province of Ontario. And you know what recently happened in the province of Ontario? The good people of that province put their faith, their trust and confidence in a Conservative government. What is their reward? Well, I have just outlined the Saskatchewan budget presented by this New Democratic Party government — a balanced budget looking after the needs of Saskatchewan people. In the province of Ontario, one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada, after many years of Conservative government, they have in this 1981-82 budget budgeted a deficit of \$1.5 billion. That's an increase in the deficit of 18.4 per cent.

What did they do with income tax, Mr. Speaker? We reduced income tax in Saskatchewan. In Ontario, the Conservative government increased the income tax rate from 44 to 48 points percentage of the federal tax.

Members opposite in debate during this session spent a lot of time talking about the Saskatchewan gas tax. Well, I want them to now know that in the province of Ontario, this evening in the budget, they introduced an ad valorem gas tax which is going to be 20 per cent of the retail price of their gasoline. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the only province now that doesn't have a gasoline tax is the province of Alberta. Nova Scotia has a lower one. But heavens, in the province of Alberta they do have a medicare premium which keeps going up every year.

Mr. Speaker, what about health care? Well, I want to report to the House that health care premiums under a Conservative government in Ontario went up this evening by 15 per cent, so that a single person will have to pay \$267 a year and families will have to pay \$552 a year, on top of the four point increase in the personal income tax, Mr. Speaker. That is the difference between a New Democratic Party government and a Conservative government. In spite of everything, the members over there may talk about cushioning the impact of inflation. I am not impressed by the Conservative prescription to cushion

people against the impact of inflation and high interest rates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — I have to admit, Mr. Speaker, and agree with those who suggest that Canada is suffering today from the terrible twins of inflation and high interest rates. These are national problems. (And if you add Tory governments, it's triplets.) Yet federal government policies do not encourage a growth in the productivity which will combat inflation, not do they address the issue of high interest rates. In fact, the federal Minister of Finance said recently in the House of Commons that high interest rates are here to stay.

I tried to recollect a little bit of history. Where have I heard those kinds of comments and arguments before? Well, I did a little research, Mr. Speaker, and I went back to October 1979. I read in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, a headline, "Won't Use Short-term Solutions to Battle Inflation, Crosbie Says." And you know who he was? He was a Conservative minister of finance in Ottawa. It quotes Mr. Clark who, like his finance minister, rejected suggestions from various MPs that the government should shield citizens from the impact of rising prices. That is Conservative policy, Mr. Speaker.

I went further and I looked at the *Globe and Mail* on October 26, 1979, in which it is written that both Prime Minister Clark and Finance Minister Crosbie, Conservatives, said of high interest rates, "These are needed at present to restore Canada's economic health." . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, they are in the opposition finally for wanting the same policy.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I went on further and I looked at a November 3, 1979 *Globe and Mail* article. It quotes the Conservative minister of finance as saying, "Canada has to have high interest rates at this time."

But I thought I should look a little closer to home. So I looked at a statement which came out of the local paper from the Leader of the Unionest Party, the former leader of the Conservative Party:

Dick Collver, Leader of the Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Party said, "High interest rates are a bitter pill that has to be swallowed in order to avoid recession. As a trading country, Canada must follow the U.S. interest rates or suffer a flight of capital out of the country."

These were all arguments by Conservatives about high interest rates, Mr. Speaker. So, I wondered what the official stand of the Conservative Party in this legislature was. And I found it; indeed I found it. In the *Leader-Post*, on December 12, 1979, when the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan was officially reacting to the federal budget of that day, it said, "Grant Devine Pleased" — pleased about all of these things which were quoted by his fellow Conservative members in parliament. It said that Progressive Conservative Leader Grant Devine also was pleased with their responsible budget. It went on to write some more and then it said:

But the warmest words came (and this is referring to the federal Conservative position at that time on interest rates) from Devine who said, "The budget may have been tough medicine in some respects, but still the prescription was right and even better than what he had anticipated. In total, the budget is very realistic and courageous for a minority government."

Now, Mr. Speaker, it amazes me, having heard that position of the Progressive Conservative Party, across this country documented here and officially stated, that they would in the last several days, for lack of any kind of initiative, pretend that their policy was otherwise, and that other things should happen. Mr. Speaker, our options in Saskatchewan, as in every province, are limited when it comes to dealing with inflation and interest rates. In one respect we are extremely fortunate, because after a decade of sound administration in this province, we have built a strong and health economy. For 1981 we expect our gross domestic product to grow by 5 per cent — the highest rate of growth in Canada. And at the same time, unemployment should remain at about last year's level, one of the lowest in Canada.

But we recognize that the relatively good performance of the Saskatchewan economy only underlines the seriousness of the situation. We are extremely concerned that high interest rates may prevent small business from taking full advantage of the spin-off benefits from major resource projects. At the same time we must be aware of the effects of inflation and interest rates on farmers, many of whom have large debt loads, and on home-owners facing record-high mortgage interest rates. This budget for 1981 attacks inflation and interest rates on the broad front: (1) by being a balanced budget; (2) by cutting taxes for both individuals and small businesses; (3) by allocating over \$300 million for long-term economic development; (4) by providing a wide range of benefits for easing the negative effects of the federal policies. These benefits include new programs in agriculture, assistance to families, and assistance to home buyers. For home buyers we have budgeted a total of \$12 million in various types of assistance. Compare this with the Conservative proposal which would make mortgage moneys available at the provincial borrowing cost. If the medium- and long-term cost of borrowing for the province is around 16.75, and the mortgage cost for an individual is about 18 per cent, then there is a saving for the home buyer of only about 1 per cent, or \$1 million in total on the \$100 million outlay. This is hardly an effective proposal to deal with the issue of mortgage rates for Saskatchewan people and it's thought out poorly because of a lack of any kind of a policy on the part of members opposite, who seem to flounder around as they struggle through the session.

Mr. Speaker, other suggestions offered by the members opposite are equally irrational. We saw during this session an unprecedented attack on our Crown corporations, and I know the members opposite (one of them over there is laughing) will say, "What are you talking about?" I'll tell you what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the critic for finance getting up in this House and saying:

We must reduce government acquisitions in the areas of the private sector where government has no business being.

Does that mean sell out SGI? Is that why we saw this kind of an attack on SGI in this session? I submit that it is, Mr. Speaker. Does that mean sell out SPC or Sask Tel, if they were ever to become the government? The member for Milestone says no. Well, I want the member for Milestone to listen. In fact, I have here a copy of the Crown corporations committee hearings of April 17, 1980; that's a year ago. I quote from *Hansard* the member for Moosomin who said:

We are now, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and out of their concern, beginning to question whether or not the government involvement even in utility corporations, let alone resource development through the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, is the route to go.

Now, is there any doubt about this concerted attack by those members opposite on the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan which have established a tremendous, a credible, and a good tradition of service to the people of this province who own them and control them?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have attempted to criticize this budget; I think, with little success. They have not been able to disguise the potential for Saskatchewan which it describes. I said to this Assembly on March 5, that we in Saskatchewan now have the foundation. This government has, and continues to provide, the leadership and we have the opportunity for enormous progress. Speaking at the end of this legislative session, I have no doubt that through this budget and others to follow, we will grasp these opportunities and realize their potential.

Mr. Speaker, with these words, I have the honor today, as the Minister of Finance for Saskatchewan, to move by leave second and third reading of this appropriation bill.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I have listened to the words of the Minister of Finance tonight in his closing remarks for this session. What I heard was fairly well what I expected to hear. Frankly, I must say that I believe the minister was really in his glory tonight because of the fact that Ontario brought down its budget today. It gave him that much needed ammunition which he hasn't had throughout this session.

I would like to take just a minute to talk about what the minister spoke about in his remarks regarding the Ontario budget. I don't know why we should be discussing the Ontario budget. We should be concerning ourselves about the one we have here in this province. He was concerned that the personal income tax went from 44 per cent to 48 per cent. Of course that's an increase and we have had a decrease this year. He mentioned something about Ontario being one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada. When it suits his purpose, Ontario is wealthy, but when he is talking about the economy in a different vein, Saskatchewan is one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada.

The tax level today in Ontario is 48 per cent, but he omitted to mention that the Saskatchewan level is still at 52 per cent. He spoke about the horrible new tax imposed on the people of Ontario, called the ad valorem tax of 20 per cent on the gas sales tax — the slippery tax. What province, I would like to know, would have a better right to put it in? The difference, (which the minister doesn't seem to understand) between Saskatchewan and Ontario (for the minister's information — he seems to forget it) is that we happen to be a producing province. He didn't say anything about whether the same tax applied to the province of Alberta; as everyone knows, it doesn't.

He talks about what happens (and my goodness, that's a horrible thing to happen) only to attempt to justify what has happened here in this province. While he was at it, he didn't mention either the 20 per cent of the 20 per cent that is used to shore up his seatmate's department. The losses we have seen and which have been incurred by that Crown corporation . . . For him to go the Minister of Finance and say, "I need double the amount of money that I've been getting and he gets it, at the expense and cost to the taxpayers of the province (doubling within 5 per cent, I would say) . . . It is called a premium on the automobile insurance rates in the province of Saskatchewan. The automobile insurance rates are already, for 80 per cent of the people of this province, the highest insurance premiums in Canada, and add to that another \$30 a year for them. But we didn't hear a word about that, Mr. Speaker, not a single word.

Then, of course, he had to resort and revert to his old stand-by, the health premium taxes being charged in Ontario. I will have to agree with the minister that no one should pay a health premium; we agree with that. However, look at that tax (and it's a tax) from the minister's own figures that we see in the budget be brought down this year. For a one percentage point reduction in tax, he claims savings to families earning in the \$15,000 bracket and up, from \$136 to \$388 per year — for one point. For four points, multiply it by four. I would assume that that would make sense — you'd multiply those figures by four. It is still, Mr. Speaker, far over and above those premiums charged in Ontario for health premiums. They may not call it a health premium, but they get it as a health premium by taxing the people of this province in one way or another.

It isn't out of the pockets of the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Health or the Premier of this province that the people of Saskatchewan get health care. It's from the taxes that they pay to this government, which are some of the highest. For a province that is supposedly one of the wealthiest (if not the wealthiest) provinces in Canada in resources, we have one of the highest income tax rates in Canada today.

Mr. Speaker, I won't be long in my remarks. I heard some comments about my having so much time, but this is the time of the session when we, in the opposition, have, you might say, the last word. It's time, I suppose, to look back on the (in this case) 66 days of the session and review some of the highlights. If it were to review the highlights, I would be finished in 30 seconds. The highlights of this session are just not there. In fact, this session was really a zero session, Mr. Speaker, from the point we were given a throne speech to the budget speech (which was a do-nothing budget, and the throne speech gave nothing to the people of this province) to tonight, the closing of it.

But let's look at some of the highlights. SGI, I would say, probably takes first place as being one of the highlights of this session. The minister rises and takes a bow. I certainly wouldn't, if I were in his place. When a corporation such as SGI can manage to lose \$50 million (\$53 million, to be exact, Mr. Speaker), has the finance department shore it up by doubling the tax revenue from the gasoline tax, and borrows \$72 million from the consolidated fund at no interest, any minister who has the gall to want to stand up and take a bow for that performance is welcome to it. That's all I can say. We found out the kind of an operation it runs with the sale of its building and the few other highlights, of that particular seven days. Insuring the Iranian navy, I think was mentioned earlier in the year.

I suppose the second highlight of the session, leaving aside anything the government introduced (which wasn't anything to speak of) was the inaction on the part of the government in assisting the people of Kamsack in their plight and with their problems. We still haven't heard that decisions were made by the government.

MR. SPEAKER: — I wonder if during this interruption we could have some order in the press gallery. I'm having some difficulty in hearing. I wonder if the members of the press gallery could observe the usual decorum which is observed in the House.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I think they're anxious to go home tonight, Mr. Speaker, from the sounds of the paper up there.

Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition have many times in the past asked the government to change its position with respect to the public accounts committee. They were asked even as late as today. It's been quite controversial during this session; two

members have resigned from that particular committee. I suppose we'll never know the real reasons why.

We have also suggested improvements for the Crown corporations committee meetings. I want to mention again that it's been the tradition or role of Crown corporations to review the financial statements, the year under review being the last year. Frankly, I see that as a waste of the taxpayers' money and a waste of time. What has happened is really history; it's past and nothing can really be done to change what has happened in the past. What we have to look at (and this is done in other legislatures; it wouldn't be a first for Saskatchewan) is not the past, but the future. Let's review the budget, your forecasts, and what you plan to do. I believe the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know where the Crown corporations are heading and where you are going to spend money. For the first time this year, we set a precedent in this Assembly by having something tabled by the minister for Sedco (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation). I hope that will carry on again next year and be expanded.

The Minister of Finance has indicated (and I get a little perturbed at this kind of irresponsible comment on his part) that the members of the opposition are interested in selling those Crown corporations. I've heard that many, many times, but I always hear it from the members of the government. We've never heard it from a member of the opposition or from the Progressive Conservative Party; it's from the members of the government that we always hear it. Of course, that could be their way out when they mismanage a Crown corporation as badly as they did SGI. Maybe that is their idea; maybe that is what they want to do. I don't know. But for them to keep suggesting that that is what we want to do is, frankly, irresponsible.

The people of Saskatchewan have no question about their desire to have their own Crown corporations. I always hear talk about the family of Crown corporations belonging to the people of Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Chairman, that only applies when it comes time for the government to advertise them on television. Then they say to the people of Saskatchewan, "They are your Crown corporations; they belong to the people."

I see the Premier is sitting here now. I ask you, Mr. Premier, what citizen of Saskatchewan would you consider responsible enough to be the owner of one of those Crown corporations, or part owner, or shareholder, that you would give him the information he is entitled to through public accounts or through the review of the Crown corporations? Or are you prepared, when he moves out of this province, to pay him his interest in those Crown corporations? I say you are not. That's not a cop out but it's a flagrant abuse of the term ownership of the Crown corporations and deceitful.

In this session, Mr. Speaker, I'd say that we've come full circle from the beginning of it until tonight. The reason I say that is very simple. The opposition has been very consistent throughout this session in criticizing the government's economic fiscal policies and in expressing concerns about the economic conditions of Saskatchewan and Canada. Many times we've brought it up in the question period; we've asked the government to take action. But not once has it accepted any part of the suggestions that we have made. And we made some, if the members opposite will recall, during the reply to the budget speech. As a critic, I suggested a 31-point program to the government opposite for improvement in the economy. We've suggested a housing initiative program at subsidized interest rates and we know what's happening in the housing industry in Saskatchewan. We've suggested a public utilities review

commission again. We've suggested the freezing of utility rates. I can go on and on, but I look at that clock and I am not going to repeat myself on that point.

I want to finish my remarks with (I suppose) another highlight of the session. It always happens on the last day. That highlight is once again what the government brings in as the last bill of a session — and that's to fatten the members' pocket books. Now the Attorney General refers to a commission, I believe he said, Judge Hughes recommended. Well, if he made the recommendation, I don't know why he doesn't follow it. I've heard it suggested by members of this side tonight, and I suggest to you, Mr. Premier, Mr. Attorney General, and to the members opposite, that if you want to be honest with the people of Saskatchewan, you don't wait until the last day of a session to introduce a bill like this. You do it at the beginning of a session. That's when you do it. If you are concerned about the pay of the MLAs (and I'm not going to argue whether an MLA receives enough money), if you feel that a member should have more money, then do it, but do it honestly and do it up front.

When you look at the number of members in this legislature and you are increasing that to 64, when you compare that with any other province in Canada — Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia — and take it on a per capita basis, then what do you have? You have more members in this legislature than you have anywhere else. Why do we need that many? Why don't we accept that we can handle this job with fewer people, pay them what they are worth if you feel that that's what has to be done, but let's not wait till the last minute in a session to do it. Bring it in at the beginning of the session. If you want to double the salaries that's fine, do it. But bring it in at the beginning. If you want to increase it 500 per cent, bring it in at the beginning of the session — not tonight, not at a time like this. That is not being reasonable.

I want to tell you a little story, Mr. Speaker. It will give you an indication of the concerns this government has toward low-income people and senior citizens. Last Saturday morning I received a telephone call from a lady who is 86 years of age. This is what she told me. She had heard my comment Friday night on the television, so she felt she had to phone me to tell me the story.

Last month, the federal government raised her old age security by \$6. I was under the impression, Mr. Speaker, that it was supposed to be indexed based on the cost of living. She said, "Mr. Rousseau, I have a little money put aside, enough for my family to bury me, and I receive a little interest money from a bond. That's the extra money I have, plus my old age security." But she said, "I was also receiving from the Government of Saskatchewan through a program called the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, prior to April, \$14 a month." Now you know what I am going to tell you — or don't you?

AN HON. MEMBER: — They took it away from her.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — That's right, Mr. Speaker. Because she received a \$6 per month increase from the old age security from the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan took it away from her under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. They took it from \$14 a month to \$8 a month. That, Mr. Premier, is the concern you have for the senior citizens of this province and the people on low income. That's the concern you have. And you talk about the 1 per cent reduction that you have given the people in income tax. You talk about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I had intended to talk about that.

I didn't hear the minister tonight refer in his remarks (being the wealthiest province in

Canada right here in Saskatchewan) to the 15 per cent of our population (which is 3 per cent above the national average) who live below the poverty line. Nor did I hear him mention the 37.3 per cent of the unattached who live below the poverty line.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should not just take those glorious statements he wishes to make from his budget and compare it to Ontario. Why doesn't he encompass it all and talk about the whole package? You will find out, Mr. Minister, that the people of Saskatchewan have serious concerns.

It is past 10 o'clock. I could go on all night on that subject. Unfortunately, it is falling on deaf ears. Concern for the people of Saskatchewan is far less than the concern was for the increase in their own expense accounts, the increase in their pension plan which "ups" them.

You compare that, Mr. Premier, to what that lady who is 86 years of age told me on Saturday morning, and it makes you wonder about why the financial needs of a member of this legislature should be of greater concern. It is a sad commentary, when we have to close a session with the notes I have just made. It is a sad commentary on the process and the way this government operates. I only hope that the people of Saskatchewan can look forward in the years to come to something a little better than what was displayed by this government this year and in this session.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to beg the indulgence of the members of the House to just make a few remarks on what might be the wrap-up debate of this particular session, and what might be the last day or evening of this session. One never knows for sure with the opposition opposite when someone might say something which offends their delicate sensitivities and creates yet another crisis with respect to this Legislative Assembly.

I would like to say, on the occasion of closing today's session (or the debate, on the assumption that, indeed, it is a closing), that in my judgment this has been a good (perhaps one might describe it as an everyday, garden variety) session which we have just completed — 66 days.

We all started off with high expectations. I remember coming into this session in November fully expecting to see that invisible man taking his place as the Leader of the Opposition — called Mr. Grant Devine.

I know the Conservatives came into this session 66 sitting days ago fully expectant that they would be here now with the new Leader of the Opposition firmly in control, articulating the policies with strength, keeping the member for Thunder Creek in line, telling the member for Qu'Appelle that he really was the leader of the party — not the member for Qu'Appelle. How those expectations have melted away, Mr. Speaker. They melted away like the winter snow always melts away in April and May. Here we see in front of us the same rag-tag opposition of 14 guys and one very illustrious member for Maple Creek with no positive alternatives. We see the same gloom and doom, the same wrecking crew, which repeatedly has marked its five-year appearance in this House with nothing but negativism.

The members opposite say that this is a tiring government. I want to tell you that it's going to take us a lifetime of tiring to tire out to the extent that this opposition is already

tired out after five years. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it would take us an absolute lifetime of growing old, at 125 bills a session, to be anywhere near the official opposition in this House, which if you go down the blues, is devoid of any kind of a positive policy alternative for the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

I'm sorry. That's not quite true — not totally devoid of all the policy alternatives. After all, we do have the environmental Magna Carta which is a policy alternative.

So, starting off from those very high expectations, looking for that invisible man (I'm still looking for that invisible man), the government came to do its job. I think we did our job.

Mr. Speaker, just this evening I went through the bills. This would be my selection of some of the bills we have passed — maybe not everybody's. There were the amendments to The Trade Union Act to clarify the question of the strike votes. The members opposite may not accept them, but I think that is an important piece of legislation. The representation act, which the member for Regina South just finished criticizing us on (recommended unanimously by an independent commission headed by judges), I think, talks about democracy and representation. There was The Automobile Accident Insurance Act (the raising of ceilings); the Dental Therapists Act; a brand new Jury Act, after 50 years; a new Trust and Loan Corporations Act; The Education Act, a ward system and other things related to education; surface rights acquisition and compensation bill. The hon. member for Thunder Creek would say it's a waste, I suppose.

I would like to tell that to the surface rights group when I meet with it again in late June. I met with approximately 250 surface rights members, as it so happens, about two weeks before the Estevan by-election. We made the promises to them on surface rights that we would do what we did, and we did it. The hon. member for Thunder Creek, I will be pleased to report to them (actually sad to report to them), said that it doesn't make that such a big thing in the Estevan area. There was surface rights acquisition, beef stabilization, agricultural implements act. The Leader of the Opposition argued about how we should do something for the North Battleford Tetrault situation. So, we moved The Agricultural Implements Act. That, according to the member for Thunder Creek, the member for Qu'Appelle, and the member who just took his seat, is nothing at all.

The economic development corporation bill, the vehicles bill . . . One could go on; take your own selection of the legislation, which I say marks a very productive session on behalf of the members of the House. Tie that on top, Mr. Speaker, to the budget presented by my colleague, the Minister of Finance — a budget on which I would be proud to go to the electorate of the province of Saskatchewan. I tell you those are not the actions of a tired government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — We came, Mr. Speaker, to work, yet there's no invisible man. We were ready to do our job. What about the opposition? Did it do its job after 66 days? The hon. member for Regina South had it all capsulized in his 10 minute address. He tried to highlight the highlights from the opposition's point of view. What were the highlights? First of all, there was the SGI-ReMor situation. You remember that, of course, Mr. Speaker? All of the people of Saskatchewan remember ReMor. All of the people would remember how the SGI (so the opposition thinks) underwent a form of

attack on something like ReMor or the resale of the building. All of these issues or scandals really have amounted to nothing. Mr. Speaker, SGI has run a deficit in two years out of nearly 40 years of operation and has provided the lowest insurance rates in all of Canada or next to lowest insurance rates in all of Canada. The opposition has come here to try to make an issue out of that. Well, that was one of the highlights from the opposition side.

What then about the other highlights from the opposition? Of course, there was the environmental Magna Carta as an opposition highlight. If that didn't tickle your fancy, there was the highlight of Kamsack. I think if the people of Saskatchewan didn't know where Kamsack was before this session, they will know where Kamsack is now as a result of the opposition's attack in this area. Then if you didn't like Kamsack, Mr. Speaker, there was the question of having SGI calendars — the ones which had April Fool's Day twice. That proved out again to be another waylaid opposition attack.

Then, of course, in the last couple of days of the session (belatedly) there is this question of interest rates. All of a sudden, after 66 days in the House, the Conservatives, in their new found concern for all the old people on senior citizens' pensions and those who are involved with respect to the poverty line, take the last three days to seize on the question of what they think is the poverty line and the concerns of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the members of this House that if anybody believes that the voters of Saskatchewan or the senior citizens of Saskatchewan would put their faith in the Conservatives opposite to be the guardians of their interests, it would be tantamount to the old saying "putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop." Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no chance whatsoever that the people of this province will be taken by the requests of the Conservatives opposite that they speak in this area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Well, here we are after 66 days and the government has done its job and presented 125 bills. There is nothing from the opposition. I am asked by the press, "Tell me, has this Conservative opposition after five years finally improved?" After all, it's only been five years since they were sitting here and they are not quite sure how the opposition works. You know I say that the Conservative opposition has improved 100 per cent. I should hasten to add something very quickly lest one Mr. Spetz takes that comment out of context and says that Roy Romanow says the opposition has improved 100 per cent. I say the Tories have improved 100 per cent — they've gone from 0 to 1. That's 100 per cent improvement, but on a scale of 100, it's not very much improvement whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, they have no policy alternatives. We do have, of course, the invisible man's policy for economic progress in the province of Saskatchewan. Here's what the PC leader, Mr. Devine, said in the *Leader-Post*, about three days ago, speaking in Yorkton (I want this to be noted, Mr. Speaker, by you and members of the press, if they're at all interested):

A Conservative government, if elected in the next provincial election (get this, Mr. Speaker) would stimulate more growth by eliminating the province's sales tax and (hold our breath, Mr. Speaker) by cutting Saskatchewan's income tax by 10 per cent.

The Saskatchewan Conservative Party would develop the province and fight inflation by establishing a public utilities review commission, a rural gas distribution system and a program to assist in the irrigation of farmland.

Mr. Speaker, if we eliminate the sales tax we will have cut out from Saskatchewan's budget forever, every year, \$300 million; that's the price tag. If we cut out 10 per cent from the personal income tax, we'll have cut out an additional \$400 million. Now we're up to \$700 million. If we take the member for Kindersley's suggestion to get out of the royalties field (the provincial royalties field and oil taxation, because it's too high), we'll have cut out another \$400 million, Mr. Speaker. I have worked this out, at a rough figure, to be something in the neighborhood of about \$900 million to \$1.2 billion in lost revenues each and every year that the Conservative leader would promise the people of Saskatchewan. At the same time, he would bring in, at a cost of \$1 billion, gas systems in the province of Saskatchewan, untold millions of dollars in an irrigation program and, of course, a non-expensive and equally ineffective public utilities review board.

Mr. Speaker, that is how the Conservatives in the province of Saskatchewan are going to balance the budget. That is how they promise fiscal responsibility. I ask any member of this Assembly or the press to tell me if that is worthy of an opposition ready to take government. It's nonsense, Mr. Speaker, and total irresponsibility, and the people of Saskatchewan know about it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Not only is there no policy, Mr. Speaker, but there is no leadership. I'm not going to talk any more about the questions of the leadership issue for a man who's not here to defend himself, the invisible man — the \$6 million invisible man leading the soon-to-be invisible Conservative Party in the province of Saskatchewan.

But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that leadership has always been an important part of any government and it's particularly important in this province, in this government, because people want to see some alternatives. I see that there are going to be some very important future issues in this province, as we wrap up this session — issues which have only been touched on by the Conservatives opposite and which I would be pleased to debate and exploit.

I think that issue number one is responsibility, responsible opposition and government. When somebody gets up in Yorkton or in this legislature and tells the province of Saskatchewan that they're going to reduce the income annually by \$1 billion, I tell the people of Saskatchewan, don't trust that person because he is not telling you the truth. That's not responsibility.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I say that on the issues of responsibility and credibility, Mr. Speaker, any political party that tells you it is going to cut back \$1 billion in income and provide you with nearly \$2 billion in additional services, is taking the people of Saskatchewan for granted and should be treated accordingly at the next election, which is going to be the case. That's issue number one — responsibility and integrity and credibility.

Issue number two, Mr. Speaker, is the question of resource ownership. The member for Kindersley and the member for Qu'Appelle, followed by the member for Maple Creek, want us to get out of the oil resource taxation area. Mr. Devine has gone around the oil patch, and he has been assisted by the member for Kindersley. He says that the Government of Saskatchewan should step down and back down in its resource battle with Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, this province in 1905 did not have resources as a constitutional right. We got it after 25 years of fighting in 1930 under the resources transfers agreements act, and we got it, Mr. Speaker, because the members in Ottawa said that act would be the corner of provincial financing. Those were the exact words. And we got it because they said we should level out the booms and the busts of our agricultural areas. Now, after 40 years, in 1973-74, we finally got a chance in the province of Saskatchewan to get those resource revenues to diversify our economy and to give our young men and women jobs and opportunity in Saskatchewan, only to see the Conservative Party of the province say it is going to do away with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — . . . only to see, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Conservatives, aided by all of those who would be leaders, say that we should be backing down, only to see the chance for the people of Saskatchewan for industrialization and economic stabilization shot down. I want to tell the members of this House that this is an issue on which we want to hear the Conservatives because we are going to tell the people of the province.

I think there are other important areas too, Mr. Speaker, areas untouched. I think of the whole farming area of beef stabilization, and the position taken by the member for Thunder Creek on behalf of the Conservative Party; the member for Thunder Creek, who took every kind of position he could, opposed the beef stabilization. He sees this as a thin edge in the wedge of getting into orderly marketing. He wants to see the orderly marketing proposal done away with. He and his colleagues today, on private members' day, got up and they voted against the amendment on the Canadian Wheat Board. And that's echoed by the Leader of the Opposition and by the invisible men who do not believe that there should be any kind of orderly marketing, who want to throw our farming people once again to the whims of the free enterprise system. That's what they want to do. They say, "Bring in Cargill; forget about branch lines; forget about crowrates."

You tie in all those things, Mr. Speaker, and I want to tell you the people of this province want to know about the issue of farming. They want to know stabilization. They want to know where you stand on crowrates, and believe me, notwithstanding how much you wriggle and writhe away from it, we are going to force you to show your true colors to the people of the province of Saskatchewan in this regard.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — And then, of course, Mr. Speaker, there is also the question of Crown corporations. The member for Regina South says, "No, we are not against Crown corporations." It's not true. Mr. Speaker, they are. Here's what the member himself said only a few months ago. This is from public accounts and I'm quoting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did not say this in public

accounts. He's correct. Here is the page with what the member for Regina South did say. He said, "We must reduce government . . ." Get this, Mr. Speaker. He said . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! It's obvious this debate is going to last the full two days, and everybody should be able to get into the debate in an orderly fashion. I'm sure all members will want to wait until the Attorney General makes his remarks, and then they can respond to them in an efficient manner as is desirable in this Chamber.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, issue number four is going to be Crown corporations. The hon. members can try and yell me down if they want, but issue number four is going to be Crown corporations because the hon. member for Regina South said in this legislature, this session round:

We must reduce government acquisitions in the areas of the private sector where government has no business being.

That's out of *Hansard*; that's right. So what does that mean about the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan? What does the mean about the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation? What does it mean about the Saskatchewan Government Insurance? Is the private sector in an area of government insurance in which the government has no business being? Mr. Speaker, what does that mean? That's what the member for Regina South said . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're right. It wasn't the member for Regina South; it was the member for Moosomin who said this:

In concluding this morning, Mr. Chairman, I wish to make it clear that we in the Progressive Conservative Party are not against Crown corporations when they serve a purpose that is instrumental to the common good of all of the people of Saskatchewan. When I say we are not against Crown corporations, I certainly refer, in particular, to utility corporations — up until this year. We are now, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and out of their concern, beginning to question whether or not government's involvement, even in utility corporations, let alone resource development through the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, is the route to go.

Those are the exact words of the Conservative member for Moosomin. He said those words. The member for Regina South said those words. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this attack on SGI and Crown corporations is nothing more or less than a full-scale beginning attack by the Conservatives to dismantle the Crown corporations which the people of this province have so carefully built up.

I want to close by saying that there is always going to be the issue of leadership credibility. I started out and I close with the question of leadership. Oh, I could talk about the member for Thunder Creek and his statements about hospitalization and medicare. That will be for another session at another time. I could talk about some of the other points regarding the Conservatives and their social service policies, but in the end all of it will boil down (all of the 125 bills — our budget, our Crown corporations, our fight for resources, the constitution) to trust in leadership.

I want to tell the hon. members opposite (and I tell them the absolute truth on this and they know it) that so long as they remain divided, as they are so pitifully in this House and so long as they are saddled with (as nice a person as he may be) a person who clearly has no profile, not public identification, absolutely no concept of what Saskatchewan should be (the invisible man), better than I could every say it, it's written

all over their faces that the chances of them getting power are next to nil. They know that and they know that the next battle is the battle that they have had twice and lost twice — the battle of getting their leader elected. They know it is a battle that is unprecedented probably anywhere in Canadian politics. They know that the people of Saskatchewan will never choose a disparate group, ranging from the right-wing extremism of the member for Regina South and the member for Thunder Creek on the one hand, to the pseudo left wingism of the member for Kindersley, and who knows where the member for Arm River stands?

I realize that the member for Kindersley is in real deep trouble now with the members opposite, but that isn't the reality of the situation and everyone in the press gallery knows that. Everyone in the public knows the difficulty that you people face, and is it therefore any wonder that to come forward with 30 alternatives with the same net result of all of the big issues, Kamsack has ended up with headlines, and the issues of fiscal arrangements and resources and constitution and EPF (established programs finance), and post-secondary education and crowrates have all gone unattended by the opposition?

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude on these remarks. I would not bet a plugged nickel on the Tory chances in 1982, 1983 or whenever the next election, provincial election is held. I wouldn't bet a plugged nickel on any of them. I tell you that if they keep up this performance of inconsistency, if they believe that opposition is trying to rake up so-called scandals, and raking up so-called scandals only, if they think that governments are defeated because of the Kamsacks and the ReMors only, then I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't bet a plugged nickel on their chances. If I were them, I would watch out for the Liberal Party in 1982-83.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I would watch out for them. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, their loud laughs don't nearly sound as loud in my ears as the quiet fear which I know exists in that operation.

Mr. Speaker, this legislative session was productive. It was not bad. It had its moments. Regrettably, the opposition has failed in its job of doing the job of opposing, and the people of Saskatchewan know it. Mr. Speaker, I shall be supporting this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the closing words of the House Leader opposite when he talked about the Liberal Party. I think he knows something about the Liberal Party that no one else does. Somehow that doesn't surprise me, Mr. Speaker. It is called "pillow talk." It is all those late night sessions when he is not home because he and the Premier opposite are in bed with Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Jean Chretien; all those late nights that they can't tell anybody about. They have an inside track with the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker. We found that out in Estevan. We found that out in the constitution. We found out, Mr. Speaker, that if the Liberal Party in this province is going to do anything, it is going to do it with the tacit and active co-operation, wheeling and dealing, and support of the government opposite.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about consistency. On the one hand, he says the ReMor, the Mafia, the Albertino, (and what was the other little scandal?) meant nothing. They were nothing. Then, he closes his remarks by saying that if you think a government is going to

be defeated by finding out about scandals and backroom deals, you are wrong. Be consistent. On one hand, you say they are terrible scandals and they don't mean anything to the public. On the other hand, you say that they don't mean anything. Make up your mind.

You know the highlight of this session was when the government opposite, with its new frontier leader from the back, stands up and says, "We have to build bomb shelters underneath, and not new housing or shelters for the people; bomb shelters are what we need." They are co-op underground bunkers. That is what he calls for. That is the new housing policy of the government opposite brought in by the new frontier leadership wing of the 1980s of the New Democratic Party — bomb shelters. We spent more time on El Salvador and bomb shelters than we did with respect to the poor, the sick, the hungry, those who can't get housing and those particular problems in this province. Bomb shelters. Never in my life . . . With inflation coming in at 12 and 23 per cent, the U.S. rate hitting 20 per cent, we are on the verge of 20 per cent, and they want to talk about bomb shelters. They say they have done their job. That's the record they are so proud to take to the people of this province.

The House Leader says that the government has proudly done its job this session. What job has it done? It put in 66 days. That's about it. Did it take any action to clear up the problems in Kamsack? No. Did it take any action to clear the serious financial problems which SGI had? No. Did it take any action for the first-time home buyers in the province of Saskatchewan? No, it didn't. Did it take any action to ease the inflationary burden on the farmers of this province? No, it didn't. Did it take any action to ease the inflationary burden on the small businessmen of this province? No, it didn't. Did it take any action to deal with those below the poverty line? No, it didn't.

What happened, Mr. Speaker? What happened to the days when the NDP used to proudly talk about their social activism and helping people? Mr. Speaker can well remember those days. Maybe even some of the press can. Where was it in this session? Where were those issues that affect the livelihood of the people of this province? Where were the discussions?

We talked about bomb shelters. That's what we talked about. We talked about government pension plan and government medicare in Alberta. We talked about Ontario income tax. We talked about that doggone Alberta over there cutting its taxes so low that we would try to ignore them. Have we dealt with one single, substantive concern of the people of this province? This Assembly hasn't. This Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is proof positive of what many of the press and most of the people of this province are saying, that the government opposite is bankrupt of ideas; it is bankrupt of suggestions, and it is at a complete loss as to what to do to help the people of this province fight inflation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — Give me one suggestion that this government has come up with to help the people of this province and the voters of this province. The Attorney General, very interesting in his diatribe, never mentioned one single, concrete suggestion or idea or proposal to help the people of this province to fight inflation — not one!

It is the first time, as a matter of fact, that we have had an NDP government (and I suggest anywhere in Canada), that has come in and proudly said that it doesn't want an

irrigation policy. That's the first time and we are very, very glad to hear the Attorney General attack us for wanting an irrigation policy for this province. I'm going to tell you we are going to take that proudly into Morse, into Shaunavon, and into some of these many other ridings which have been crying for an irrigation policy and an irrigation plan and an irrigation proposal. It's the first time and I want everyone to remember that the Deputy Premier came out against irrigation for the farmers of Saskatchewan. That's a day of infamy for those who want a diversified rural Saskatchewan. This is the first time, but we are glad because we were a little concerned.

There was some indication by the minister responsible for Sask Power that Sask Power was considering a rural gas distribution system. We are very glad to hear tonight that the NDP, the Premier and the Deputy Premier are against a rural gas distribution system for the province of Saskatchewan. I am very glad the Attorney General has finally had the courage to tell the people of Saskatchewan where he stands. It has been long overdue.

We are very glad tonight to hear, for the first time, an NDP government and an ND Party which is against a significant tax cut for the people of Saskatchewan. We're very glad to hear that the Attorney General is against a 10 per cent across-the-board tax cut; we're very glad to hear that. It is the first New Democratic Party to oppose significant tax cuts for the people of this province. The Attorney General says that's \$400 million. He's the same one who says zero times one is one (or whatever it is). That's very basic mathematics. My calculation of a 10 per cent cut across the board of individual income tax, according to his budget . . .

Let me tell you, I certainly learned something about shady accounting or fancy fiscal accounting in the Crown corporations. Ten per cent of \$409 million comes out to roughly \$40 million. Let me tell you, there are several Crown corporations that have that amount sitting in their bloated treasuries and they won't be allowed to pass it on to the people of Saskatchewan.

That's what the Attorney General is against. They are against significant tax cuts. They are against passing on the resource savings directly to the people of this province. For the first time, we have had the Government of Saskatchewan make a firm, unalterable commitment to continuation of higher taxes, with no benefits being passed on and no help to the people of this province.

I ask you: what did we accomplish? For the poor, nothing; for the farmers, nothing; for the taxpayers, nothing; for the home-owners, nothing; for the consumers, nothing; for the senior citizens, nothing. Let them rally in the streets tomorrow on their knees to say thank you to the government for the benefits. They won't be out there because, in these times of inflation, all they got was a bare plate — promises, words, nothing.

They talk about leadership. The Attorney General says he is so proud of the leadership. If you've ever seen a man who has hit the peak of potential in the party, it was evidenced when he had to defend in this Assembly (and I say defend, never, never attack or propose) the Premier of this province and he's had to defend him for very good reason.

The total lack of leadership that the Premier of this province and the government of this province gave on the constitution will be remembered, I say, forever in this province as the day of infamy, the day when Saskatchewan sold out western Canada, the day that Saskatchewan (for 40 pieces of silver, or whatever) said, "We're not going to support the rest of western Canada; we're going to sell you out. Pierre, whatever you said to Ed in bed last night is fine. We'll honor that and we'll stand out here and take a neutral

position for as long as you need it. At some point we may have to take a stand, but right now we certainly don't have to and until we do, you do what you want, Mr. Trudeau. You bring in a constitution that's going to cost Saskatchewan its heritage; you bring in a constitution that's going to take away Saskatchewan's resources; you go right ahead, because I'm going to stand idly by while you wreak havoc on the people of this province." That's leadership? That's their definition of leadership?

Mr. Speaker, we see farmers bankrupt; we see small businesses going bankrupt; we see small consumers going bankrupt. And the one thing which came through in this session is that the government, after nearly 40 years in this province, is bankrupt of ideas and bankrupt of suggestions. The tragedy of all is that it is bankrupt of concrete assistance to help the inflation fighting people of this province; it is bankrupt of any concrete financial help to the people of this province who truly need it during these times of inflation. That is the first time that an NDP government has ever been in that position.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to and bill read a second and third time.

ROYAL ASSENT AND PROROGATION

At 10:46 p.m. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne and gave royal assent to the following bills:

Bill No. 66 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Act

Bill No. 72 — An Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Congregation Agudas Israel

Bill No. 04 — An Act respecting the Montreal Trust Company and the Montreal Trust Company of Canada

Bill No. 06 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Notre Dame College

Bill No. 55 — An Act to amend The Executions Act

Bill No. 57 — An Act respecting the Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan

Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Wills Act

Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend The Liquor Licensing Act

Bill No. 67 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Superannuation Act

Bill No. 68 — An Act to amend The Securities Act

Bill No. 69 — An Act respecting Trust and Loan Corporations

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Bill No. 73 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act

Bill No. 81 — An Act to amend The University of Regina Act

Bill No. 82 — An Act to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act

Bill No. 86 — An Act to amend The Labor Standards Act

Bill No. 80 — An Act respecting The Medical Profession

Bill No. 03 — An Act respecting St. Peter's Hospital, Melville, being An Act to amend and consolidate An Act to incorporate St. Peter's Hospital, Melville

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Radville Christian College

Bill No. 07 — An Act to incorporate the Canadian Baptist Theological College

Bill No. 79 — An Act to amend The Veterinarians Act

Bill No. 50 — An Act to amend The Rural Municipalities Act

Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Fuel Petroleum Products Act

Bill No. 56 — An Act respecting Jurors and Juries

Bill No. 58 — An Act to amend The Air Pollution Control Act

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Provincial Lands Act

Bill No. 60 — An Act to amend The Department of Agriculture Act

Bill No. 62 — An Act to amend The Northern Saskatchewan Economic Development Act

Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Water Resources Management Act

Bill No. 85 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Jury Act, 1981

Bill No. 87 — An Act to amend The Unified Family Court Act

Bill No. 89 — An Act to amend The Marriage Act

Bill No. 90 — An Act to amend The Department of the Environment Act

Bill No. 91 — An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act

Bill No. 92 — An Act to amend The Intestate Succession Act

Bill No. 93 — An Act to amend The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act

Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend The Department of Health Act

Bill No. 75 — An Act to amend The Family Services Act

Bill No. 76 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Assistance Act

Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Rehabilitation Act

Bill No. 78 — An Act to amend The Housing and Special-care Homes Act

Bill No. 114 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the amalgamation of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan and the District Court for Saskatchewan

Bill No. 115 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Medical Profession Act, 1981

Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting Electrical Wiring and Inspection and the Sale and Installation of Electrical Apparatus and Material

Bill No. 74 — An Act to amend The Income Tax Act

Bill No. 83 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979

Bill No. 97 — An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act

Bill No. 98 — An Act to amend The Hospital Standards Act

Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act

Bill No. 101 — An Act to amend The Personal Property Security Act

Bill No. 105 — An Act to amend The Legal Profession Act

Bill No. 106 — An Act to amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act

Bill No. 108 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act

Bill No. 109 — An Act respecting the Assessment of Real Property, Businesses and Special Franchises

Bill No. 111 — An Act to amend The Condominium Property Act

Bill No. 21 — An Act respecting Representation in the Legislative Assembly

Bill No. 102 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (No. 4)

Bill No. 103 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act

Bill No. 107 — An Act respecting the Economic Development Foundation of Saskatchewan

Bill No. 110 — An Act to amend The Vehicles Act (No. 3)

Bill No. 112 — An Act to amend The Crown Corporations Act, 1978

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Bill No. 118 — An Act to amend The Executions Act (No. 2)

Bill No. 100 — An Act to amend The Cattle Marketing Voluntary Deductions Act

Bill No. 104 — An Act to amend The Election Act

Bill No. 113 — An Act to amend The Agricultural Implements Act

Bill No. 116 — An Act to amend The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979

Bill No. 70 — An Act to amend The Education Act

Bill No. 95 — An Act respecting the Stabilization of Returns to Beef Producers in Saskatchewan

Bill No. 117— An Act to amend The Statute Law

Bill No. 119 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the public service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively March 31, 1981 and March 31, 1982

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor was then pleased to deliver the following speech:

Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to relieve you of further attendance at the Legislative Assembly. In doing so, I wish to thank you and congratulate you on the work you have done.

Following the recommendation of the constituency boundaries commission, you have provided for the establishment of new constituencies for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly.

You have taken steps to ensure the long-term development and planning of the Wakamow Valley for the enjoyment and benefit of the citizens of Moose Jaw and district.

In order to prevent extreme fluctuations in returns for the province's beef producers, you have passed a beef stabilization act. You have approved amendments to The Education Act to implement the ward system for elections in the larger school divisions.

In recognition of the unique role of the jury in our judicial system you have provided for changes in the law relating to the selection of jurors and the qualification of people for jury duty. You have approved changes in the licensing procedures for the medical profession.

In order to clarify the rules respecting payments on farm implements for farmers and implement dealers, you have passed amendments to The Agricultural Implements Act. You have provided for a complete revision of the law relating to trust and loan companies.

In establishing the Economic Development Foundation of Saskatchewan, you have

provided a mechanism for government, the private sector, and native people to co-operate to bring about greater economic opportunities for native people.

You have strengthened the rights of the oil industry and landowners by approving amendments to The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act.

You have provided for a new association for dental therapists and for the incorporation of urban municipal administrators.

To ensure more government financial assistance for agricultural research, you have approved amendments to The Department of Agriculture Act.

I thank you for the provision you have made to meet the further requirements of the public service and I assure you that this sum of money will be used economically, prudently, and in the public interest.

In taking leave of you, I thank you for the manner in which you have devoted your energies to the activities of the session and wish you the full blessing of Providence.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislative Assembly, it is the will and pleasure of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor that this Legislative Assembly be prorogued until it pleases His Honor to summon the same for the dispatch of business, and the Legislative Assembly is accordingly prorogued.

His Honor then retired from the Chamber at 10:56 o'clock p.m.