

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 3, 1981

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you, and to the members of this Assembly, 33 grade 4 students from Dr. Perry School in Regina. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Inglis, and two chaperones (I believe they are two chaperones), Mrs. Muill and Miss Woodyat. They are sitting in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming this group to the Assembly this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the hon. member for Regina South in welcoming the students from Dr. Perry School. I hope they find this afternoon enjoyable and enlightening. I hope that those accompanying them find it interesting as well. I wish you a very interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Uranium City Layoffs

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier on what would appear to be a fairly momentous day in this Assembly, my question will go to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Attorney General, today a death warrant was served on a town in Saskatchewan, namely Uranium City. Eight hundred and thirty employees today were informed that effective next June they will not have employment. I cannot believe that the government was taken completely unaware by this announcement. I cannot believe that the government did not have advance warning that this announcement was imminent. My question to you is simply this. What plans do you have for the salvation of Uranium City and the employees and their dependents who depend on this crown corporation for their existence?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to advise the House that the Premier is in Saskatoon addressing the Saskatoon Board of Trade.

The second observation I should like to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the government, as I understand it, was first notified of this matter yesterday by Eldorado Nuclear and because of the time frame has not been able to give adequate and full consideration to this.

My third observation is that there have been many death warrants signed for the people of Uranium City in the past and somehow they have been able to overcome them. I don't

know if that is the case in this instance or not. But in any event the government, through the Minister of Mineral Resources and other responsible officials, will undoubtedly be seeking to meet with Eldorado Nuclear, town people and others concerned to assess the situation to see what can be done.

MR. THATCHER: — Supplementary question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. Mr. Minister, in the announcement today, Eldorado Nuclear indicated that it would take \$450 million over the next five years to keep the plant operating. Eldorado Nuclear also indicated that they foresaw no indication anywhere that the world situation will change in the foreseeable future. That world situation includes a price of \$50 per tonne five years ago . . . \$27 per tonne . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Per pound!

MR. THATCHER: — Per pound, excuse me. Eldorado Nuclear was saying (and it has stated) that they foresee no change in the world conditions. Eight hundred and thirty employees are down the tubes in Uranium City today, Mr. Minister. My question to you is this. Is it fair to say that the great cornerstone of the NDP resource policy today in this Assembly lies in a rubble of untruths, deceit, misrepresentation and misinformation?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, I think that would be putting it a little strongly. I want to say in response to the member's comments prior to his question, in that the Eldorado mine is an underground mine which has very high operating costs, its operating costs this year would be over \$60 per pound. One can see that obviously the market is not the driving force in terms of the shut-down with respect to Uranium City.

Their ore grades have fallen over 40 per cent; they have carried out extensive studies in trying to identify higher ore grades, and they haven't found them. I believe the ore grades they are mining now are about 0.18 per cent uranium.

The costs, as I say, are well over \$60 per pound. They do say that even with the increase in the markets they foresee the mine will not be economic. I can point out to the member that even with the figure he used of \$50 per pound, which was obviously a high price (the high point on the curve of uranium prices), at operating costs of over \$60 per pound you are not going to have a very economic mine.

The costs continue to escalate for them; their ore grade continues to drop. They did extensive studies to try to identify higher ore grades in the mine; they were unable to find them. I think that the facts are, pure and simple (is they are as presented by Eldorado, which I have no reason to doubt), that with the costs as they are, the mine has simply run out. The ore grade is so low it is uneconomic under any plausible scenario for uranium prices; it's an underground mine. The other mines that are being constructed and are in place in Saskatchewan are open-pit mines and their costs are very substantially less. We are seeing now in the United States, and we will see in the next year, closures of mines there which are old with very low-grade ore, and we will see taking their place the mines in Australia and in northern Saskatchewan which are open-pit, with high-grade ore and much lower operating costs.

MR. THATCHER: — A supplementary question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. The minister is aware, I am sure, that today Esso Minerals, Canada, announced the postponement for at least five years of a \$650 million uranium project.

I'm sure that the minister is aware that part of the statement of Esso Minerals is basically

that they could not obtain sufficient commitments to justify the original timetable. Those are the words of Esso Minerals, not mine. I'm sure the minister is aware that many uranium mines in the United States have closed. I'm sure the minister is a subscriber to *Energy Analyst* and that he is aware of its comments in the October 16, 1981, edition that (if I can briefly paraphrase it) unless some of these Saskatchewan projects are cancelled there will be an even larger overcapacity.

In other words, Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: in light of the facts which I have just given you, doesn't that make the information you have just provided to us, about two minutes ago, misinformation, untrue and virtually deceitful?

Again, the cornerstone of the NDP resource policy lies in rubble and in a sea of cancellations and firings.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Esso project has never been announced in terms of a date. They've had target dates which have been moving targets. I have said all along that I thought they were optimistic.

AN HON. MEMBER: — 1985.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — That's 1985 and they haven't even gone through their environmental processes or anything else . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I defy the member opposite to find any statement I ever made that said Esso would proceed with a 1985 target date for start-up. The member is about as accurate on that as he is on everything else.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is no question that in terms of the Midwest Lake project, for example, they're going to come on stream later than originally forecast by Esso. I have been saying that for a year. If the member is surprised, then I'm surprised that he's surprised. You look at Gulf Minerals, for example. They're busy examining the Collins Bay deposit. You look at Amok. They're certainly optimistic in terms of the industry there. We're proceeding with Key Lake. I believe there will be markets for all of that uranium. There will be markets at reasonable prices, perhaps not as high as we would like. There will be profits and substantial revenues to the Government of Saskatchewan.

MR. THATCHER: — Final supplementary to the minister. Mr. Minister, every uranium market report and every uranium analyst is predicting precisely the opposite of what you have just extolled. Mr. Minister, you have invested over \$250 million of taxpayers' money out of the heritage fund. You have invested hundreds of millions of dollars through borrowing into the uranium industry. Is it fair to say, Mr. Minister, that you have played the role of the high roller, the big investor and the heavy speculator? If I may, I'll quote from your own family of crown corporations ad where you say, "It's your business." Mr. Minister, today the bottom fell out of your business. What are you going to do about it?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, nothing fell out of the bottom of anybody's business today. The price of uranium didn't drop and the forecast didn't. It wouldn't matter if the forecasts were indicating that in three years time the price of uranium would double; they still wouldn't be able to meet their operating costs in Uranium City. The basic problem is that the ore grade is declining and they can't identify any higher ore grade. Their costs continue to escalate. Under any reasonable scenario, even a very optimistic one with respect to prices (which is precisely what Eldorado says), there's no way that mine can be profitable. All one has to do is look at what's happening in

Australia and in northern Saskatchewan in the private sector with Gulf and Amok. Obviously, those people don't agree with the member opposite.

MR. ANDREW: — A question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. I understand that each of the partners of the Key Lake joint venture markets its share of the their own uranium, and I understand that Uranex Exploration and Mining Ltd. has five years of committed sales. Could you tell the Assembly, Mr. Minister, how much SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) has in committed sales from that mine?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, I can't give the member the precise number. I don't have it all added up, but I would think that at the present time, in terms of actually committed sales, it would be in the order of about 2 million pounds per year, starting with start-up.

MR. LANE: — We have received from the Minister of Mineral Resources, the minister responsible for SMDC, some very glowing projections over the years as to the great future of uranium in the province of Saskatchewan. "Uranium is the kingpin of future provincial prosperity" — that was an editorial by Mr. Greenshields. "Cowley says uranium marketing is critical in SMDC's future." He even offered at one point to purchase Eldorado Nuclear, which is how astute the hon. member was. "Uranium industry outlook promising for 1980" — that's from the president of SMDC. I can go on, and on, and on, on the quotes, but every quote by the hon. minister or the president of SMDC was about the glowing future of uranium mining in the province of Saskatchewan. Today that has proven to be false. The information given . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I haven't heard the question yet. The member is debating the issue, putting forward comments in such a way as to engender debate in the House. That is not the purpose of the question period. If the member has a question, please ask the question.

MR. LANE: — All the information given by the minister responsible or the president of SMDC, given the light of the highly inaccurate information and misleading information . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member for Qu'Appelle knows that a question begins with an interrogative, such as who, what, why, where or when, and that means he's asking a question. The member no sooner heard my ruling than he stood up and began to debate the issue again. I want the member to ask a question.

The member cited at least three examples. It was quite clear to me he was going to ask a question about uranium. I think the background was clear. I believe every fair-minded person in the House understood that; therefore, the member should get to the question.

MR. LANE: — I repeat it. In light of the highly misleading and deceptive information promoted by the minister responsible for mineral resources, including SMDC . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! Questions should be put in such a manner as not to engender debate.

It is the member for Qu'Appelle's opinion that certain information put forward by the

minister is deceptive, or whatever. That's debatable; that's his opinion. He has to ask the question. He is not permitted to give information or debate the issue. He has to be prepared to ask a question, and the minister can answer the question if he so sees fit. The minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, order!

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, under questioning about five minutes ago, you based the bulk of your answer for the situation in the uranium industry today on the fact that the Eldorado mine at Uranium City is a deep shaft mine. You didn't really get around to telling us why, if the only reason the mine is closing is the high cost of mining under this technology, Esso Minerals, which is putting in an open pit, which the minister initially extolled the virtues of because it could be done so economically . . . why a \$650 million project originally scheduled for 1985 is being put back at least five years.

Would the minister tell us, if his market people in the department of which he is in charge are telling him that the future is so wonderfully rosy, why these people are saying that the future is rotten? Would you please tell this Assembly, so we can tell the people of Saskatchewan, because, in case the minister has forgotten, he has spent several hundred million dollars of taxpayers' money.

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, in answer to the question I didn't get to answer, I haven't tendered my resignation and I don't intend to either.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. COWLEY: — That was just in case the member for Qu'Appelle was hoping he might soon be the recipient of a cabinet post.

Mr. Speaker, in response to the question from the member for Thunder Creek, I want to make a couple of comments with respect to the economics of the operation at Uranium City. It has two particular problems. One, it's deep and underground, which means it's high costs; and two, it has a very low ore grade. Those are two problems with which I don't think the member opposite would disagree. Midwest Lake is different from Key Lake, Rabbit Lake or Cluff Lake in that there is a much deeper deposit at Midwest Lake. It will either have to be underground mining, which because of the high grade of ore is going to be very expensive and which will involve some difficult technical problems, or else there will be a tremendous amount of overburden moved in order to get at the ore body. The costs, without any question, are going to be substantially higher than at the existing mines in northern Saskatchewan that are open pit and the one that is presently under construction at Key Lake.

I have not said (and I don't think the member can find it) that Midwest Lake was going to come on stream in '85. Indeed, I have been suggesting that I suspected their time frame was later. I have not seen the particular announcements that they made; I am not surprised at that. What I have been saying is that, with respect to the mines that are presently in production in Saskatchewan and the Key Lake mine, there will be markets for that uranium and there will be markets when Key Lake comes on stream for that uranium at reasonable prices. They may be \$40 or \$50 a pound, or closer to the levels they are today. Obviously I can't speculate about exactly where they will be, but I expect in the mid-1980s we will see a strengthening of uranium prices which, by the way, Eldorado speaks about in some of the releases they have made today. There will be perhaps a 25 per cent strengthening in prices, and a modest growth in the demand for uranium around the world.

MR. THATCHER: — The minister chooses to dance around the subject and not get to the point. Mr. Minister, would you tell us what studies your department has that give you the expertise (for want of a better word) to talk in the terms which you are choosing today? Because, Mr. Minister, today in a statement, Esso Resources says the prices are so depressed that it has caused closures in the United States. They say that originally, when they targeted the date of '85, they thought the high grade ore and the production costs would insulate them from what they knew was going to be a decline in uranium prices. Obviously, Mr. Minister, your department has information which is contrary to Esso Resources, contrary to Eldorado and contrary to the industry as a whole. Would the minister be prepared to table this information in the Assembly, and tell us the source?

Even further, Mr. Minister, you indicated that SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) had orders for two million pounds out of the project. Would you kindly tell us who they are and where they are? I challenge you to do so. I'll bet you a nickel you can't, because they don't exist!

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, we've been through discussions before of the marketing reports and my answer now is the same as then. I don't intend to table SMDC's marketing reports.

With respect, Mr. Speaker, to the point the member makes, he says that somehow today the circumstances have changed with respect to markets from yesterday. There is no evidence at all in any statements made by Eldorado, or by anybody else, that the market for uranium today is any different than it was yesterday. The basic decision that's been made by Eldorado with respect to the mine at Beaverlodge has been made because they can't get their ore grades to go up. In fact, they are going down, and their operating costs are now exceeding \$60 a pound.

I think the member for Thunder Creek himself would agree that with costs of production at over \$60 a pound, even a very optimistic and rosy scenario in terms of uranium prices wouldn't justify such operating costs. Eldorado indicates in its statements that even assuming a 25 per cent increase in price, the company would have to borrow large sums of money every year in order to keep the mine and mill open and would never be able to repay the debt. The amount they are talking about (these are Eldorado's figures, not mine) to keep the mine open for five years, they would have to borrow \$450 million. If you look at the level of production at Uranium City the member can see that it has nothing basically to do with the market, unless one was assuming there was going to be an OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) price increase. The market is not the driving force behind the decision with respect to Beaverlodge; the driving force is the operating costs, primarily brought on by the decline in the ore grade.

MR. THATCHER: — A supplementary question to the minister. I note the minister declined the challenge to name the customers and where they are for the Uranerz project, and that's probably because they don't exist and never did exist and probably never will exist. I note the minister again dances around the project involving Esso Resources. This is the most important question. Already you have committed hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars to uranium projects which, on the basis of today's markets, have fallen flat on their faces. What I would like from you today is a definitive statement as to the future policies of your department and the Government of Saskatchewan in their field. All the private concerns and even crown corporations are backing off. Are we to expect that you're going to proceed in senseless headlong

spending of hundreds of millions dollars, in addition to what you've already spent, or are you going to follow the lead of the people who know the business and call a halt to this thing until things settle and you know exactly where you are going?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think, maybe we'll follow the lead of one group of people who know the business, and that's Eldorado, in the sense that they're going to continue . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no. The numbers the members are quoting are basically the investment in Key Lake. Eldorado is a partner in Key Lake and Eldorado is continuing to be a partner in Key Lake.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. COWLEY: — There is no suggestion on the part of Eldorado, either in their statements there or in any other statements they've made to me (or that I am aware of, to anybody else in North America or the rest of the world) that Key Lake isn't going to be an economic project under current and forecast conditions. So the member asks us to follow Eldorado and Uranerz people who presumably (if the member doesn't think we know anything about it) do know something about the uranium market and the economics of Key Lake. And that is exactly what we intend to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. COLLVER: — My question is to the Provincial Secretary, and I hope he will correct my memory if I'm wrong. During the course of the debate when the government introduced a Bill creating SMDC and other crown corporations such as the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, the minister specifically stated, on at least a dozen occasions that I know of, that the primary reason for the introduction of these crown corporations was in order that government could provide social benefits to the workers of those organizations and could temper the kinds of layoffs that occurred in the private sector. My question to the member is this: is Eldorado Nuclear a crown corporation or am I missing something?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, I wouldn't want to answer the question as to whether or not the member is missing anything, but it is my understanding that Eldorado is a crown corporation. It is a federal crown corporation. I suppose if the member wants to engage in debate, what's good for one crown corporation he'll say is good for another.

Certainly, I think historically, Eldorado has done a reasonably good job in terms of the amenities, etc., and the way in which it has treated its employees. If I can believe what they say, and I think I can, they have spent considerable time arriving at this decision. They have spent a considerable amount of money searching and looking for better ore bodies. They are concerned about the impact on their employees and the community. They have assured us that they will do everything reasonable in order to make the transition from an operating mine to a non-operating mine as painless as possible with respect to the employees. I think in that regard, certainly, what they're telling us and what they're saying in their news releases, etc., would suggest that they are operating in a way which is attempting to take into account the impact on the long-term and short-term employees and the community as best they can in difficult circumstances.

MR. COLLVER: — I would only ask the minister one final supplementary on that point. I would ask him to ask the 840 families in Uranium City who are affected by this decision of a crown corporation that is going to cost the taxpayers of Canada a large amount of money (and in light of the Government of Saskatchewan's actions in the uranium

business, it's going to cost the people of Saskatchewan a very large amount of money) whether they feel there's any difference between the answers that the minister just gave us today in this Assembly pertaining to that crown corporation shut-down and the shut-down of the Royalite refinery in the city of Saskatoon some years back, about which the member for Biggar was extremely critical. The same blither came from Gulf-Royalite at that time, when that refinery shut down, as just came out of the mouth of the minister responsible for the uranium industry in Saskatchewan. I ask the minister: will you ask those families in Uranium City whether they feel any better about this shut-down by a crown corporation than they would feel by a shut-down, whatever blither the company may give them, of a private corporation?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is any question that the employees would feel badly if the mine were shut down by anyone. There are two issues which the member doesn't deal with. One is what is the impact on the employees, will they be treated any differently or not; and two is would a private company have carried on as long as Eldorado and gone to the expense they did in trying to find out whether or not there were any higher grade ore bodies there which could prolong the life of the mine? I can't answer that question. It is a subjective judgment, obviously. Regardless of the fact, the member for Nipawin and I would probably disagree on that particular analysis of that situation. There is no question that the employees there will not react well.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

Address in Reply

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Chapman and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Berntson.

MR. COLLVER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned yesterday, when I adjourned debate on this motion, I want to mention a number of areas in which the NDP government has failed to provide the kinds of service and attention that the people of Saskatchewan should be entitled to.

Before I do that I want to make a few comments about the kind of situation which occurred in this Assembly today during question period. The Conservative opposition very ably and reasonably asked the Government of Saskatchewan what kind of action it was going to take in light of the uranium plant (Eldorado Nuclear) shut-down in Uranium City and the dramatic effect it would have on the 840 families who live in Uranium City. The government opposite proceeded, through the Provincial Secretary, the minister responsible for that agency, because the Premier is not in this Assembly . . . That seems to be the case when bad news happens in the province of Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I cannot recall one single occasion during my sojourn as a member of this legislative Chamber when bad news was announced in Saskatchewan and the Premier of Saskatchewan was here to answer questions. The point is, Mr. Speaker, he comes in when the good news happens. He spreads his wings and says, "I'm a beautiful person because I want to retain this 80 per cent acceptance factor." Let some hard facts occur; let 840 families face this Christmas without a job . . . Isn't it interesting that Eldorado Nuclear decided just before Christmas — this crown corporation, this member of the family of crown corporations — to let their employees know that there would no longer be jobs for

them. Isn't that wonderful what a big heart this family of crown corporations has? Billions of Saskatchewan peoples' dollars have been expended in the province of Saskatchewan on the family of crown corporations, on the pretext of time and time again advertising that they are so much better for the average citizen and for the worker, and that the crown corporations are going to deal with these employees beautifully. What happens to Eldorado Nuclear? They run out of ore. What happens to them when their mine is not efficient? Exactly the same thing as happens to a private sector company. They shut down and the 840 families have to go elsewhere for work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you are expending private monies and your own monies and risking your own monies on uranium mines or oil wells or potash mines or whatever, it is all very well to say that you can expend those monies because you believe the markets are going to be there and you are not going to have to shut down the mines. But when you expend tax monies, when you expend monies that should be expended for medicare, for proper dental care, to reduce the cost of utilities or to reduce the cost of taxation, when you spend money like that to gamble and risk on the uranium business in the province on the pretext that you are going to protect the employees, then you do so to the detriment of the people of the province and the people you are supposed to be serving.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday or the day before in this Assembly the Premier stated that the Sask Power Corporation had lost money. We don't know how much, but it had lost money in this current fiscal year. We guess somewhere in the vicinity of \$50 million or \$60 million, but we don't know because no one has released that information yet.

Mr. Speaker, although the potash corporation has made some paper profits in the last five years, this is not going to be the year for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. There are layoffs in the industry all over the province right now. The Bredenbury project has been delayed and delayed; I suspect indefinitely. The expansion in some of the mines is failing to go ahead. Sales of potash are not what they were and prices are not what they were. So we have losses in Sask Power; we have losses in Sask Potash. And now we find out that this glorious investment in uranium is not only not going to come on stream in the short term but is going to create the kinds of layoffs and job losses that the Government of Saskatchewan stated that it was going into this industry to prevent. And it is going to come from one of the family of crown corporations, Eldorado Nuclear.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's irrational in the light of certain other facts that have recently become known in the province of Saskatchewan. The NDP is great at talking about the benefits of socialism, about "Remembering the people," they say. But they remember the people and forget the person. They say they are going into this mining in the North and investing tax dollars in these heavy risk mines to benefit the people. But they forget the persons who are living in Uranium City, who are going to lose their jobs as a result of their expansion and over capacity in the northern part of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, they are providing medicare but they are providing no medical care. There are waiting lists all over the province of Saskatchewan, lists that take anywhere from

three months to fourteen months for sick people, injured people, to get into the hospital. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we don't have enough specialists. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we don't have enough nurses. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we don't have the modern equipment and the modern technology. Why, Mr. Speaker? Not only because the Government of Saskatchewan is committing its monies to these foolhardy and foolish pie-in-the-sky schemes in the northern part of Saskatchewan, these foolish ventures in which it is going to lose long-term dollars on behalf of the people, but because it has decided that it is going to go forward with this preventive health care program to expend monies, which should be applied to allow sick people to get well, to try to convince people to quit smoking.

Mr. Speaker, in a place like Saskatchewan, where people are highly educated, highly motivated and sophisticated, where the people know about health care programs, there is not a smoker who doesn't know he shouldn't smoke. I am a smoker. I know I shouldn't smoke. It is bad for my health, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan could expend \$25 million, it could expend \$250 million, it could expend \$2.5 billion on advertising, but the advertising isn't going to stop me from smoking. I am going to have to stop myself.

Mr. Speaker, they say that being overweight is bad for your health. So they are going to expend millions and millions of dollars to convince people not to eat so much, so they won't get so fat, like me. But, Mr. Speaker, they could spend tens of millions of dollars on advertising on television, radio, and newspaper, and I am still going to take that extra piece of bread tomorrow. The advertising isn't going to stop me from doing it, and so, too, any other person in the province.

One hundred dollars spend on preventive health care in a highly educated and industrialized society will get you \$1 worth of benefits. Now, spent in a society like India, Pakistan, Mexico, or some country in the Third World, where the people are not highly educated, where they don't know the simple rules of hygiene, the \$100 expenditure on that kind of program can get you \$1,000 worth of benefits. But, Mr. Speaker, this is not India, Pakistan, Mexico, the Philippines or the Third World. This is Canada. This is Saskatchewan. The people here do understand these basic rules. They do understand their basic needs. To expend monies on that preventive program — tens of million of dollars, as the minister is proposing to do — is foolhardy and foolish when sick people are not able to be treated in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only me speaking. Here are the facts. The ratio of general practitioners to specialists is 2 to 1 in Saskatchewan, while the ratio is 1 to 1 in Manitoba and Alberta. In Saskatchewan, there are 780 persons per physician for all physicians. The national average was 646 in 1980, according to the Department of Health. There were 2,131 persons per specialist in the province of Saskatchewan. The national average is 1,307. Almost two times as many people in Saskatchewan have to be treated by one specialist as have to be in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the point is this: the Government of Saskatchewan, in its brilliance, is deciding to explode medicare into a myth. Medicare to them is a term. It is a disease. It is the all-inclusive, all-wondrous benefits of socialism, all wrapped up in medicare. But, Mr. Speaker, when they are stupid with medicare, then medicare ceases to function. When they are crazy with the dollars of medicare, then people don't get medical care. That is what is happening today in the province of Saskatchewan. All over the province, in every town, village, and city, individual citizens are going elsewhere for medical attention because they can't receive it in the province of Saskatchewan.

I ask any member here if he is being honest. Go back to your constituency and ask your neighbours and friends. They will tell you that either their brother, sister, mother, father, or someone has been standing in line for months to have medical attention and they haven't been able to get it.

They will tell you about their neighbour, about their friend, about their brother or their sister, or their cousin or their aunt who has had to go to Calgary to have needed medical attention, or to Edmonton because the specialist was there, or Denver, or the Mayo Clinic, or some place else in North America because the specialists aren't here. Why aren't they here? The minister sits in his place and says, "How do we get them here?"

Mr. Speaker, if the people want to know how they can get the medical specialists here and have proper treatment, they should change the government because this NDP government is bankrupt of ideas. What they are doing is expending the monies of the people on these monopoly schemes. "They're sitting there and jumping over Boardwalk into Park Place, but the problem is that they're no passing "Go," and they're not collecting \$200. They don't even know how to play Monopoly right.

They're losing money in northern Saskatchewan; they're losing money in potash; they're buying up farmland and the renters aren't able to produce as much as the owners. Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the people of Saskatchewan are starting to take notice of this misinformation the government has been providing. They're starting to realize that what has been said in this opposition for the last eight years is the truth.

The NDP government in Saskatchewan does not provide for persons. It provides for the collective people. Most importantly, it provides for the leaders of the collective people — themselves, their hacks and their money, their positions, their cars, their perks, and that's where most of the money of the Saskatchewan people goes. It goes toward paying off political debts to the people that the NDP thinks help get them into power. The people, more and more, are recognizing it and are going to make a dramatic change in the next provincial election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, I'm particularly pleased to have this opportunity today to address a few remarks to the House on the occasion of the throne speech debate, 1981.

I want first of all to express gratification and my sincere congratulations to the mover and seconder of the address in reply. I think their contributions, Mr. Speaker, were among the best I have listened to during the period of time I have had the opportunity to occupy a seat in this legislature. They did their homework; they did it well, and those of us on this side of the House are extremely proud of our association with them.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech, I believe, is significant in two particular respects. First of all, I think it points a direction for this New Democratic Party government along the road to further economic development and it gives further recognition to the social and the human needs of the people of this province.

Secondly, it's significant, given the time frame within which it is delivered, that it's probably the last throne speech prior to a general election.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to speak in this throne speech, following the member for Nipawin in this debate. He is obviously a communicator and I suppose he could be referred to as an entertainer, too. It is perhaps unfortunate that he is unable to refrain from his usual habit of misrepresentation. I thought his deliberate attempt to mislead and confuse by intimating that somehow Eldorado Nuclear was a provincial crown corporation was overstepping the bounds of reason, Mr. Speaker.

It will be remembered that this government was given its most recent mandate by the people of Saskatchewan in October 1978. At that time the Liberal Party was obliterated, leaving only a residue in this House, represented by two members who left that burning Liberal ship to comfortably become bedfellows of the hon. member for Nipawin who more recently answered another call, while encouraging us as westerners to join him in his southern migration to join the Reaganites in order that we might all enjoy the unlimited opportunities in the land of the free and the home of the brave. But there, I expect, we would be free from the encumbrances of hospitalization and the medicare which he seems to bless. We'd be free, I suppose, of the encumbrance of dental care for children and reasonably priced prescription drugs. We would be free from public automobile insurance and a host of other provisions that inhibit, I expect, the free movement of captains of industry such as he. I see the hon. member has already left the House, but I want to take this opportunity in any case, Mr. Speaker, to wish him farewell. I expect we will be seeing very little of the member for Nipawin or the member for Swift Current from this point forward.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Nipawin implores us to join him and his champion, President Reagan, in their crusade to take from the poor and give to the rich, with the military-industrial complex being the major beneficiary in the United States of America. This reactionary political force across the 49th parallel today has already rendered a chilling blow to the needy by slashing something in the order of one billion dollars from the food aid budget for the poor and cutting \$1.4 billion from the school lunch and child nutrition programs. The Reaganites have shaved \$1 billion from social security benefits with the major effects being felt by the needy. They have slashed \$1 billion from a program providing aid to dependent students when parents are on social assistance. This is the regime which the hon. member for Nipawin would have us join. I understand, too, in accordance with a September 4 announcement, that Reagan is also attempting to abolish the departments of education and energy, and cut 12 per cent from the spending directed to agriculture, health, housing and other programs that the self-anointed, born-again Christians describe as "extraneous frills."

Mr. Speaker, the more things change across the way, the more they remain the same. Liberals opposite may become Conservative converts and Conservatives may become Unionest. But regardless of their party label, this motley crew opposite us in the House is distinguishable by their allegiance to all of the forces of reaction.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Just at a time, Mr. Speaker, when the Conservative opposition members seem to have cleansed themselves a little bit by putting some distance between themselves and the member for Nipawin, along comes another embarrassment from Indian Head-Wolseley. This member has also become a Ronald Reagan convert. He said in one of his newsletters (and this bears repeating), "We are living in a time that needs strong action and determination such as exhibited by Ronald Reagan of the U.S.A." Those are the words of the member for Indian Head-Wolseley. They are not my words. That statement, Mr. Speaker, tells you an awful lot about the man. It tells you

a great deal about the political party with which he associates himself. It serves as a warning to Saskatchewan voters who may have been considering a flirtation with the Tories.

Mr. Speaker, surrounded as we have been for many years by Conservative administrations throughout Canada, I think Canadians, and Saskatchewan people in particular, can be grateful for the sanity, the objectivity and the humanity which remain compelling forces here in the province of Saskatchewan. We welcome particularly a return of a New Democratic government in the province of Manitoba.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — It's unusual for a new government to be rejected after their first term in office. There is usually an inclination on the part of a fair-minded public to give them a chance and an opportunity to prove themselves. But that Lyon government, Mr. Speaker, was so Conservative, so reactionary, so arrogant and so inept that the electorate blew them away in a four-way fight. Surely the Manitoba experience should serve as a guide to Saskatchewan voters when they are called upon to make their choice in the immediate future. Manitoba voters chose to elect a government with a commitment to the principles of democratic socialism, social justice and economic planning.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, those elements are fortified and continued in the throne speech, to be followed shortly by a budget which will then provide the fiscal framework, leading to a provincial election which we expect may take place within the next number of months.

Mr. Speaker, our last budget was so impressive that the Leader of the Opposition left his seat, where he was hidden away, in the galleries and entered the hustings, declaring that was indeed an election budget. As usual, the member for nowhere was wrong. It was merely, Mr. Speaker, a familiar example of a well-considered and thoughtfully planned budget by a New Democratic Party government.

Mr. Speaker, when the writs are issued the people of this province will judge on the basis of our record of performance. Mr. Speaker, it's a good one, and we'll be proud and anxious to have the people of Saskatchewan sit in judgment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — But, Mr. Speaker, they will cast judgment not only on the government but also on the opposition in this legislature. Mr. Speaker, this opposition is not only fragmented and leaderless, but it has the distinction of being grossly and enthusiastically wrong on every major issue to come before this House and before the province of Saskatchewan since it became a political force with the demise of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, this House and the public of Saskatchewan should be reminded of the position adopted by these creatures when we announced our intention to take over 50 per cent of the productive capacity of the potash industry in the province. They said at that time, "How stupid can you be, buying used holes in the ground?" That's one

of the quotable quotes which will live for many years. The potash corporation, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is presently celebrating five productive years. In 1976 the corporation produced 140,000 tonnes. Last year production was 4.5 million tonnes. Sales of 3 million tonnes were recorded in 1976, increasing to 392 million tonnes in 1980. In 1976 the corporation paid \$2 million in taxes and royalties. Last year those payments totalled approximately \$90 million. So those used holes in the ground, Mr. Speaker, in 1979 turned a profit of \$68 million; \$178 million in 1980, with \$57 million of that going into the heritage fund to provide programs for people, programs that would not have been provided or would have been financed by way of general taxation had that not been the case.

Sitting opposite, Mr. Speaker, are people who have not generated a new idea in their entire lifetimes. Their objectives are so limited, Mr. Speaker, that they require tiny, minute ideas — ideas small enough that they can grasp them without opening their minds. It's been said before. I think the member for Saskatoon Nutana said that a Tory is a person properly described as one who will fight to the death to keep from passing out of existence an idea his grandfather fought to the death to keep from coming in. Tory credibility will be a major factor when the writs are issued, just as it is today.

This House needs to recall once again, Mr. Speaker, the advice offered by Tories with respect to the management of our oil resources, also. In 1975 the then leader of the Conservatives, the member for Nipawin, was seen to plead the case for the oil companies, claiming that royalties were oppressive and that we should tax oil as Alberta does. That position was repeated by the present leader, so one has to assume that's the position of the Conservative Party opposite. If this government had listened to the sage advice of the two most recent leaders of the Conservatives, it would clearly have meant the loss of over \$1.152 billion, Mr. Speaker — over a billion. It would have meant a reduction in service provided to Saskatchewan people or it would have meant significant increases in taxation to compensate for that lost revenue. These people opposite, Mr. Speaker, have been obviously and emphatically wrong on every issue of consequence. Given the opportunity, I expect Tories, considering their track record, would desecrate this province in record time, considering their track record in Manitoba.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, another exciting and imaginative venture during the past decade has been the development of the Cornwall Centre in downtown Regina. The member for Regina South chose to use facts with reckless abandon, as he is given to do, indicating his opposition to the involvement of the government in downtown revitalization. Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Tories are consistent.

They are consistently wrong on another issue of vital importance to Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan communities. This government has made a conscious judgment to assist cities in the redevelopment of their downtown cores. I was pleased, when I was minister of government services, to play a part in the Weyburn development when the Department of Government Services undertook the responsibility for land assembly for the project there. A new breath of life has been breathed into that city of Weyburn, as can be said also of the city of Prince Albert. Similarly, help is in the works for Swift Current and Moose Jaw for their downtown redevelopment plans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that the most impressive effort of all has been the Cornwall Centre project. I should bring, I think, a flush of pride to any fair-minded and objective Saskatchewan citizen. Instead of acknowledging a major accomplishment, the member for Regina South, who now stands behind the rail, chose to distort and misrepresent the facts about the financial arrangement in hopes for some small political gain. He criticized the mortgage financing arrangement, with the province providing loans at the cost of borrowing at that time. This was a shady attempt by that member to discredit the project while deliberately ignoring the additional ingredients in that plan. He chose to ignore them entirely. He knew, but he chose to ignore the fact, that the developed will pay an annual ground rent for 75 years. The developer will also provide participation rent based on cash flow over the same 75 years and will repay the mortgage over a 20-year period. It was a good and prudent financial arrangement, remarkably different from the way it was represented by the member for Regina South.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I think this incident tells you a great deal about the man and about the party that he represents. Never tired of being wrong, Tories, in predictable fashion, attached the acquisition of Norcanair. They are aware that the service is in some trouble. They're quite aware of that. It presently runs the risk of going under with the probability of Pacific Western acquiring and running that operation. They're obviously opposed to Saskatchewan people owning a quality air service which would provide a link between Saskatoon, Regina and the developing northland. Obviously they would prefer to have the Alberta government-owned Pacific Western operating with the inevitable flow of goods and services flowing to the advantage of the province of Alberta, to Calgary and Edmonton, rather than flowing to the advantage of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.

They are wrong again — tiny little minds, Mr. Speaker, which are unable to grasp or understand the consequence of losing that air service to an out-of-province carrier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, given the ability of the Tories to be wrong on every issue of consequence, they have erred in so many fundamental ways, people cannot be expected to take them seriously as a credible political force in the province. This is the political party which proposes to offer thrift and good economic management if chosen to govern. I believe Saskatchewan people judge political parties by their deeds. I think Saskatchewan people judge political parties by their track record, rather than by the rhetoric they produce.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition is indeed an integral part of our parliamentary system of government. We have attempted to provide this group across the way with more adequate resources in order that it might properly perform its function — and God knows in 76 years there's never been an opposition that needed it more. With resources provided by this legislature, this party opposite engaged a strange assortment of research people for the 1979-80 session who flooded the order paper with orders for returns and questions asking information — some 562 requests for information, a good deal of it available to them from annual reports if they had hired a staff which possessed the wisdom or the intelligence to read or to understand them.

What was the result, Mr. Speaker? The result was something more than 3,000 separate responses being required from departments, agencies, boards and commissions. These requests cost the taxpayer almost \$0.25 million, representing some 8,955 hours of work by already busy civil servants. It would have taken one person working

five and one-half years to answer all of those numerous returns. What emerged then was some 30,000 printed pages delivered to an opposition that had no idea what it was searching for and had no use for the information when it arrived. The most ludicrous part of it all, Mr. Speaker, is that the remaining material which has not been shredded is sitting in piles, naked and embarrassed, gathering dust — a tribute to the idiocy of those opposite who have proven themselves incapable of effectively managing their own staff as members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. These are the people who ask to be trusted to govern.

Let's have a look at the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. They are led by a man who has twice failed to get elected, the second time in a by-election in a constituency where the Conservatives had won with 55 per cent of the popular vote only a few months earlier. That's the Leader of the Conservative Party. You know, Mr. Speaker, Tommy Douglas once said when the going gets difficult for Conservatives you can always count on them to choose a firing squad, form a circle and fire inwards. That prophecy is coming true.

Once again a quotation by the member for Thunder Creek bears repeating in this House. This was a comment about Grant Devine. The Premier mentioned it yesterday; it bears repeating. He said:

My personal assessment is that I liked him better six months ago when he was elected leader. I think his political judgment is suspect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Now that, Mr. Speaker, is a direct quote from a Tory — a Tory assessment of their fearless political leader. How then can one believe that the public can be expected to display faith and trust, when the Tories themselves have serious and grave doubts about their leaders?

The member for Thunder Creek is an obvious leadership candidate but he's not alone in his aspirations. The member for Qu'Appelle, however, knows something that the member for Thunder Creek isn't ready to acknowledge. He knows the Tories, once having been stung by the arrogance and the petulance of their fallen leader, the member for Nipawin, are not ready for a repeat performance. So, Mr. Speaker, confident and comfortable in this knowledge, the member for Qu'Appelle is content to lurk in the shadows, licking his chops and sharpening his stiletto.

Mr. Speaker, these two members who emerged from a Liberal cocoon to become Tory moths are truly the most unbelievable and opportunistic creatures to emerge on the political scene in living memory. It will be remembered by some who have been in this House for a short while that when the member for Qu'Appelle deserted the leader of the Liberals of that time (Ted Malone and his associates), the member for Thunder Creek (who was in transition himself) remarked that the member for Qu'Appelle didn't exhibit a great deal of class when he defected to the Tories, and he, himself, followed shortly.

What neither of these two Tory mercenaries understand, Mr. Speaker, is that there is no respectable way to sell your soul.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — There is no respectable way to sell your soul and there is no classy way to exercise selfish political opportunism and carry with you your self-

respect. That is why these two mercenary transplants are barely tolerated by their own Tory caucus today.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Moosomin (who is not in his seat either) at least proved in his own mind that he, too, is leadership timber. He proved that by delivering a speech (I believe it was during the last session of the legislature) of something like an hour and thirty-five minutes in length. I suppose thus he qualifies, notwithstanding the fact that the thought content of that hour and thirty-five minute speech could have been transcribed on the back of a postage stamp with enough room left over for his memoirs.

Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the firing squad is forming and the execution will take place a few days after the next provincial election. In the meantime, the Tories prepare themselves for the inevitable, having concluded that they have to ride it through, led by the invisible man, the member for nowhere.

Mr. Speaker, in the last provincial election we developed a catchy and effective theme song that was done by Susan Jaks, and it went:

Allan Blakeney and the NDP
Working for you, working for me.

Word has it that the Tories were impressed; so much so that they developed what they refer to as "Grant Devine's Battle Hymn," and it goes something like this:

Oh, give us a home
Where Tories may roam,
In a land where Liberals are dead.
We'll transform Wascana
To a republic banana,
With a pillowcase over our head.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, I think this throne speech is a fitting preamble to greater events yet to come and I am most pleased to offer my support to the motion. I'll be voting against the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure, and honour that I rise in this Legislative Assembly today. After just listening to some of the remarks by a minister of the crown, my reply to the throne speech will not be to attack personalities or to attack individuals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — I will be bringing forth to the people of Saskatchewan facts, figures, truths and policies from the Progressive Conservative opposition in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite should be ashamed that a minister of the crown would stand up and tell poems and stories, and make personal attacks on members opposite. What does this do for the people of Saskatchewan? Do the people of

Saskatchewan care what's going on in the United States of America? No, they don't care.

Mr. Speaker, I will move right into one of the large concerns of the people of the Wilkie constituency and, as far as that goes, the people from northwest Saskatchewan. It has to do with the heavy oil upgrader. Mr. Speaker, I am going to read a little clipping out of the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and I think this describes exactly what the people in northwest Saskatchewan are feeling in the absence of any firm decision coming from the government opposite regarding the location of the heavy oil upgrader:

Frustration in Upgrader Site. All the economic arguments in the world won't likely change the anger and frustration of west-central Saskatchewan if the proposed billion dollar upgrader isn't build in that area. Recent stories suggest Saskoil, with one-quarter ownership in the proposed \$1 billion project, has chosen Stony Beach, midway between Regina and Moose Jaw. Sites between Wilkie and Unity or near Maidstone are said to be running far behind. Historically, the west-central area has been the poor brother of Saskatchewan's regions. Years ago, before the opening up of the far northwest area of the province, the west-central area was usually called the northwest of the province to represent frontier implications.

Now the people of northwest Saskatchewan do feel like they are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Mr. Speaker, if this government opposite does not locate the heavy oil upgrader in the northwest area, it is nothing more than a political decision by the NDP Government of Saskatchewan. There is no way that upgrader should go anywhere but in the northwest area where the oil is; the natural gas is there and the power is there. The communities around have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that they can handle all of the facilities, all of the needs for construction right through to completion, for operation of that plant. This government had better not hang the people from northwest Saskatchewan out to dry because it will have to answer in the next provincial election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the beef stabilization program that the government opposite has called the savior of the beef industry in Saskatchewan. There are three or four concerns that the people of Saskatchewan have regarding this and I will point them out to the Minister of Agriculture now. The cattle producers of Saskatchewan, do not like a six-year lock-in factor. I request you right now, Mr. Minister, to reduce that lock-in factor to three years. Then you might be started in the right direction to go on this program. Mr. Speaker, the Premier stated that many cattle producers have come out to meetings throughout the province. That's true. Those producers are not coming out to jump on the bandwagon and sign a contract with the Minister of Agriculture and his government. No, the contract isn't even finalized yet and isn't even produced. At a recent meeting the local stockyard operators of Saskatchewan were told there was going to be a 25 per cent participation in this program. How can the government opposite state that, when the contracts are not even signed or made yet? The regulations are not even set yet. Mr. Speaker, there isn't one cattle producer in the province of Saskatchewan that is going to sign a contract which will bind him for six years but which the government can change whenever it wants. Mr. Speaker, this ties in directly with the grain stabilization program. The farmers in Saskatchewan have seen what has happened to that. It started out at \$500. It's now at \$900 and it's proposed to go to \$1,500, and the cattle producers of Saskatchewan are

very leery that this same government is going to go in this direction with the beef stabilization program.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn to Sask Power. The increase in rates for Sask Power over the last year are just shocking — or electrifying. February 1, 1981 — 12.6 per cent for small industry and commercial customers; August 1, 1981 — 12.7 per cent for residential users, 11.5 farm rates, 19.2 resort rates, 12.4 street lights, 10 per cent industrial. Mr. Speaker, the last financial statement of Sask Power showed profits in the last two years in excess of \$50 million with retained earnings of \$219 million. Mr. Speaker, how can this government opposite justify an expenditure of this type, justify an increase in rates to the people of Saskatchewan with a profit picture like that? They can't.

Mr. Speaker, we'll now go to Sask Tel rates. Increases, August 1, 1981 - 6 per cent residential, 11 per cent business rates, 11.2 long distance rates. Once again, Sask Tel had in excess of \$50 million profit in the last two years, retained earnings in excess of \$134 million, but there's still an increase by the government opposite. Crown corporations were set up to provide the best service at the least possible cost. They are not doing that any more today, Mr. Speaker. It is nothing more than a form of indirect taxation.

While I am on utilities, I would like to point out that in Saskatchewan we just bout have no rural gas distribution system. Fifty thousand family farms in Saskatchewan don't have it; 27,000 urban families and 8,000 businesses don't have it. Mr. Speaker, after the next provincial election the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan will be the government and we will implement a rural gas distribution system for everyone in the province of Saskatchewan.

On other point while we are on utilities — Sask Tel profits. Last Monday, the Premier opened another golden tower in Saskatchewan — 65,000 square feet of gold plated windows, and executive offices that I think are second to none in this province — maybe in Canada, Mr. Speaker. Who is going to pay for this \$35 million building? The people of Saskatchewan are going to have to pay for it with increased telephone bills. Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan will:

1. Remove the 5 per cent sales tax on telephone and power bills.
2. Freeze the rates in Saskatchewan for one year so that the people of Saskatchewan can have a chance to fight high inflation and get over the tough economic conditions that we are facing in Saskatchewan today.

While I am on utilities, Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify two points. It has been stated that the Conservatives are going to do away with the crown corporations. That's untrue. It's just like medicare, which is known as the big Saskatchewan lie. We are not going to get rid of those crown corporations and we believe in medicare — very strongly.

Mr. Speaker, I notice the Minister of Health laughing. A little later on in my speech I have something for the Minister of Health, and I hope he doesn't laugh when I bring it up.

Mr. Speaker, I have another point about the employees of these crown corporations. I'm talking about the field staff and the people in the offices. I believe, as do all the members on this side of the House, they are doing an excellent job working for the crown corporations in Saskatchewan. The problem is with the politicians and the

politically appointed hacks and directors who are parachuted into these corporations. This is where the problem is.

Mr. Speaker, we can talk about SGI. I think SGI has dug its own grave. SGI has gone out of control. It now has the highest rates in Canada. How has it done this, Mr. Speaker? It has done this by parachuting in political hacks at the executive level. Twenty per cent of the sliding gas tax in Saskatchewan . . . As you put the gas in the back it has to run up to the licence plate to help pay for the front of that. The Conservatives will remove that tax burden on the people of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I was quite disturbed the other day (I can see why private enterprise is not welcome in this province) when the seconder of the throne speech, the member for The Battlefords, stated, “Mr. Speaker, I don’t believe in free enterprise.” What kind of attitude is that in Saskatchewan, a province which has over 40 per cent of the arable land? We have more resources than Alberta. You know what the NDP government is going to do? It will either socialize them or leave them in the ground. Mr. Speaker, that is going to put us back in the 1930s.

While I’m talking about the 1930s, Mr. Speaker, I’d like to reflect on the population. It’s the same now as it was in the ‘30s. The only thing that we export out of Saskatchewan is our children. That’s wrong. While I’m talking about children, I have a little clipping here that states:

His feet will never fill his daddy’s shoes. Why? Because, when he was 10 weeks old, his mother decided not to have him. He was only 1.5 inches long, but was already a perfectly formed baby. He had a heart that beat, feet he could kick. He even had his own distinctive fingerprints. Because he was a tiny human being, he also had something else: the right to live.

Mr. Speaker, he didn’t live. He didn’t make it. There are many others. This is happening in the province today. I’m calling on the members opposite and the Minister of Health to take some action and start standing up for the rights of the unborn in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, my time has almost run out. I have many other things I would like to discuss, but I think that the NDP government has to get one message: you can control prices for the people in Saskatchewan, but you cannot control the people. You’re going to have to realize that because the people will give you that message in the next provincial election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I undoubtedly will not be supporting the motion and will be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I think the members on this side paid the common

respect that the member for Wilkie deserved by being quiet. I expect the members opposite also to do the same with me.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we heard from several members in the opposition. Certainly my colleague, the Minister of Labour, also spoke in this debate. It is not my intention to spend too much time on the comments made by the member for Nipawin, although I do want to allude to a few of his remarks, and I want to spend a minute or two on the remarks made by the member for Wilkie.

Mr. Speaker, I thought it was totally unfair of the member for Nipawin to make the accusation against the Premier of this province for not being in the House this afternoon. It was clearly explained to him that the Premier was in Saskatoon, speaking to the board of trade. I think the Premier of this House will certainly match his record of attendance in this House over the last 10 or 11 years that I have been here with almost any other member in this House. I think for the member for Nipawin to bring up this particular matter is, to the highest extent, very hypocritical. Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact that about 90 per cent of the time last year, when this House was in session, the member for Nipawin spent his time on the ranch in Arizona. I regret very much that these kinds of accusations are made, particularly when they are made over the air waves.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Nipawin was fairly critical this afternoon about medicare. We know, of course, why. The member for Nipawin never has accepted (as I believe many members opposite have never accepted) the principles of medicare as we know them in Canada today. I say that and I intend to back it up with facts. If we believe in medicare, there are certain principles which we must accept. One of the principles of medicare is accessibility. Most provincial Conservative governments have health care premiums. Many of the other Conservative governments charge hospitalization fees. Many of the other Conservative governments have extra charges for people to go into hospitals. For example, Alberta charges \$208 in premiums; Ontario charges \$702 for a family in premiums. Mr. Speaker, we know well that there are many poor people who simply cannot pay those premiums and thus they do not have access to medicare. That is why I say the members opposite do not believe in the medicare system which we have in Canada today.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Wilkie who just spoke said, "We believe in medicare." They have to repeat this time and time again not only to convince themselves, but also to try to convince the people of this province that although they opposed it 20 years ago when we implemented it, they have suddenly had a conversion. I read very carefully the words of Dr. Barrotes, whom most of us know well, in the *Star-Phoenix*. When he attended the PC convention recently, he said, "We, the PCs, must convince the people that we believe in medicare; we must convince them that we will stand behind medicare."

Mr. Speaker, those of us who accept medicare don't have to go out to tell people that we believe in it. We support it through our actions. A little later in my speech, I will show that we believe in a comprehensive medicare system.

I have one comment about the comments made by the member for Wilkie in regard to abortions. Mr. Speaker, we all know that abortion comes under the jurisdiction and the purview of the federal government. It is in the Criminal Code. I regret the fact that in 1969, when the Criminal Code was changed, abortions became part of that Criminal Code. As an individual, I oppose abortions. I think we should find some other ways to

deal with the situation. We must (and here again I am critical of the member for Nipawin) implement preventive health programs. We must implement family life programs for people so that they can cope with their circumstances before pregnancy takes place.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that there are 65,000 abortions in Canada but, on the other hand, here in Saskatchewan our rate is one of the lowest. That is no consolation. But I really can't stomach it when members opposite tell me that our record is bad in Saskatchewan, when more than 30,000 abortions were performed in Tory Ontario. Mr. Speaker, 30,000 in Tory Ontario. It was one of the highest — higher than Saskatchewan. Per capita, Ontario rates second; BC is first. Saskatchewan is either fifth or sixth. Those statistics are there for any one of you to get.

Mr. Speaker, they are hypocritical on this issue. I remember well in the 1978 or 1979 federal election, Joe Clark, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, stated very clearly that if he became the Prime Minister of Canada, he would change the laws to make abortions more equitably available to people in all parts of Canada. Members were out in the boondocks supporting Joe Clark and trying to get him elected. It is one thing to say that you believe in medicare, as they do; it is quite another thing to commit that particular persuasion to action.

I would like now to turn to some formal remarks pertaining to the throne speech. I do want to congratulate the mover and the seconder. I think they did a marvelous job in moving and seconding the throne speech. I am proud to be the Minister of Health in a government which has always placed health care for Saskatchewan people first in its priorities. That was true in 1944. It is still true today. As His Honour the Lieutenant Governor said in his excellent throne speech:

... 1982 will be another anniversary year for Saskatchewan. 1982 will mark the 35th anniversary of the introduction of hospital insurance in Saskatchewan, and the 20th anniversary of the introduction of medicare in this province.

Historically, certainly these are landmark events — achievements recognized right across Canada, across North America, and, interestingly enough, right across the political spectrum today. They are the most important milestones in the health care in this century. Hospital insurance and medical care insurance were introduced by the Douglas and Lloyd governments because of one fundamental belief. That belief is simply that every member of society deserves good quality health care, regardless of his or her position in society.

Health care should not be a market place commodity with the best going to the highest bidder. Rather, if we are a society professing certain Christian ideals as we claim, then society, through its instrument the government, must act according to those ideals, the most noble of which is "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Translate that idea out of the theological realm and into the political realm and you get medicare and a number of other fine social programs.

But those two anniversaries, important as they are, are not the only ones to remember. This government and its CCF predecessors have worked continually to expand our health program, to make it more comprehensive and to make it the best in Canada.

Following World War II, the government assumed health service costs for low-income

senior citizens and social assistance recipients. The first health region was created and our air ambulance program was begun.

The years since 1971 (since Mr. Blakeney formed the government) have seen an even more remarkable growth in the range of programs and services available to Saskatchewan people — programs established by this government and universally opposed by the members opposite.

We abolished deterrent fees — that vulgar legacy from the previous government, which was Liberal in name, yes; Conservative, certainly, in practice . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, there was the Thatcher government. We removed health premiums, Mr. Speaker. We established Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living (SAIL), and we created the Saskatchewan Hearing Aid Plan. We established also, and have continued to expand the Saskatchewan Dental Plan for children. There are now 140,000 children who are covered.

We set up the Saskatchewan Health Prescription Drug Plan, a plan which on the average saves patients, roughly, \$7 on a prescription. For certain high-cost drugs that saving can be more than \$20.

We strengthened our network of rural hospitals. The previous government tried to do away with them and did do away with some of them. We expanded and upgraded our major ones. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in the two and one-half years since I became Minister of Health, we have had some remarkable achievements.

In the important area of hospital services, we have made considerable progress. The University Hospital in Saskatoon is in a five-year renovation program, estimated at \$29.7 million. It will be, Mr. Speaker, when this project is completed, one of the finest hospitals anywhere in Canada.

The Regina General Hospital regeneration project has a budget of \$118 million. In rural areas we have undertaken major renovation projects at Herbert, Kipling and Wolseley, and we have announced renovation plans for Melfort and Cut Knife. We have constructed new hospitals in Kamsack, Paradise Hill, Foam Lake, La Loche and Carrot River.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I wish the member for Nipawin were here, because I was in Nipawin yesterday, and the members opposite might like to know why I was there. Well, I was there to announce a new 70-bed hospital for the Nipawin people. From the comments I heard from the Nipawin people yesterday, I think that the members opposite will be made acquainted soon with a man named Irvin Perkins, who, I think, will be sitting on this side of the House very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, 13 hospitals, either renovated or built, in two years. I will gladly compare that record with what we heard yesterday out of Tory Ontario, where there is a real danger of losing hospitals. If the papers are correct, they will have an accumulated deficit of \$100 million, and Premier Davis of that province said that he would bring some financial assistance. Yesterday his health minister spoke to hospital administrators.

I was particularly interested in the Tory solution to the underfunded hospitals. What did the Minister of Health there tell the administrators they could do? Well, he says that they

can raise the parking rates, and that they can increase cafeteria food prices. Surely even a Tory government could do better than that.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to all the other things I have mentioned, we have established the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation and substantially increased its funding, including \$1 million for major equipment. We opened our province's first day hospital in Moose Jaw. We opened the first geriatric assessment unit in the province. We opened a health and social centre in Raymore, bringing the total number of health and social centres to 11. We have funded a major expansion to the community clinic in Prince Albert and have seen the opening of a community clinic in Wynyard. We have opened a 22-bed psychiatric unit at the Pasqua Hospital here in Regina and a 32-bed psychiatric unit at The Battlefords Union Hospital. We have opened five new group homes for psychiatric patients, two in Saskatoon and one each in Prince Albert, Regina and Moose Jaw. To support this increased capacity, in 1980-81 we increased the total approved staff to hospitals by approximately 750 positions, and we did all this, Mr. Speaker, without dipping into the parking lot funds as they had to do in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to new buildings and extra hospital beds, let me just run through some of the new programs and improvements introduced in the last two years. In the summer of 1980, we introduced a dental intern program to allow dental students to work summers in a rural dental practice. We introduced a practice establishment grant program to attract anesthetists to the province. We have increased the number of specialists in the last five years by 59, contrary to what the member for Nipawin said this afternoon. We are working to improve children's health through the establishment of a child safety committee to co-ordinate and extend the work of the many agencies in the field of child safety. We established a health research board which provides \$750,000 a year for grants to Saskatchewan researchers in the health field. We have provided additional grants to Regina and Saskatoon for preventive health projects. We have funded a senior citizens' highrise in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, in a moment I want to mention a few more projects. I'll run through the list, Mr. Speaker, because I'm always amused at the opposition charge that we are a tired government, a charge we heard again on Tuesday. Well, there are two kinds of tired — the kind that comes from sitting on your thumb doing nothing but complaining (Tory tired) and the kind that comes from doing a good day's work, the kind removed by a good night's rest, the kind you don't notice because a sense of accomplishment is stronger. This government, Mr. Speaker, feels good because of what we have done; we are refreshed and ready to keep going.

We did all this, Mr. Speaker, and we will do more because our commitment to a comprehensive medicare program is one we back up with action, not with just hollow words of support. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I, too, was delighted to read that the opposition now supports medicare. At least, as I said previously, at their recent convention they said that they do. Well, they're about 20 years too late. A conversion at any time is better than nothing, but I would be more convinced of their sincerity, Mr. Speaker, if we did not have so much evidence to the contrary across Canada. And I will not run through again, Mr. Speaker, the number of health care premiums that there are in many, many Tory provinces right across this country.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we have worked very hard to build, to expand, and to preserve medicare. And a fact which should not be forgotten, a remarkable fact, is that in the beginning Saskatchewan had to go it all alone. We had to finance the whole program ourselves. But because of the example of Saskatchewan the federal

government and other provinces came on board. Medicare in some form now exists nationally and the federal government has recognized its financial and moral responsibility to support the provincial program.

What should be happening now at a time when medicare is a welcomed and accepted fact everywhere? What all governments and all opposition parties should be doing is simple. We should be working to improve the system, to expand its range of services, to make it even more accessible and more comprehensive. Sadly, however, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. Rather, some cracks are beginning to appear — not in Saskatchewan but in other parts of Canada. We believe this is a dangerous sign, because the second great principle of medicare, next to universal accessibility, is portability. We need a plan which is the same from coast to coast to coast. Instead, we are seeing the checkerboarding of medicare. Yes, Mr. Speaker, checkerboarding.

When the Prime Minister talked about the constitution, this was a dirty word. Apparently, with health care there is not so much concern. We are seeing, for instance, the federal government threatening to cut back its responsibilities by establishing program financing, this despite the recommendation of the recent parliamentary task force which said health and education programs are too important to be pruned. As I mentioned, we are seeing other provinces, Tory provinces, impose their own impediments to medicare: health premiums, hospital charges, no drug plan (or a very limited one). In Tory provinces, we have seen no resistance to extra billing; rather, the practice is encouraged and defended. That's no good, Mr. Speaker.

This is no time to be cutting back; this is no time for hurdles to be placed between the individual and total health coverage. It is a time for all governments to act together to mend the cracks before they destroy medicare. Now is the time for members opposite to back up their stated support for medicare by urging their Tory counterparts to put an end to premiums and other extra charges, and to support Saskatchewan (and I assume Manitoba now) in doing away with those extra charges.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — In Saskatchewan, we intend to celebrate these important anniversaries by moving forward in health care. We will do it alone if we have to. We have done it before. But as Canadians, in the crucial field of health care, we would prefer to be equal partners in a universal system, not ahead of the pack like we have always been. Mr. Speaker, we intend to move forward. Well, if you have to be head of the pack, we will be there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I hope even ahead of my seatmate here from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, we intend to move forward to a new era of health care and new transformations. The health system in Saskatchewan has moved through two major stages: first, the conquest of infectious disease and, second, the provision of accessible and essential services through health insurance. Now, to meet the health needs of the upcoming decade, Saskatchewan must embark on a third stage, a stage which will significantly redirect health priorities from curative medicine to preventive and community services.

Mr. Speaker, we must embark in this new direction, not at the expense (and I want to repeat this and be emphatic about it), not at the expense of existing programs but as a complement to them.

Mr. Speaker, I did some checking, since the members opposite and the member for Arizona or Nipawin (or wherever he is from) were critical about the support we have given to our hospitals. I did some checking, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to find out exactly what the figures were in 1971-72 budget, the last Liberal Thatcher budget that was presented. I looked at the subvote for administration and grants to the hospitalization plan. Mr. Speaker, there was \$77,839,060 in that subvote. Today that subvote (and its there for any person to look at) is \$355,211,680. Working that out, that's a 456 per cent increase during the term of the Blakeney government — 456 per cent! But at the same time, the inflation rate was 81 per cent. There was a 456 per cent increase in the administration and grants to hospitalization and 81 per cent increase in inflation. Mr. Speaker, I think that is clear evidence that not only do we work the best hospitalization and medicare system in this province, but we also can go in a new direction. That new direction, Mr. Speaker, will pay dividends in the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's another reason why we want to do this. I believe that we had a good system here in Saskatchewan but I believe Saskatchewan must take the lead again in the '80s to show the other provinces that if we wish to be successful in this particular area we need to go into the new transformation. I think we need to redirect our emphasis toward prevention for two simple reasons. We have gone, I think, just about as far as we can with the curative approach. The returns that we're getting are fairly diminishing. But, more important, the once dreaded diseases have been eliminated or brought almost completely under control. Many of our young children don't know what polio is; many of our young children don't know what TB is. These things have been put under control.

I think now we need to look at the lifestyles of individuals and see how some of the major health problems are caused by those lifestyles. Indeed, I am told that four out of the five major causes of death today in our province are related to lifestyles. They are heart attacks, strokes, cancer and accidents. All have more than a little to do with the way we live — what we eat, drink, smoke, or breathe and how we drive, exercise and so on. The obvious way to deal with these modern health hazards is to get at the source of the problem, rather than wait for the disease to strike and then treat it.

I read an opposition brochure, Mr. Speaker, which sneers at our emphasis on preventive health. I ask the members opposite which would they rather have: a totally reactive health system which waits around for a heart attack victim so that victim can be saved and then slowly and expensively nursed back to health, or a system which attempts to treat heart attacks by preventing them, thereby saving the agony and expense of a long restorative period? The answer, I would think, is obvious. A fully developed preventive health service will have two major elements: one that will promote preventive health services such as public health inspection, immunization, screening, psychological testing and counselling, and nutrition counselling; a second element of health promotion and education, the development of programs to encourage healthy lifestyles.

Mr. Speaker, this new phase in health care is an exciting one. It is a challenging one, too. For it to be successful, however, we will have to enlist the help of communities, special interest groups and individuals. We are beginning cautiously, however. Programs are being implemented on a pilot basis, evaluated and then implemented on

a much wider scale.

For instance, we have pilot prenatal and postnatal projects under way in both The Battlefords and Regina, projects which will educate mothers on the need for good nutrition. We have provided a grant in Regina to the North Central Community Society, as the Premier mentioned yesterday, for a project focusing on the health needs of senior citizens, and we have a school project under way in the Moose Jaw health region to educate students on the need for preventive measures.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, in the initial stages we are moving slowly. We are moving cautiously, but we are moving ahead with determination. This plan, I believe, is the prescription for successfully bringing about the third transformation of our health care system. As I said, we are moving into this new phase while continuing to maintain, strengthen and improve our traditional health care services, services which have made Saskatchewan the model province for health care in Canada and which make us the envy of every North American jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, this is the year of the disabled person. We should not forget that 1981 is the International Year of the Disabled. I am sure that my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, would want me to remind this House that this government is committed to helping our disabled citizens.

In his budget speech last March, the Minister of Finance announced what we would be doing during this year and what we will continue to do. He announced, for example, \$1.1 million for 17 projects to provide easier access to public buildings; an early intervention program for families with disabled preschool children; grants for Saskatchewan housing for home repairs for disabled persons; a group home for emotionally disturbed children; a day care pilot project for handicapped students; a new speech therapy program; a new residential and educational program in Saskatoon for blind and deaf children; and the construction of the Saskatchewan Rehabilitation Centre in Regina. Those are government initiatives, Mr. Speaker. We also provided \$127,000 to be distributed by the Saskatchewan committee for the International Year of Disabled Persons. So far, 36 projects have been given grants by this committee.

Mr. Speaker, most of the work done in this province for disabled persons is performed by volunteer organizations. As well, volunteer organizations assist greatly in ministering to our senior citizens, children, hospitals and communities. They provide a thousand invaluable services and we should not pass up a chance to pay tribute to them. I was pleased that the Premier, yesterday, spoke about the volunteers in his speech.

I also want to pay tribute to them, Mr. Speaker, because recently I heard a once-respected local lawyer say that the volunteer is dead in Saskatchewan — that the government has killed the volunteer. I think that this was an insult to all our volunteers in this province. I didn't believe him, because I knew that there are 85 volunteer organizations in Saskatchewan and that list doesn't include service clubs - 85 separate organizations, Mr. Speaker, which haven't heard they are extinct, and so they go on providing their selfless, compassionate service to their fellow men. I want to thank them for all they have done and continue to do, on hospital boards, for Meals on Wheels, for home care and for all their other services. I was delighted to hear former Chief Justice Culliton pay such eloquent tribute to the volunteers last Thursday evening, and I simply want to echo his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, before I close I would like to say a few words about Saskatoon, a city that will be celebrating its 100th birthday in 1982. I have had the honour of serving in this legislature for 10 years. I am proud to represent the people of Saskatoon Buena Vista, soon to be known as Saskatoon South, and the city of Saskatoon, because those 10 years have been good ones for our city.

Before 1971, Mr. Speaker, I could tell my high school students that their career choices in Saskatchewan, unfortunately, were very limited. Sadly, one thing I could tell them was to get as much education as possible and then look elsewhere, as so many Saskatchewan citizens were doing before 1971. What I couldn't tell them, Mr. Speaker, as a high school counsellor but I could as a politician, was that they could stay and work to get rid of an uncaring, irresponsible, free enterprise government from this legislature, and replace it with a government that would turn our city and this province around. That they did, and we have turned it around. That advice the people of Saskatoon listened to.

In Saskatoon now, you will find just about any opportunity you choose, and you can live in a city which, by any objective standard, is one of the best places in Canada to live. Saskatoon has always been blessed with a beautiful natural environment. I am proud that the beautiful heart of our city is being preserved for the use of our citizens and for the generations that follow, through the Meewasin Valley Authority.

The Meewasin plan is a long-range plan. It is literally breathtaking in its vision and imagination. Naturally, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite opposed the concept and still oppose it. I am also proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that because of the policies of this government and because the people of Saskatoon are hard-working, imaginative people, Saskatoon now has the best of both worlds: a pleasant and preserved environment and unbounded opportunities for its people. Our population is growing rapidly, and to meet the needs of that expansion, we are working closely with the city to provide the necessary infrastructures. The 42nd Street Bridge is now under way with the province paying 65 per cent of the bridge costs and 50 per cent of the road work. Saskatoon, in conjunction with the government, is planning one of the most exciting downtown developments in Canada. When it is completed, what is already a beautiful and functional downtown will be even more so.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon is rapidly becoming a centre of high technology, industry and research. This means that Saskatoon will remain vibrant and forward-looking well into the future. This means that there will be jobs, interesting jobs, head office jobs, for Saskatchewan people.

There are other exciting things happening in Saskatoon, too many to mention. All you have to do to note how Saskatoon is growing is drive downtown from the airport. Ten years ago much of that drive was through emptiness. Now there are businesses, restaurants, offices, small industry — all the evidence anyone needs to prove Saskatoon is on the move. There are developments in conjunction with the provincial government. Sedco Park is in Saskatoon, as are the head offices of SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) and the potash corporation.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker — University Hospital expansion, veterinary college expansion, a new engineering building, and a proposed new geological building on campus. In short, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of my city and honoured to represent it in this Assembly. I am especially proud to represent it in a government which has bucked the

national trend toward despair and recession.

Mr. Speaker, these things didn't happen by accident. These things came about because the Blakeney government took some action to make them happen. Ours is a government which has helped to make Saskatchewan the province of today. In this province, Saskatoon certainly is a city of tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, because I am thrilled with what has been accomplished in the 35 years since hospital insurance, the 20 years since medicare insurance, because I am confident that this government and this province will continue to build on the solid achievements of the past 10 years, and because the opposition offers nothing but empty rhetoric based on imaginary logic, I will support the motion and I will oppose the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. CHAPMAN: — Because of all of the moisture that's occurring now in the Estevan constituency, the folks were delayed. It's my privilege today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce, through you, to the Assembly, 15 participants in a Canada World Youth exchange. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery and are accompanied by their co-ordinator, Claire Binet. Seven of the participants are from the country of Malaysia, and eight are from various parts of Canada. For the past two to three months, they've been visiting the southeast corner of Saskatchewan and are soon to travel, in exchange, to Malaysia. I trust that your visit to the legislature will be a highlight of your visit to Saskatchewan and would ask the member of the Assembly to join with me in extending the usual warm welcome.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

Address in Reply (continued)

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I would like to join with the member for Estevan in welcoming the exchange students to Canada and particularly to Saskatchewan. I hope that you enjoy your stay here in our province and enjoy the proceedings of the legislature.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to be involved today in the reply to the Speech from the Throne. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to a number of items and a number of concerns that the people of my constituency have raised over the past several months. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people in my constituency for giving me the opportunity to be their representative in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I would have liked to have been on the government side of the House, but with a different party in power. Perhaps we'll just have to wait until next time when that opportunity will come.

I would like to commend the mover and the seconder for having been chosen to move and second the Speech from the Throne. I would like, at the same time, to caution them

just a little bit. It seems that when the Premier makes the selection of the mover and seconder, he does it to raise their profiles in their home constituencies. He does it usually in those constituencies where he sees that the member is, indeed, in a bit of trouble. I would like you to take a bit of caution from the position that you are given.

I would like to start my reply today by discussing with you the need for a level 4 facility in the town of Rosetown. This is a concern that I have brought forth a number of times. I bring it forth because the people in Rosetown and the surrounding area are finding it increasingly difficult to get accommodation in nursing homes for the level 4 patients.

Over the past number of years, the people who need level 4 care have been on waiting lists, sometimes in hospitals and sometimes in level 3 facilities, often without any real place to turn for the type of care they require. The Rosetown district and the surrounding districts have been assigned to send level 4 people to the facilities provided in the town of Swift Current. For many of them, that's a long way. It's not the traditional shopping area for that community. They have raised their concern with the Department of Health and, more recently, with the Department of Social Services. I'm asking the government today to take a very serious look at providing this type of facility in the town of Rosetown. I would be pleased to bring the representatives from Rosetown to discuss this issue with the minister at the earliest opportunity.

I would like also to take this opportunity to commend the government for the home care program that has been put in place in my constituency. I find that a number of senior citizens and handicapped people are receiving good service from this home care program. At the same time, I would like to raise a concern that has been raised by a number of towns and rural communities where the home care program is being offered. The concern they raise is that they are afraid that in the very near future the government will find the home care program a very expensive program and will see the need to cut back on the funding that is being offered. Local government expressed the concern that the shortfall may indeed be expected to be picked up by local government in the way of a levy on the property tax base. They recall the road ambulance program and the treatment that they received under it. It was shabby treatment indeed. For that reason, they are approaching with extreme caution the idea of having home care programs, unless they can get a guarantee from the government that this funding will at no time come back to the property tax base as it's savior.

I would like to comment as well about the funding for residents in special-care homes. I was pleased to see the government this year move to a room and board rate, the one I had recommended a number of times and have spoken on in this House many times. The one concern which I have is that the government, when it did move to the room and board rate, saw fit to move level 4 into social services and then charge all of the levels \$390 per month. At the same time, they neglected completely to include level 1, basically discounting level 1 as not being a group of people worthy of attention.

I could give you the room and board rates which are charged by other provinces for the year 1980, but I do not have the updated figures for 1981. British Columbia charged \$6.50 a day in 1980. Alberta charged \$6, and Manitoba charged \$8.25. But Saskatchewan, when it introduced its program in 1981, saw fit to charge \$12 a day.

While there was likely some increase in the other provinces during 1981, I am certain there was nowhere near that type of increase which would have required the \$12 figure. So, Saskatchewan for the first time is out in front in the medical issue by having

the highest charges anywhere in western Canada.

The other matter that might escape the attention of many people who do not work closely with these figures is the fact that the government moved level 4 from health into social services. They did this for one distinct reason: the level 4 patient or person was always covered completely by medicare but the level 3 patient had to pay his own way. By moving level 4 from health into social services, they now charge the level 4 patient \$390 a month, but they can do this without saying that they are, indeed, having a deterrent fee. I say that it's just a stunt and that's all, because the deterrent fee is still there, and the people now classed as level 4 are paying a deterrent fee of \$390 a month.

Yesterday the Minister of Health criticized the province of Alberta for having a deterrent fee or a fee for medicare; that fee was \$224 — a small fee compared to the \$390.

He also gives all the credit for medicare to the government opposite. T. C. Douglas, in his eulogy to John Diefenbaker, gave John Diefenbaker the credit for making medicare possible. He said without John Diefenbaker's backing, medicare would never have been put in force. John Diefenbaker was not NDP.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — I believe that it's time they take a very serious look at where medicare really came from . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it's there. You can read it yourself in any of the papers. I would also like to mention that in the province of Alberta, when we are talking about what they do in the medical field, there is no property tax to keep the operation of the hospitals going in their districts. When a new hospital is built in Alberta, they pay 100 per cent of the cost out of the provincial treasury. In Saskatchewan there is a 40-60 arrangement. So, again, Saskatchewan falls far behind. When you look at the E&H tax, Saskatchewan has a 5 per cent tax; Alberta has no tax. When you come to the senior citizens, in Alberta there is absolutely free medical care for them with no charge at any time. There is no charge for the handicapped in Alberta.

But these things don't apply in Saskatchewan. If you want to talk about the dental care program, the senior citizens also have free dental care, and have had for some time. The new home care program, which is just coming into this province, has been in Alberta for a few years and has been operating very well. That is where your idea originated, so don't tell the people that it is the NDP which had all these great ideas. Tell them rather they are borrowing the ideas from the Conservative governments around them.

I have just a couple of items I would like to raise in the education area. First, I am deeply concerned about the government's decision to override the authority of school boards, imposing themselves on school boards in a number of different areas. The Minister of Rural Affairs, when speaking at a meeting, made the following statement:

Edgar Kaeding told a meeting in Moose Jaw last night that boards could be asked to collect some of the cost of education through local taxes as one way to keep a check on rising expenses. He said that although the government pays 70 per cent of the cost of education, some school boards may be providing them with Cadillac services.

I don't know when the Minister of Rural Affairs became the expert on education, but I think he has a lot to learn. Until he is willing to name those people, I believe that the man

has no credibility in this Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — The minister, when questioned about this yesterday, could not indicate even one board which was offering Cadillac services. I think he would be very, very hard-pressed indeed to go out and look through the systems in the province and come back with even one indication of where Cadillac services are offered. He is simply using this to discredit school boards everywhere in the province of Saskatchewan. I believe that it is not the way we are going to have good working relationships with school boards and teachers around this province.

The Minister of Education, as well, has been imposing himself on school boards over the past two years. The two larger cities in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon and Regina, have four school boards: a public school board and a separate school board in each city. These school boards have, for a number of years, made very good decisions on where and to what extent new schools are needed in each city. They tabled the information they gathered with the Department of Education and when approval was granted, then proceeded to build the schools. But not with this Minister of Education. No, he has a new process.

Instead of following the normal process, he sees fit to appoint Lyle Bergstrom, a former deputy minister of education, to be a committee of one, to not only go out and look at the decisions which have been made but also to go beyond that and to look at the cities, and bring back a report outlining the needs of each school board for new buildings in the cities. I believe that this is a very unfair approach and also that the minister is imposing himself on the duly-elected school boards of this province — a process which I think needs to come to the public's attention and be dealt with. And, at the next election, I believe it will be dealt with — very seriously.

The government, as well, has imposed itself on school boards by putting five appointed people from the Department of Education on the bargaining committee to bargain teachers' salaries. These teachers are employed by the school boards. Now there are five government appointees and four school board appointments to the bargaining team. We saw last year that the government would go ahead and finalize an agreement without the consent of the trustees and thereby really give more power to the Department of Education and less power to the trustees who are elected by the people of this province. I believe it is time that this type of action came to an end. Then when people are duly elected, they would be given the jurisdiction by legislation to do the job they are elected for.

I would like now to make a few comments about agriculture. The member for Estevan, in introducing his motion on Monday, made a comment about the need for food in eastern Europe. By this, he is referring to Poland and that general area of Europe. I agree with the hon. member that there is indeed grave concern in this area of the world and that Canada should do its utmost to assist in providing food to hungry people.

But I would like to just look at the reason that this area of the world is now short of food. Eastern Europe, the Ukraine, Poland, and the area along the Black Sea have long been known as the richest food-producing areas of Europe. Indeed, they were classified as the breadbasket of Europe. Now we find that they're short of food. What has happened in the meantime? Indeed, what has happened in that socialism has come in, and that part of the world is finding that they cannot produce enough food under that system to

feed themselves. You take away the pride of ownership from people and the production side will drastically fall. That is exactly what has happened in that part of the world, and I believe that will happen to socialism in this part of the world.

Let me use the land bank as an example of why socialism is not working. The Saskatchewan government moved to buy large numbers of acres. In excess of a million acres are now held by land bank. This land is then leased to young farmers and they are given the option to buy after five years. But at the end of the five years, they must buy at the inflated price, while the land bank sits back and smiles about the capital gains that they are accumulating. Did you know that land bank has accumulated more than \$400 million in capital gains? That is \$400 million that really should have been in the pockets of the young farmers who are farming that land.

You take away the power of young people to buy their own farms, you take away their pride of ownership, and you take away their pride in operating a farm efficiently. If you had put some money in the coffers and allowed these young people to borrow and buy their farms, they would have that \$400 million today; they also would have had a good portion of that land cleared and would be owners producing at a much higher level.

This year we see in the Speech from the Throne that agriculture gets very small mention. The government opposite mentions only that they're going to continue with the program that they offered last year. That was the \$25 million of research funds over the next five years. That's no new money. All it is is a continuation of a promise that was made a year ago. So for the next five years we'll hear that same theme when the throne speech is brought down.

I think at a time when inflation is rampant in Saskatchewan, when costs of production are rising and the price of grain is dropping, that the government needs to do more than simply look at a research program in the agricultural field. Now, I know the minister is going to come back and tell me, "Oh, no, we've introduced the beef stabilization program." They did. They introduced it. It's not operational as yet; the regulations are not yet written. Indeed, an application form is not yet available.

I'm concerned because the beef stabilization program does not look at the whole beef industry but, rather, it looks at a very narrow part of the beef industry — just slaughter beef. I'm concerned about the requirement for people to sign up for six years. They are called upon to make a decision to sign up for six years, when there are no regulations and basically very little direction which they can look to. They have no idea what the result is going to be, and yet they must make a commitment for a long term.

I think the minister should take a very serious look at reducing that minimum sign-up period to perhaps a couple of years at the most, so that people will not be hurt too greatly if the program doesn't work. I also think that if we are going into a beef stabilization program, there should be opportunities for people to stabilize their operations at whatever level they operate.

The cow-calf operator is often looked upon as the backbone of the industry, and yet here he is not even considered in this particular beef program. You know, a cow-calf operator may be in an area of the province with good grassland where he can operate a good summer herd, but may have difficulty in providing hay and grain for fattening cattle. For this reason I think the minister has dealt a blow to many of those people by not including them in a program, if the program is to be a success.

This is not something that was offered in the 1978 election scheme, but has come in since. One program offered in the 1978 election program was the farm fuel rebate reduction program. It lasted for a couple of years and then was discontinued. Is this a ploy that the government is using, that when election time comes around, they are going to again have something to offer as a handout to farm people to try to buy votes? Are they going to come back at the next election and say, "Oh, we are going to offer a farm fuel rebate?" That may last for one year, or two years, or less. I think this is not an aboveboard method of dealing with the farmers in this province.

Agriculture in the past four-year period has seen tremendous increases in costs of production. The only way that farmers are able to survive is by being very frugal operators, by working excessively long hours, by holding their labour component to a bare minimum, and just be being extremely efficient in order to survive. But the government sees fit in the midst of all of this to drop their fuel rebate program.

Another area that I believe should be looked at, and will be looked at when we form the government, is the need to offer the people the opportunity to use purple fuel in tandem axle trucks. It doesn't make sense to me that a person hauling his own grain from the farm to the market with a tandem axle truck is required to buy bronze fuel for that truck, yet the man who is driving his half-ton truck to town is able to burn purple fuel. I'm not recommending that the use of purple gas be discontinued for half-ton trucks, but I am recommending that the purple fuel be made available to those people who are using tandem axle trucks.

Another area I would like to touch upon briefly is the enersave program that was offered by the federal government. This program offered up to \$800 grants for people to convert to other forms of energy than heater fuel. But while it came across the country as far as Saskatchewan, we find that the Saskatchewan government has not been able to negotiate with the federal government. So, in Saskatchewan, we are not allowed to convert to electricity, which could have been one of the areas that was eligible for a grant. Rather, the only things we can convert to in Saskatchewan are natural gas or propane or wood. Now, much of Saskatchewan would have a very difficult time in coming up with wood to convert to. I think that electricity was one of the viable opportunities for people who want to convert from oil to an alternate energy source, and I would encourage the government of Saskatchewan to get on with the negotiating process, so our people will not lose the benefit of the \$800 grant available from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like as well to touch on a concern I have with regard to load limits on a number of Saskatchewan highways. During the fall period is the time when farmers bring in next summer's supply of fertilizer, and it's also the time for the ranchers to ship the loads of feeder calves that go to the feedlots in other parts of the country.

From my constituency it's very difficult to bring in fertilizer from southern Alberta and arrive in the constituency without being overweight. You can come in on Highway No. 1 with a full load of fertilizer, but you can't come up Highway No. 4 to reach Rosetown. Instead, you are instructed by the highways department that you must drive to Regina and then take Highway No. 11 to Saskatoon and backtrack on Highway 7 in order to get to Rosetown. This is indeed a fuel waste, a very costly process for the trucker, and that cost is passed on to the farmer who buys the fertilizer.

I believe that there's need for the government to move to raise the load limit on Highway

4, so that we have a north-south highway connecting No. 1 and No. 7 to enable the heavier loads to move.

Much the same concern has been raised by a number of ranchers in my constituency. When it comes to shipping out their calves in the fall, they can't ship a complete cattle liner of calves because they're overweight. So they have to ship out two loads as far as Highway No. 1, then combine the loads and have them shipped on to other parts of Canada, or wherever they're going to be fed.

Calves are under a lot, of stress at time of shipping. This loading and unloading that occurs in Swift Current, in most cases, is causing a considerable loss to ranchers in that area. I believe that at least permits could be provided to allow ranchers to move these calves out without undue stress, and I don't believe that it will cause any particular damage to the highways.

I think there's a need for the Department of Highways and Transportation to re-evaluate its whole program. If the highways are not heavy enough to take today's trucks, then, for goodness' sake, let's bring them up to standard so people can move in this province.

Mr. Speaker, because the throne speech put very few new ideas forward that will be of assistance to people in the province, I will find it necessary to vote against the motion, and will be supporting the amendment.

MR. PEPPER: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take part in this year's throne speech debate. I would first like to congratulate my two colleagues, the members for Estevan and The Battlefords, Mr. Chapman and Mr. Miner, for a job well done in moving and seconding the address in reply to the throne speech, two members who, in the short time they have been here, Mr. Speaker, have added dignity and pride to this Chamber, and have proven with their great ability that they are a credit to their constituencies as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the address by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor was noteworthy for several reasons, a few of which I propose to outline here today.

First, let me say I believe the vast majority of Canadians are pleased, yes, pleased and relieved that a constitutional accord has been reached. The significance of that achievement cannot be understated, and the Government of Saskatchewan can be very proud of the role that it has played in this important first step in the renewal of Canadian federalism. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it was Saskatchewan that provided the basis for the resolution of the deadlock between the federal government on the one hand and the eight dissenting provinces on the other. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that seven of the provinces argued the unanimous consent of all provinces was necessary for constitutional change. We were urged to adopt that position. We were harshly criticized for not doing so. The federal government, at the other extreme, argued it could act alone. We also rejected that position and the supreme court rejected it as well.

Saskatchewan took the stand that a broad consensus was required for constitutional change, that the extremes of both the other positions were in error. The Supreme Court of Canada agreed and adopted our position, providing a resolution of the constitutional logjam that was both acceptable to Canadians and consistent with the finest traditions of our federal system. I say, Mr. Speaker, it was indeed fortunate the Government of Saskatchewan took the position it did, rejecting the other options which

were pressed upon it at the time — options which if adopted might have done grave damage to the fabric of Canadian federalism. Saskatchewan was indeed fortunate to have capable leadership at such a critical time in the history of our nation. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, all Canadians benefited from that leadership.

Now, many Canadians felt that with a constitutional accord having been reached, the federal government ought to have turned its full attention to the economy. But it is with regret that I must say the November 12 federal budget provides neither the direction nor any of the measures necessary for economic recovery in Canada. The federal budget recognizes that Canadian economic growth was slowed and that this slowdown will continue well into next year. The budget also projects unemployment will increase in Canada over the next two to three years. According to the federal government's own projections, slow employment growth coupled with small productivity gains will result in very slow growth in real output, ranging from 2.2 per cent in 1982 to 2.8 per cent in 1987.

So I say the theme of the federal budget is restraint and restrictive fiscal policy will worsen the current economic recession. What happens? It leads to increased unemployment. Nor did the budget contain any policy designated to establish an independent interest rate policy or any measures to provide relief for those suffering from unduly high rates. I regret very much, Mr. Speaker, the apparent decision by the federal government through its budget to abdicate its economic responsibilities. The jobless have been abandoned and home-owners have been left to fend for themselves.

Now, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to look at this. By contrast, the Government of Saskatchewan continues to strengthen our economy. We all know the importance of agriculture to the economy of Saskatchewan. Last year agriculture contributed over \$4 billion to the gross provincial product. I am proud of our government's record in working with farmers. FarmLab, the five-year \$25 million research program, is but one example of our commitment to agriculture. The voluntary beef stabilization program is another. The Saskatchewan Hog Assured Returns Program is a third. There are 1,000 Saskatchewan hopper cars which are now fully operational moving prairie grain to market.

Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, is Saskatchewan's number one industry and we are helping to keep it that way. As has been stated before, today Saskatchewan has a greater percentage of farmers under 25 than either Manitoba or Alberta, and a greater total number of farmers under 25 than both of those provinces put together. Mr. Speaker, that situation didn't just happen by chance. It happened because this government has listened to farmers and worked with them to create needed programs, like beef and hog stabilization. Two programs alone, the land bank and FarmStart, have put over 7,000 new farmers on the land. Today we continue to work with farmers through the FarmLab program.

I have mentioned at least six projects which are under way. They are under way in the Weyburn, Carnduff-Estevan areas. These projects involve things like soil fertility research, winter cereal trials, and the use of water fertilizers in rotation. Such projects as these, Mr. Speaker, will be invaluable in developing new crops and increasing yields to meet world market demands. Such projects will benefit all farmers. Yes, because just as in other industries, research and development is the cornerstone of future growth.

The throne speech also indicated there would be amendments to The Crop Insurance

Act. Crop insurance is another program which has greatly benefited Saskatchewan farmers. In 1980-81 crop insurance paid out about \$6 million alone in Weyburn constituency and over \$3 million in the two previous years. From next to nothing in 1971, crop insurance has been expanded, Mr. Speaker, to the point where it now covers 43,000 farmers for almost \$1 billion.

Yes, we are proud of our commitment to agriculture and this year's throne speech renews that commitment. Similarly, this government continues to work with municipalities through programs like revenue sharing, expanded transit assistance, the community capital fund, urban parks and downtown revitalization.

Through revenue sharing, for example, urban and rural municipalities have received over \$3 million since 1979. Nor does this include the community capital fund and the many hundreds of thousands of dollars it has made available to our communities.

We have also recognized the importance of the small business sector of our economy. We are moving to provide assistance there. I know of four local businesses in Weyburn that have benefited from the small industry development program. Small businesses across the province benefit from the interest abatement program and Aid to Trade. Last year, the rural transportation assistance program initiated the Radville-Ceylon-Weyburn bus service.

Mr. Speaker, there are many areas of broad concern to Saskatchewan citizens that were addressed in the throne speech. I think we all are desirous of extending environmental protection. In 1980, both The Department of the Environment Act and The Environmental Assessment Act were greatly strengthened. Legislation will be forthcoming concerning the handling and movement of dangerous goods within Saskatchewan. As well, existing provincial staff will receive training to enable them to act as dangerous goods inspectors. A portion of new royalties from mining companies is already being set aside in the environmental protection fund. This government's environment policy reflects our belief that industry, as well as individuals, should be responsible for its actions, and that environmental concerns should not take a back seat to other considerations.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, there's much for the people of Saskatchewan to look forward to. The throne speech mentioned the greatly reduced costs for home care. There has been a general expansion of services for the elderly. I was also pleased to see a strengthening of our commitment to preventive health programs at a time when social services are being cut back in many other jurisdictions. We can be proud of our activities in this very important area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — Our commitment to health and social services is well-known. I also look forward, in this International Year of the Disabled, to the enactment of accessibility standards in public buildings to which we will be giving consideration. Those standards will be based on the recommendation of an advisory committee which was established to consider a uniform building code.

The throne speech also pointed out that legislation will be forthcoming in the areas of pensions, co-operation, communications, culture and education, and libraries. The provincial minimum wage will be increased to \$4.25 an hour effective January 1. Here too, Saskatchewan will maintain its leadership role.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, these are all matters that deserve the earnest consideration of this Assembly. Much progress has been made in past years and today there are great opportunities facing us. We have made great progress in the past. I believe we have every reason to be optimistic about the future. I do not hesitate in stating to you that we have good reason to support the motion before us. Accordingly, I am pleased to support the motion and will be voting against the amendment. I urge all members of this Assembly to do likewise. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be talking mostly about agriculture, but I have a few remarks I want to say first. It would appear that our Hon. Premier is once again gearing up for a possible election, using his timeworn theme of scare tactics which got him through two elections. I want to assure the Premier and his cohorts that those scare tactics aren't going to work in the next campaign. The electorate will demand the facts before they make up their minds for which party they will vote.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I speak not only for myself but for all the members on this side of the House when I emphatically state that we have no intentions of disbanding any public service, be it a public utility or crown corporation, if it is serving the needs of our residents and is being operated in a businesslike manner, with all its financial and business relative thereto being placed on the table for all to scrutinize and analyze.

Mr. Speaker, I just don't know how gullible the Rhodes Scholar Premier thinks the people of Saskatchewan are. I agree that many of us did not attain the greatest heights in the academic world, but the majority of us did get through the school of hard knocks, and along the way picked up the average academic education. How can he, the Premier, get up before a group of people such as the wheat pool convention, and other groups he speaks to, and say, "Look, we aren't going to get a handout this year from the federal government. In order for us to carry on your business, we have no alternative but to assess each one of you a higher tax to operate."

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think most people's usual procedure when operating their private businesses is that when their cash flow is not enough to pay their current expenses, they resort to their reserves until their cash flow improves. If things don't improve by the time they use their reserves, then they go to their bank or credit union and get a loan against their assets. Of course, if things continue to be bad, they end up bankrupt and out of business, or turn their business over to the Saskatchewan government to operate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it would appear our Premier doesn't believe government business

should be operated the way we ordinary taxpayers operate. The Premier doesn't go through the step of going to the reserves. He jumps that step and goes directly to the already overtaxed citizen and say, "Give us more. Bleed some more. We, the NDP, know what's good for you."

How can the Premier of our province get up and speak of raising taxes again and again and again and, at the same time, authorize media advertising at great expense? It tells us how great our family of crown corporations is, with their huge profits; how we have a huge heritage fund; how great a deal was made with Ottawa in regard to our energy resources; how great the increase in retail sales have been in Saskatchewan — thus more education and health tax revenue. Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his colleagues have time and time again told the taxpayers of the province that their NDP's handling of our financial affairs has been nothing but one successful venture after another. Therefore, we can expect them now to tell us where all the profits from their ventures are and when the average person can expect to see tax reductions — a bigger and better chicken in every pot.

If Saskatchewan is the land of milk and honey, as we are led to believe, let us not worry about comparing Saskatchewan with other provinces in this country. Let us just deal with Saskatchewan, and spend less time extolling how great we are in comparison to other provinces. There is no point, for example, in adding up the pluses in Saskatchewan versus the minuses in Alberta, or vice-versa. You know, Mr. Speaker, we are here in Saskatchewan. If all is so good and great, let us show the rank and file public that we are in fact the best province. Let the Premier and his colleagues come clean and fully disclose the financial affairs of crown corporations, etc., so the public can analyze the balance sheets and documents pertaining thereto.

Let the public decide from the financial reports if telephone rates should be increased, if the insurance corporation is being reasonably managed and if its rates should be increased, if the power rates should be increased, if Sedco is making good, sound investments, and if Sask Tel should be borrowing more money to buy real estate, to build more shopping centres. Let's give citizens telephone services at cost. Let's give taxpayers power and gas services at cost. Let's build more and better roads.

Why can't we allot more financial aid to education and health without going to Ottawa for handouts? Let's improve those social services that can be proven to be needed.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his statements, particularly of late, seem to me and others to be coming from a group who are in a state of organized confusion. On the one hand they say, "We are the greatest," and at the same time they must tax the taxpayers more. They can't give the civil service a raise. They can't help maintain the small towns, villages and farm areas by extending the natural gas system.

Mr. Speaker, the public is asking questions continuously. They want to know what is going on in government. I don't have the answers for the inquiring public. All I can say to them is that I, as an MLA, along with my colleagues, can't get full disclosure of the public's business, even in the committee of crown corporations. In some cases, these people are not civil servants, and they live in communities throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the time has arrived when the Premier must come clean, and tell it like it is. Tell us and the public what the details are of our family of crown corporations and of corporations with which his government has entered into agreements. Let the public know exactly where we are, where the investments are,

where the losses are, and where the profits are. It is not good enough any longer for ministers responsible for our financial affairs to stand in their places and say this information or that information is not in the public interest and would jeopardize our position in the market place, etc.

If the government of this province is going to continue to operate and expand its operations in the free market place, it must be prepared to operate like all good corporate citizens. If it can't abide by the general rules and can't stand the heat, it had better get out of the kitchen.

Mr. Speaker, I expect that in the not too distant future, we'll be favoured with a budget. Of course, I am expecting that it will contain numerous goodies for everybody. At least that is what will be said by the Minister of Finance when he delivers same. I also expect that it will be a so-called bribery budget, where we will be told the reason the Premier and his cohorts are able to be so good to us is the unqualified success they have had in the handling of our family of crown corporations. I do hope they will also tell us the reason they can make record-breaking expenditures is their ever-increasing taxes on fuel, ever-increasing telephone rates, power rates, insurance rates — which the people of my constituency will believe when they see the bureaucracy express speeding by their door.

What I mean by the bureaucracy express speeding by their door is the new buses. The buses won't even stop to let people on board if those people wish to go to Regina or Saskatoon. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I don't suggest that my people in Arm River get too close to that bus when they are trying to hail it down or they'll be run over by a very expensive bus that won't stop for the average rank and file taxpayer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — When I say bribery budget, Mr. Speaker, I mean the government will hope it will be able to convince the electorate to vote for the NDP come the election after it has bribed them with their own money. No, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the "Vote Allan" slogan will work again. No, I don't believe the usual scare tactics will work. I think the people of Saskatchewan want more clear and concise answers before they opt again for the Premier and his boys. I think it's as one of the Premier's boys, who isn't running again, has already stated publicly: "It's time for a change."

This afternoon I want to bring before this House the real record of this government in the field of agriculture. Agriculture is so important to our future. You know what the Minister of Agriculture said in the *Financial Post* on February 12, 1980. I quote:

If the Saskatchewan farmers hope to cash in on a growing, profitable world grain market, the change-over to straight grain farming is necessary. The Saskatchewan economy is diversified enough to take the strain of a large crop failure.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP advocated a return to straight grain farming for Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Party believes this proposal is wrong-headed and retrogressive and clearly demonstrates the lack of understanding of agriculture by the current NDP administration. What is the record of the NDP in agriculture? We have only one major . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, you can sure tell that the farmer from Regina Rosemont doesn't know much about farming.

We only have one major hog processing plant left in our province, yet we export 100,000 hogs to Alberta annually. In addition we import hamburger, milk and chickens to supply our restaurants. We have lost over 8,000 family farms in Saskatchewan since the creation of land bank, and I challenge the government to prove otherwise. Saskatchewan farmers have experienced the largest decline in net income in the prairie provinces. The Premier has stated in the past that he would have negotiated to trade away the crowrate for oil price concessions with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, 85 per cent of the farms in Alberta have natural gas; 90 per cent of the farms in Saskatchewan do not. What is the government doing for rural Saskatchewan? Saskatchewan has 40 per cent of the prime agricultural land in Canada; Alberta has 15 per cent. For the first time ever, total farm income in Alberta was equal to that of Saskatchewan in 1979. Since the NDP has been in power the net farm income of farmers has increased only 5 per cent.

Why was it necessary for the Meewasin Valley Authority to have the power to expropriate 160,000 acres of prime farmland? The land bank and the Department of Agriculture now (this is lands branch land) control 9 million acres in this province. Central Canada wanted to buy our oil at half price last spring. Did Ontario or Quebec offer to sell feed to drought-stricken Saskatchewan at half price? No.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to deal with the beef stabilization plan. I see the Minister of Agriculture disappeared when I stood up. He knew I was going to hit beef stabilization. Last spring I termed it nothing more than a backdoor step toward establishment of a compulsory beef marketing board. At that time the Progressive Conservatives in this legislature called on the government to allow for consultation with beef producers and other interested groups. That was never done. They forced the Bill through the legislature and said to the beef producers, "Here it is." Even they, then, couldn't supply any details. The beef stabilization Bill was a bad piece of legislation. The beef industry asked the government to stay out of its affairs but, no, they did not listen.

History has shown in the last 10 years that government intervention into the livestock industry has done nothing but bring confusion and has solved little. In fact it has created more problems than it ever solved. We all remember what happened when the government imposed itself on the hog industry. Things haven't been the same since. What were the results of the intrusion into the hog industry? For a starter, the number of producers dropped dramatically. Then the number of hogs produced dropped dramatically. Production all the way across the board dropped dramatically. There was virtually no support among producers for the program . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to note that when I get up to speak in this House, I arouse a lot of people. The reason the hog program fell was that the producers didn't trust the government to keep the program voluntary. The track record of NDP government is such that it cannot be trusted in these matters. The hog producers couldn't trust it and neither do the cattlemen.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most serious problems which could arise from the beef stabilization plan would be the loss of access to the United States market by Saskatchewan producers. Many livestock groups in the United States are lobbying to close the border to Canadian beef. The beef stabilization plan has ramifications down the road that could be horrendous in our relations with our neighbours to the south, as

far as the free movement of cattle is concerned. Since this plan was introduced many, many concerned farmers have made representation to me on beef stabilization. They don't trust the government because there are no definite contracts and people are wondering why there are no clearly spelled-out contracts. Then there is the whole question of the six-year tie-in. The beef producers don't like it. They are asking why. It is such a long time to be locked into the program.

Mr. Speaker, there is no — I repeat, no — guaranteed levy for the farmers. Why? What guarantee do they have that it will remain at 4 per cent? In a short time it could be 76 per cent and then 8 per cent. There is no contract to show them any guarantees, no regulations. To top it all off, there are absolutely no regulations that have been shown by the Minister of Agriculture to the people of Saskatchewan who are interested in this program.

During this past week I have had the opportunity to meet with many farmers at the Western Canadian Agribition here in Regina. It is common knowledge that morale amongst farmers is at an all-time low, just as low as it was in the 1930s. They see government hurting rather than helping agriculture. The beef stabilization plan will add more government controls which will interfere with the normal market process. On a final note on beef, I would point to Alberta, as the Premier is so fond of doing; he always likes to compare Saskatchewan to Alberta. Let's note that just yesterday the Alberta government announced a comprehensive \$136 million beef, cattle and sheep support program. There is no confusion in Albert, Mr. Speaker. That is \$136 million, with no confusion. That sure is a lot better than the program which has been enforced on farmers here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I say that the Minister of Agriculture, since he has become minister, has put the Department of Agriculture in a complete state of confusion. When you brought a Bill into this House last spring and just slipped it through this House, and had no regulations or contracts or people to see . . . This is almost the end of their signing-up time. It's January 1. They have to sign up this month if they're going to collect any money in April, and they can't see a contract.

What kind of a government do we have that puts Bills through with no regulations before the Bills? We were misrepresented in this House last winter. We were misrepresented by the government opposite. The farmers in Saskatchewan were misrepresented — completely deceived. They thought there was something there for them. There are absolutely zero people who have signed up for this — zero! The Minister of Agriculture has made the statement that 25 per cent have signed up. Twenty-four per cent of the people have filled out their applications forms so they could see a contract. No contract has been signed because they are not even finished making it up, because there are no regulations. All the farmers in this province know about is how to pay taxes. They've paid and they've paid and they've paid. Where does the money go? Into the Premier's bank, with one door — the door of no return. Why couldn't you have put in a plan in this province without asking the farmers to dish out some more money? That's all you've done.

Mr. Speaker, the main concern . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Agriculture should have done was control costs and not control the farmers. Control the costs. Do something about bringing the costs down. Every place he moves the costs are going up. Bring the costs down and perhaps the farmer would make a profit on his animal or on his grain. Freeze the power rates. Freeze the telephone rates. Freeze SGI rates. Yes, the member for Wilkie just said, "Freeze the minister."

Mr. Speaker, I contend that after 10 long years in office, the NDP government has long since forgotten the needs of the farmers. On the opposite side of this Chamber we see a government led by a man who is indifferent to farmers. Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier know about rural Saskatchewan? He's probably never see a baler let alone run one.

What does he know as compared to the leader of our part, Grant Devine? I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to say that my party is led by a man whose roots are in Saskatchewan, a man who grew up on a farm, still farms, and is respected and listened to in the agricultural community. Farmers will not believe the wild stories the NDP fiction writers have dreamed up about Grant Devine. The farmers know where Grant Devine stands when it comes to agriculture. Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the voters of Saskatchewan have not forgotten this is an agricultural province. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Conservative Party listens to and knows the problems of rural Saskatchewan. I am proud to say that we on this side have a comprehensive plan to develop rural Saskatchewan. The Progressive Conservative six-point program for the 1980s consists of:

1. Saskatchewan family farm purchase program. I don't want any of you people to say that we didn't say something in our speech. They're alternatives; the Progressive Conservative Party has alternatives like a once-in-a-lifetime \$350,000 loan to young people to get started in family farms and small businesses.
2. A rural gas distribution system to provide Saskatchewan rural communities and particularly farms with access to low-price energy for home heating, grain dryers, irrigation pumps, and livestock feeding facilities. Look after those things and there might be some profit left for the cattlemen, the hog men, and the grain men. Don't just charge them another tax.
3. A Saskatchewan irrigation capital grant program to provide family farms with the economic incentive to fully capture the benefits of irrigation, which we certainly lack in Saskatchewan.
4. Saskatchewan agriculture and food processing programs (capital and tax incentives) to enable Saskatchewan families to participate in the benefits of the growing food market.
5. Increased financial aid to educational and research institutions working in agriculture and veterinary medicine.
6. A rural community development program to revitalize Saskatchewan's towns and villages.

Mr. Speaker, the neglect by the Blakeney government of farmers is outrageous. While they build fancy bathrooms for high-priced bureaucrats, the farmers of Saskatchewan suffer. Mr. Speaker, under a Conservative government the farmers can count on having a fellow farmer and friend in the Premier's office.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to say that I am proud to serve the constituency of Arm River. I want to say that the Speech from the Throne neglected the needs of agriculture and as such, I will be supporting the amendment put forward by the member for Souris-Cannington. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I believe it's always important to end the day on rather a high, when the morale of the troops is up. I feel that on our side now, so I would like to beg leave to adjourn debate and continue debate tomorrow.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:14 p.m.