

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**December 8, 1981**

The Assembly met at 7 p.m.

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**Address in Reply (continued)**

**MR. ANDREW:** — A few comments further, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the throne speech. I would like to direct some attention to the whole question of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan. What we have seen, I think, is simply the tip of the iceberg with the announced closure of the Eldorado Nuclear mine in Uranium City. I believe that's the beginning of what could be some pretty rocky roads for the uranium industry over the next 10 years and perhaps even longer.

What I am simply saying is this, Mr. Speaker. The problem is that the product is there, as it is in many other places throughout the world. The whole question is the market for uranium internationally, and it doesn't make a great deal of difference whether or not you can put your product at a lower cost if there are no markets there. When you start looking at the buyers of the world, you realize that they look at perhaps two or three important things. Number one is obviously the cost, and that's pretty much set by what is called the spot market or prior on long-term contracts. The second thing they look at is security of supply. Of course, what the buyers of the world, who are primarily the utilities of the world, are looking for regarding security of supply is not necessarily from one country. They are looking for products not only from Canada, but also from Australia and other countries. They want to spread their market out for supply.

So we are going to find ourselves in a very intense marketing condition for uranium over the next 10 years. Now, that market is going into the complex international markets. I think we're going to see the same thing, perhaps, that we saw a decade ago with AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.). To market that product you're going to have to use some very ingenious methods that would not be considered proper by Saskatchewan or Canadian standards. We're going to have some serious problems there. I think we're going to be struggling with SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) to get a return on that investment over the next 10 years. That's going to be the big problem we face.

Has this government really reached a point where it's concentrating on playing the international speculative market? Obviously, that's what is happening with SMDC today. Governments are starting to lose sight of what traditionally governments are supposed to do in this country, and that is to provide for the people who are living in the province or in the federal system. I suppose it was put to me best when an older gentleman phoned me perhaps a month ago (a former NDP supporter, he claimed). Which one of the many thousands was that one? He was a senior citizen and he phoned to complain about the power bill he faced, to complain that the power bill was going up and that there were taxes on that power bill. I think everybody in the Assembly has probably had that type of complain made to him by a constituent.

I think what that particular gentleman told me is something very significant that is happening in the province today. He said, "You know, something changed with the

NDP.” It was back, he thought, in 1977 when they won that landslide victory. He said that when they won that landslide victory, they forgot about the people. They forgot about the people after they won, and they are concerned about themselves. They’re concerned about the elite people within the central operation of the party. They forgot the little guy who was traditionally what governments in this province were all about. They forgot the little guy and his telephone bill and his power bill. He doesn’t count anymore. They’re more concerned with some speculative capital-intense venture with uranium. They can’t put the money out to lessen the tax load on an individual in the province, to lessen the load on his power bill or his gasoline bill, or any of those things that really count to the average person.

What the average person is facing today is a very tight economic condition. He doesn’t have enough money to go around. That’s the reality; that’s what the people are telling me. And the individual is looking to government for some help. But what is the government saying to him? “No, we don’t have any money for that. No, that’s not our responsibility; go to Trudeau — he’s the guy that can help you.”

But in the end, the big question is that the government no longer has the money to help the little guy. They say they are going to help the people. They say, “Watch us; trust us. We’re going to take this money into the uranium industry. We’re going to turn a massive profit, and then we will give it back to you in glowing terms.” The individual person is going to start to question that policy. He’s accepted it for the last 5 or 6 or 10 years and he is now starting to wonder if they are so wise.

I wonder if their priorities are really in the places where I thought they were. They seem to me to be more interested in the elitist policy, not unlike, I suggest, the corporate structure in the private world, because what is more important to them over there now is what their department does, or how they become involved in this, or what type of office they have, or how big their office on the 13th floor is, or what venture they can get into so they can rub elbows with the Bob Blairs of this world. Those are the things that turn the people on, on that side of the House now.

It used to be that you had some concern and that you had some compassion for the little guy out there, for the small businessman out there, and for the person who was facing financial troubles. But no, you don’t have money for those people any more unless they fit into one of your grandiose plans.

To help the beef industry, to solve the problems of the farmer, what you are going to do in concoct a scheme by which he can market this products. But the big problem that the farmer is facing is that his costs are going up and his income is going down. You don’t ever think that perhaps you could do something to help that man’s cause, or do something about giving him a different fuel source such as the rural gas distribution system.

You know, we will have farmers, this winter in the province of Saskatchewan, living in a small home on a small farm. With any kind of cold weather this winter those people are going to be facing power bills of \$400 to \$500 per month for bunker heating fuel. Those are serious cost problems for those people. They are going to be driving their vehicles — the farmers and the people of rural Saskatchewan haven’t a great deal of choice — if they have to go to a doctor in Saskatoon. That’s a distance of 100 or 200 miles for a lot of people. It costs them money to drive there. Their gas bills not only for their homes but also for their automobiles are going higher and higher. Two-thirds of the price of gasoline goes to the government today, and that is escalating.

The member for Saskatoon-Sutherland talked about how great this new energy agreement was. I'm glad to see that it has finally been resolved. Everybody should be happy about it, but I'll tell you the one person who is paying on that energy agreement, the one person who really wasn't consulted and who was neglected was the consumer. What the consumer of this province is going to be paying by the end of that energy agreement is six-dollar gasoline. To fill up your tank it's going to cost you \$6 per gallon, and the reason for that is that conventional oil is running out.

We are going to be using more and more enhanced oil — Syncrude oil, oil from Hibernia, oil from heavy oil upgrading. That particular feeder stock now constitutes something like 10 per cent of our crude oil source in this province. Within six years that's going to be closer to 40 per cent, and the cost is going to be horrendous. The individual person faces a problem there. He faces a problem with escalating telephone costs. Yet, throughout the United States today, through its deregulation program, the cost of telephoning is in fact going down. But it's not going down in Saskatchewan; it's going higher. The prices that they have to pay are what the people are concerned about in Saskatchewan today.

That is what this throne speech did not address; that is what the members opposite are not addressing because, Mr. Speaker, they have become elitists. They have become corporate socialists, if you like. They are more concerned about their own little power group within the government. They have, as the old gentleman told me on the phone, forgotten the people, and by forgetting the people, the members opposite are going to come to task some day. Some day that is going to come home to haunt them, because what happens when a government forgets the people is that the government becomes arrogant. When the government becomes obsessed with that, then there are going to be problems for the government.

I think you can see that reflected, perhaps, in the way that the members opposite are having trouble rallying their forces. The people over there are having trouble rallying their forces; I can see it in their faces.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about the NDP nominating meeting held in Kindersley the other day . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Of course, I wasn't there, and I didn't have any spies there. I had to go by the newspaper, and the newspaper, of course, is the only source I had to tell what it was all about. According to the newspaper, they had a crowd of 45 people at that nominating meeting — 45! That is the lowest number of people at an NDP nominating meeting in Kindersley in 40 years. The paper went on to say that most of them were over the age of 50.

What is that saying, Mr. Speaker? It's saying basically this: the NDP, when it comes down to the people out in the field, is becoming old.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, consider a nominating meeting held by the Tories last night, in an area that has never really been a strong point for the Conservatives — the constituency of Kinistino. Can you imagine the constituency of Kinistino? I don't think we ever got our deposit back in that riding before. At the nominating meeting last night there were 400 people! There were four candidates seeking nomination in the riding of Kinistino. What does that say for what is happening in rural Saskatchewan today? I'll tell you what it's saying: it's saying exactly what the throne speech is saying — you people over there are becoming old. They're becoming old; they're becoming bankrupt of ideas. They don't have any new programs. They're becoming tired. That, in the end my

friends, is what really, turns political parties out of power, when they lose that youthfulness, when they become old, when they want to live on their laurels, when they want to talk about a throne speech which deals with medicare.

They want to deal with the battles of yesterday. They want to deal with the constitution that has now gone by. They want to go with the old system of blaming Ottawa for this and blaming Ottawa for that. You know, the mentality of Saskatchewan people has always been that we struggle. We have always been people who have been downtrodden, relative to our brothers in many of the provinces of Canada: Ontario, B.C., and Alberta. We have always been the poor cousins. I think everybody will agree with that.

But now we have the resources; we have the land base; and we are no longer the poor cousins. We have the oil, the uranium (be that as it may), potash, timber, farmland. As a people and a province, we probably have the greatest supply per capita of natural resources of any province in this country. But when it comes to the question of whether that money is coming back to the people — it's not. Our taxes compared to Alberta's . . . I suppose that, really, if we want to get into a comparison of provinces (the members opposite like to compare themselves with Manitoba), they have no oil, no potash . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Not anymore!

**MR. ANDREW:** — “Not anymore,” he says. That's right, not anymore because it's not worth the comparison anymore — no oil, no potash, half as much farmland. That's quite a comparison. If that doesn't work, let's compare ourselves to Prince Edward Island; and if we're really desperate, like (I think) the member for Indian Head-Wolseley said today, we'll compare ourselves to Newfoundland. That's some comparison isn't it? The province of Newfoundland, holy smokes, what a grab bag way to find some province to compare yourself to. Really, we're like Alberta. We have to be like Alberta, because like Alberta, we have the resources. But, we don't have what Alberta has — a Tory government that puts the money back into the hands of the people.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — The price of gasoline in Tory Alberta is 40 cents lower. Income tax in the province of Alberta is 35 per cent less. The comparison of the province of Alberta for virtually anything we want to compare it to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He says medicare. The Attorney General talks about medicare.

I will give you an example of what medicare is doing in the constituency of Kindersley. There are three hospitals in the constituency of Kindersley: at Kindersley, Eston, and Eatonia. There is one at Dodsland. In the town of Kindersley, the hospital puts a mill rate of 6 mills on every property owner. That is the biggest town. The next biggest town, which is Eston, adds 8 mills to every person's property. The small hospital at Eatonia adds 13 mills to every taxpayer in Saskatchewan. Do you know what they pay in Alberta for hospitals? They pay zero on their property tax. Do you know what the average household pays in property taxes in the province of Alberta compared to the province of Saskatchewan? They pay about one-half as much property tax in the province of Alberta as they do in Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — Let's look at the other major item that people buy. You have transportation. You have the consumer goods. For every consumer good we buy, of course, we have to add on our 5 per cent sales tax. What is the sales tax in the province of Alberta? It is zero. Every item they buy is 5 per cent cheaper. What they have done, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Alberta is just exactly this: they have taken and used their resources and they have turned around and said, "Okay, we have to put some of that money back into the hands of the people, because it is the people who count."

I will give you another one. People over here are happy about the welfare system we have in Saskatchewan and the government's ability to pay welfare payments. Do you know what happens in the province of Alberta? The per capita welfare payments in the province of Alberta are 33 per cent higher than they are in the province of Saskatchewan. The people of Alberta, under their dirty Tory government, are treating the welfare recipients of that province far better than the people of Saskatchewan are.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will go back to the premise of the old gentleman who phoned. He said, "You people over there have forgotten who the people are."

Mr. Speaker, I go back to the Speech from the Throne of the good Premier of Saskatchewan. He comes in to deal with the question in the throne speech. Here we are in the province, with recession in the country and people staring to feel the burden of the economy, and what do we have for it? We have the Premier standing up and taking the first hour to talk about the constitution that has already been passed through parliament. And I suspect we're going to have another go at that. The Premier is going to put some stuff into the history books, I suppose. He becomes obsessed with talking about the constitution. If we get a question from the media, what's the Premier going to talk about — the constitution?

Well, I tell you, the people in Kindersley, and I suspect in most other areas of this province, are not concerned about the constitution. They're concerned about the pocketbook issues out there today. That's what the game is all about today. They're concerned about the cost of living and about inflation — they're concerned about the economy. Those are the issues out there the people are facing, and what do we see in the throne speech on that subject? "Oh, we had better blame Ottawa for the economy, because that's where all the fault is," they say. We don't hear that the Government of Saskatchewan is going to do anything about it, because it's supposedly all Ottawa's fault.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Blaming their bedfellows, eh?

**MR. ANDREW:** — That's exactly right! Now I say to people out there, what are we going to see coming from this government? We're going to see nothing.

Here's another example. The Government of Saskatchewan will deny this, but it has prepared an option to buy Marathon Oil. Now, as I understand, that option is roughly in the area of \$200 million. They have also made an option through their people to buy out some property of Gulf Oil in the southern region of Saskatchewan. As I understand, the bid put forth by the Government of Saskatchewan to Gulf Oil is \$230 million. There's \$430 million that the government has with which it can go buy two oil companies.

But what kind of answer do the hospitals get when they come in and say, "Please Mr.

Government, could we have a few more dollars because we have to cut back? We have to either deficit finance or risk the health care that we're giving our patients." The answer is no. There's no money for that, Mr. Speaker. And what do we have when the school boards say, "Boy, we have some tough problems and we have to start cutting back our school programs. We can't provide the system of education in rural Saskatchewan that is being provided, let's say, in the cities." What's the government saying when the school boards come to them and ask them for more money? "No, no, we don't have any money. We have money for Gulf and Marathon, but we have no money for the education system. We have no money for the health care system."

I don't suppose there is a member in this Assembly who hasn't had a request to build another nursing home. There are a lot of senior citizens in this province and, whether they like the home care program or not, eventually they get to the point where they have to live in an institution. And you call it a senior citizens' home. So each one of those towns wanting a place, wanting to expand its existing facility because the line-up is long — 20, 40 people trying to get into those nursing homes — comes to the government to ask for some assistance, to ask for some money. But what answer do they get? "No, no money for you."

But they have money to buy an airline; they have money to buy an oil company; they have money to speculate in the uranium markets of the world. That is where their priorities are. They have money to put in expensive \$150,000 offices in a crown corporation building. They have money to buy, as they say, the run-down airline; but they don't have money for the people.

And I think that tells it all, Mr. Speaker. Because the NDP has now become elitist; it has become tied up. The NDP is no longer the party out there in the ridings. The NDP is right where you see it, right over there — three or four guys in the inner circle of the NDP. That's what the NDP is, the elitists. And it has forgotten the people. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, when the next election is called the people are going to forget the NDP.

With that, I can simply advise the Assembly that I will not be voting for the motion, and I think the amendment of the member for Souris-Cannington is an excellent motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Mr. Speaker, in replying to the Speech from the Throne, which contained little substance, I would like to spend some of my time speaking on the legacy of the NDP in the field of health care.

The government members opposite like to go around the province spouting off on their commitment to medicare and their commitment to the health care delivery system in this province. But truly, Mr. Speaker, it is nothing more than words. I would say the people of this province must beware of persons going around bearing false gifts, because surely that is what the government opposite is doing.

I would like to read into the record a letter received by the Premier on November 27 from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. And I might say that these are professional, dedicated people who spend long hours working at their jobs ensuring that the health care delivery system in this province keeps going despite the cutbacks that they must face each day. The letter was addressed to the Premier and it says:

Dear Premier Blakeney: The members of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses

(SUN) Local 75, University Hospital, are extremely concerned about the cost reduction measures being implemented by the University Hospital administration on the direction and authorization of the hospital board. We are aware of the large deficit, but do not agree that measures that will decrease the standard of care should be implemented. Our patients deserve safe, quality nursing care, and budget problems should not cause any compromise to this level of care. Measures that directly affect nurses and patient care include:

1. Not hiring into vacated positions — termination, maternity leave, etc. Not hiring nurses into vacated positions is not a result of a nursing shortage. There are nurses willing to work. The consequences of this measure are obvious: excessive workloads for nurses and hazard to the patients.
2. Curtailment of sick leave replacement. People have not always been replaced when ill in the past, and if this will be further curtailed, nurses will be unable to give safe patient care. If nurses are not going to be replaced, they may feel pressured to come to work when ill, jeopardizing the health of their patients, their co-workers and themselves.
3. Decrease in educational leaves of absence. It is with some chagrin that we heard of the decrease in educational leaves of absences. The leaves are shamefully minimal as it is. Continuing nursing education is necessary in order to update skills and increase our knowledge in a rapidly changing field.
4. Not prebooking float staff. This measure places the float in a position where planning ahead is not possible. A call at 0600 to 0730 hours to ask if you can come to work for 0730 means difficulties arriving on time, getting family responsibilities arranged and being prepared to come to work. The late arrival of staff, and lack of staff, is putting added pressures and workload on the nurses.

Other measures being implemented affect nursing indirectly, such as decreasing staff in other services. This usually means nurses have added jobs. For example, to lose a physiotherapy position means nurses will likely be doing physio. Decrease housekeeping, and nurses will end up doing housekeeping duties. By not replacing ward aides or clerks, nurses will be expected to fill in with these jobs. Nurses have the unfortunate history of being catchalls, and each one of these and other non-nursing functions take the nurses away from the bedside, providing patient care.

We recognize that the present funding system for the University Hospital is not based on the unique and demanding needs of our patients or the fact that the University Hospital is the referral and teaching centre for the province. The present funding system does not even cover the financial obligation as stipulated in the contract negotiated between SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) and SHA (Saskatchewan Hospital Association). This funding must be changed. It is a patient's right to receive safe care, and this care should be high quality care. If a large deficit results from the hospital's attempt to fulfill this obligation, so be it. The hospital board, SHSP (Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan) and the Government of Saskatchewan must make the necessary funds available to the hospital in order for the staff to deliver the best care possible. We cannot jeopardize the level of patient care, endanger

patients' lives or expect staff to have excessive workloads in order to reduce costs and to decrease the deficit. Service and teaching obligations cannot be met.

The government, the hospital and management must take appropriate action (not "in keeping with our fiscal responsibility" as stated in the attached letter) but in keeping with their patient care responsibility.

Please let us know what you are going to do to ensure that the necessary funds to operate the University Hospital are forthcoming.

And it's signed by G. Poole, president of Saskatchewan Union of Nurses Local 75.

I think this is a damning indictment of the things that are happening in the health care system in Saskatchewan today. And I think the problems being faced by the University Hospital are not restricted only to the University Hospital. I understand the General Hospital in Regina is facing the same type of difficulties and many of our smaller rural hospitals also are facing the same type of difficulties.

It seems to me that the government opposite expects the burden of deficits caused by underfunding to be totally absorbed by the people who have dedicated their lives to the well-being of mankind. I think it is a shame that the Minister of Health can stand in this House and say to us and to the people of Saskatchewan that it is his belief that a long waiting list for a hospital bed is indicative of an efficiently run organization. Today he tried to defend his position during question period on psychiatric services, on the number of hospital beds, and the number of doctors, etc.

I would like at this time to quote from Justice Emmett Hall's report, "Canada's National and Provincial Health Program — A Commitment for Renewal." A question was asked this afternoon by the member for Indian Head-Wolsely about the dismal disarray of our psychiatric services in the province and the minister said, "Well, mistakes have been made and we're trying to do this and we're trying to do that." I would just like to quote from page 58, table 18 — "Psychiatric Hospital Beds per 1,000 Population."

It is interesting that Saskatchewan has 0.07 beds per 1,000 as compared to a high of 1.6 in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, 0.8 in Alberta, 0.9 in Ontario, and the list goes on and on. In fact, there is only one province that has fewer beds than Saskatchewan and that happens to be Prince Edward Island. He went on this afternoon to cite the number of special-care beds in Saskatchewan. I say we should have twice the number of special-care beds in this province, considering the population of the elderly in Saskatchewan. It is almost double the national average.

Yet, Prince Edward Island — poor Prince Edward Island — which is not a have province and perhaps will not be a have province for many many years to come, has 11.4 beds per 1,000 as compared to Saskatchewan's 9.2. I think it is ludicrous for the minister to stand up and say, "Well, we have this," and then change it to say, "Well, I believe . . ." Well, perhaps he should get his figures straight before he comes in with statistics.

It is also interesting to note in the same Hall report on page 55, table 15 — "Acute Short-term Hospital Beds per 1,000." Saskatchewan is listed as having 6.5 in 1978 as compared to 8.4 in 1958. Here we have the Northwest Territories having 8.8 beds per 1,000, as compared to our 6.5. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but when they're talking about beds per 1,000, they fail to also mention the fact that they probably pay for less



than half the total beds in the province. Funding is cut down every year, as is staff.

The Minister of Health reminds me somewhat of — was it Mr. Chretien who had the visions for the '80s? Several years ago he got up and postulated on several points of what he saw as visions of the '80s. We have the Minister of Health taking the same kind of stand in the area of preventive medicine. I can remember his news conference when he was first named Minister of Health. Three-quarters of the news conference was spent on his talking about what he was going to do for this province in the area of preventive medicine, yet we see no evidence of it anywhere. Preventive counselling is not covered under MCIC (medical care insurance commission). For things like rape control, smoking, drinking, and all those things, doctors aren't paid under MCIC. So we have to have other agencies spring up and provide the services, at sometimes very high cost.

Yet in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, reference again for about the fourth year in a row was made to what the government is going to do in the area of preventive medicine. I can venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that the throne speech of the next legislature (I might say the throne speech that this side of the House will be making) will have measures for preventive medicine. But we as a government, unlike the government opposite, will deliver on our promise in the area of preventive medicine.

When we talk about the whole scope of health care; Dr. Terry Russell reported to the Department of Health, through the Minister, on his review of child and youth health services in the province. Very, very dismal were they, and, Mr. Speaker, still are. The suicide rates have not gone down. Teenage pregnancies have dropped somewhat; we are now second instead of first. Yet, when this report was tabled in the House last year, the Minister of Health got up and made a big production about the task force that he was going to institute to study the study already given to him on the problems in the area of health for children and youth. Nothing was mentioned of that in the budget. I think the minister should, before this part of the session is finished, get up and give at least an interim report on what the task force is doing — if any such task force has even been instituted.

We can almost tell, Mr. Speaker, that there is an election coming up. You can tell by the replies to the throne speech by the members opposite; you can tell by the little ditties they write in the papers and the little ditties you hear on the radio. They're up to their old scare tactics again. So far they haven't really concentrated or spent much time on health care and what the Tories are going to do, but they're trying a new angle because they realize that the people of Saskatchewan no longer accept their tactics in trying to downgrade the Tories when it comes to health care. The people of Saskatchewan look to other provinces where there are Tory governments and realize that the health systems in those provinces are working very, very well indeed, and will continue to work very, very well indeed.

It was interesting that Mr. Justice Hall said that he found not one government or individual, not the medical profession, not any organization against medicare. Yet the government opposite during the next election, which I am sure will be held in the spring, will go knocking door to door and any time they find an elderly person, a handicapped person, or someone who can't really fend for themselves, their whispering campaign will begin, I'm sure. But this time it won't work.

I think people in Saskatchewan know that medicare is available nationwide and will

continue to be available nationwide. No one would ever dream of tinkering with medicare except to improve it, like we will do when we become the government in 1982.

I would like to spend a few minutes on the beef stabilization program. As a party, we opposed the Bill when it was introduced last spring. We opposed it because there was no input from the industry which it was to affect. There was no input by ranchers, or farmers who had cattle. Basically, it goes against our grain to impose anything on anyone. I know that the program is voluntary, and the minister the other day said that he thought they had about 900 contracts waiting to be signed, and that that was a great indication of the acceptance of the program. I think there are about 22,000 producers in the province, so we will see.

I was very shocked and dismayed by the remark made by the Minister of Agriculture yesterday when he said that the Tories had their henchmen out to the meetings with their questions and speeches written down. Well, I would like to tell the minister that I attended the beef stabilization meeting in the town of Maple Creek, which is in the centre of a very large cattle area of the province. I might add that the minister didn't even have the courage to show up for that meeting. He sent one of the board members, and I must say that the mood of the crowd was not too good when the minister didn't show up, to answer their questions. The board member could not answer many of the questions they asked, mainly because the regulations weren't in place. As I understand it, they are still not in place, yet the minister wants people to sign up for something when they don't know how it is going to affect them.

These people listened very attentively to the board member who tried to explain the program and how it was going to work, and they sat in that audience and took down notes and wrote questions, because they didn't want to forget their points when their turn came at the mike. For the minister to call these producers, who were concerned enough to come out to this meeting, henchmen, is just a shameful thing, and he should be censured for it.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne was not an exciting one. I think that is accepted by people on this side of the House as well as people on that side of the House. I notice that not many of the local papers had glowing reports of the Speech from the Throne — but I think it is an indication that perhaps they are frightened, bankrupt of ideas and can't think of anything new. Perhaps they are scared to step out on a limb now, because they know their days on that side of the House are numbered. They are scared to get into anything controversial at this time. Even the Bills that have been introduced in this session, barring the home-owner's protection or whatever it is called . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you have been calling it The Home-owner's Security Act. All of a sudden it becomes a protection act, because you couldn't offer them any security. You could offer them protection through the legislature but not security. You won't put up any money for those people. You expect everyone else to do it. Heaven forbid you should have to dip into your heritage fund, which I understand doesn't have any money in it — a lot of assets tied up with crown corporations but no actual cash flow. That is the only piece of legislation of any merit. Everything else is housekeeping. We could have done that in the spring; we didn't have to come back for this do-nothing throne speech and mostly do-nothing Bills . . . (inaudible interjection).

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You guys are counting too heavily on that Blakeney ballot box. It may not work.

**MRS. DUNCAN:** — Well, he is bankrupt. I agree. The Blakeney ballot box won't work because the people of Saskatchewan would never stand for a shameful thing such as that.

Mr. Speaker, in taking my seat, I say with a great deal of pride that I will be opposing the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to enter into this debate for just a few moments. I want to talk about one topic which is of great concern to a lot of people in my area, but also of concern to a lot of people throughout the province — I suppose you could say in isolated pockets. It has to do with a topic which we have heard a lot about outside the House; we hear very little about it here in the House. It has to do with the whole question of land claims or land entitlements.

I will go on record as saying (and I know there have been a lot of opinions expressed by members opposite as to where I and members of our party stand on that issue) that I do believe there is an entitlement there for the native people. Having said that, I can't agree with the way in which this government has approached it. We talk about protecting the rights of minority groups. Certainly you can say that is an honourable thing to do; I believe it is. We are talking about the native people affected in the bands that have claims, or purport to have claims or entitlements. This government and its cousins, the federal government in Ottawa, sat down in the back rooms either here or in Ottawa or wherever it was, and forgot about the individual rights of the people who are affected. I speak now of the third-party interest. Certainly it's upsetting for people when they see a band coming in to claim land which is adjacent to them or land in which they do have a third-party interest, whether they be trappers of two or three generations or ranchers.

I think of the area around Paradise Hill and north of there where the Thunderchild Band has a claim. I know people have certainly heard about it. There has been a lot of press coverage and a lot of feeling close to hysteria over this some of that area. Some of the material which has been coming out from both sides certainly has to be put into context. People will be upset, but the government certainly could have handled it in a way in which third-party interests were informed, at least about what was going on, before some federal government surveyor rolled into the area. Here they are with their survey rods and stakes and they say, "We're surveying this." "Why are you surveying it?" asks the trapper, or the rancher who is out looking over his cattle. They say, "What are you guys doing here?" That is literally how it happened.

I see the Minister of Highways chuckling and chortling over there. He lives in that area and he knows, and people in his constituency are very concerned about this. He can laugh as much as he wants to about this, but that is certainly the way it happened in that area. There is no way you can have any credibility in the area if, after having a meeting with your federal cousins, you're going to go in and tell these people, "This is going to be taken over." You have decided, from your point of view, that this land, which they have had an interest in over a long period of time, is going to be taken over by somebody else.

I will give you an example. We had a meeting in the town of Paradise Hill and the Minister of Highways attended on behalf of the government. There were something like 400 people there — people with legitimate concerns. As I said before, some of the

things coming out of that meeting were going off in the wrong direction and not really addressing the issue; I admit that. But, there is no way you can handle this thing the way you people over there have — no possible way.

I am saying to you that if there is an entitlement, you lay out some money, boys. Lay out some money. Get into negotiations with people in the bands; negotiate with members of the band. Don't get taken in by activists that are working with the bands. Don't get taken in by those people because they don't represent the native people that are members of those bands. That's what I am saying to you. The Minister of Northern Saskatchewan knows what I am talking about, and you can say what you want. Don't get taken in. I didn't sign any petition. Don't get taken in by members of groups who suggest that they stand for the native people. Don't get taken in by activists; that's what I'm saying to you.

So, Mr. Speaker, you people put your community pastures on the table and said, "Come in and select these for the bands." You've said, "Come in and select these." I hear the minister saying, 'Those community pastures are good operations.' There are some ways those community pastures could be changed, as well, and that's another topic we could get into. But you people have put those pastures on the table without any consultation with people who have had pasture allotments there for a long time. I've heard members from the Department of Agriculture in this province tell the people there, "What is it? You've only got a one-year allotment there anyway." It's an annual allotment that you have in the pasture. So many of those pasture patrons have been there for a number of years. In most cases they are relatively small operators who base the future of their herd on that pasture allotment, and once again you boys didn't consult at all with those patrons. You put their pastures on the table for selection, and a band comes in and selects the pasture. Where are these guys going to sit? You wonder why some of the people in the areas are going off on a tangent in some cases, and getting the wrong idea of the whole issue. You wonder about that. I'll tell you what isn't acceptable to me, Mr. Minister of Northern Saskatchewan — you asked me what's acceptable to me. It isn't acceptable to me to sit in some clandestine back bloody room like you do.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — . . . and have a meeting with the federal Liberal cousins that you have down there and just forget about the individuals out there. Certainly there are people living in isolated parts of the province. You say, "Well, there are just a few votes out here. They won't matter. We can kick these guys aside, because we've got some policy." That's exactly how you operate, that's exactly how your system works, and that's why, when the next election comes, people are going to say they just can't wait. I can tell you, people in our area just can't wait for that election to blast you guys right out of the water.

Mr. Speaker, I should really go into that. The Minister of Highways mentions the paved streets in Meadow Lake. I am going to tell you something about my community, as well. We will get off the other topic; we will get on to the subject of streets of my town. I wish the Minister of Urban Affairs . . . Here he comes. Look at that. I wish, and he walks in the door. The Minister of Urban Affairs is here to hear this.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Make another wish; make them all disappear.

**MR. McLEOD:** — I should make more wishes and maybe some more would leave.

Anyway Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways mentioned something about the paved streets in the town of Meadow Lake. I couldn't think of a thing I would rather talk about. I happen to have lived in that town for very many years. In fact we had the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Meadow Lake last Thursday night — a very young town. I see the boys laughing over there and saying, "Your mayor was there." I know they are very happy about the mayor of Meadow Lake now because he happens to be the candidate for your party. He is so far, fellows, from being the next MLA I couldn't have selected a better candidate for you had I done it myself.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — Mr. Minister, you talk about pavement. The only thing our people say about that pavement in Meadow Lake is the same thing that all of us who have been in that town for a very long period of time say. That main street you talk about paving, Mr. Minister, and you gave grants to pave — I paid my dues and the people who have been in that town paid their dues over the years. They have walked in mud to their knees. We have paid for it many times. Our property taxes are high. My colleague, the member for Kindersley, talked about how our property taxes compare to those in Alberta. Our people can make those comparisons with towns across the border, as well, because we live close to that border.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — The Minister of Urban Affairs tells me about the main street that is paved. I will tell you that the very first building that was ever in that new town site 50 years ago was right dead centre of where that main street is now. It was my dad's log shack. You can't tell me that any guy who comes in and says he is going to pave a couple of blocks is going to beat me in Meadow Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say one more thing while we are speaking of roads and pavement. The members opposite continue to talk about pavement. We have a few blocks of pavement in the town of Meadow Lake, which we appreciate very much. We don't thank you for it; we thank those of us who pay our taxes in that town, excessive taxes as they are.

I want to talk to the Minister of Highways a little bit about pavement outside the town of Meadow Lake, say, from the boundaries going in any direction you would like to go. I asked the Minister of Highways last year to come to Meadow Lake sometime by wheeled vehicle rather than by airplane. I want him to come over there from Lloydminster where he comes from and drive that highway between Loon Lake and through Makwa to Meadow Lake — Highway No. 304, which used to be an LID (local improvement district) road. It is a curvy, winding road. You guys call it a dust-free highway in your project array, or whatever, in your highways propaganda. I will tell you, you could have made it dust-free, all right. You might as well have rolled a roll of tar paper down the top of that bloody thing and that's all. That is blacktop; that is all.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — I will tell you, Mr. Minister, you go in there and do something with that highway soon. While we are at it, go the highway from Goodsoil to Meadow Lake, as well, and do something with that thing. Our guys have to haul their produce many more miles than any of the people in southern Saskatchewan do. We hear of rail line

abandonments. You tell me with big crocodile tears (even some of my own colleagues cry about it) about hauling grain for 16 miles because some smaller community is closed. Our guys have been hauling at least 50 miles for 50 years. You still haven't got a road in front of them and you still won't let them burn purple gas in their tandem trucks, which they need if they are going to make those trips. They have to have bigger trucks to go down the roads.

Mr. Speaker, the sawmill is a wonderful thing. I'm really pleased, on behalf of everybody who lives there, that that sawmill is open. I'm not thanking you boys for it. I'm telling you that's a crying shame that you had to be embarrassed into opening it, and that's literally what happened. It's a shame that you had to be embarrassed into opening it by families who were suffering, and that's what was happening. You leave that open. It's an excellent industry for our community. You try to play your petty party politics with that mill. If you think that the people in Meadow Lake couldn't see through that ploy, your opening that mill and bringing in your mayor out of the woodwork; I'll tell you the people there think that's the greatest, biggest joke that every hit northwestern Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. McLEOD:** — I'm not saying thank you for opening it; I'm saying I'm really pleased that we on this side of the House were able to shame and embarrass you into opening the mill. It's open now. Thank you very much.

I have one other thing to comment on, as a number of my colleagues have, and that is the lack of nursing home beds in our area. The Minister of Social Services has heard on several occasions from the people of Loon Lake about the addition to their hospital for nursing home beds. They have received no answers from the minister, except the regular delay tactics. They are not hearing anything from you. For your information, the community of Loon Lake has a high percentage of senior citizens who want to have those nursing home spaces in their own community, where they can be near their families and friends.

The community of Goodsoil, to the north, is in exactly the same position. They need some nursing home spaces. They've heard nothing from your boys, nothing from your department. We requested it on several occasions and heard nothing. What I'm asking you now (and I'm requesting it on their behalf) is that you come forth with some nursing home spaces in Goodsoil and Loon Lake, that you fix those highways that are an absolute disgrace — No. 55 and No. 304 especially — and No. 26 from St. Walburg to Loon Lake and go on up to Goodsoil. And there is the thing that you call a highway, No. 21 from Paradise Hill to Pierceland.

Just before I close, Mr. Speaker, I should remind the member for Redberry of something. He came to the community of Pierceland last year to represent the Minister of Urban Affairs at an opening of a housing unit. He arrived late with a civil servant. I understand how that can happen and everyone there understood it because they're used to it. If you hadn't been there before you would not have realized that you would have to leave quite a bit earlier because of the kinds of highways that have to be driven over to get there. Your people would not have had to apologize for it; we understand that.

I'm talking about Pierceland now, Mr. Minister. Listen carefully, because they are expecting something from you. In his apology, the member for Redberry was telling

about the back road, saying that he took the wrong turn at Loon Lake and went west, and then took the back road into Pierceland. "I'm very sorry that I'm late," he said.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — What was the number of that highway?

**MR. McLEOD:** — It was Highway No. 21. My answer to him is this: it certainly wasn't a back road you were on, Mr. Banda; that was Highway No. 21. The only way you could identify No. 21 as a highway is that periodically there is a sign that says Highway No. 21, Saskatchewan. It's a disgrace, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Speaker, it should be obvious from my preceding remarks that I certainly won't be supporting the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to enter into the throne speech debate. It is always an honour for any member to take part in the throne speech debate. But I have to wonder as I stand up in this debate, after having read the throne speech that came down at the commencement of the 1981-82 legislative session, why we are here.

I have to ask myself why the government called this session. Mr. Speaker, when you read that throne speech, when you go through it and look for some content, the only thing you can find that is worth reading is a reference that was put in the Wednesday before it was delivered — 24 hours before — to The Home-owners' Protection Act. Mr. Speaker, I think on the Wednesday before this session opened that the cabinet read that speech and it was so empty, so pathetic, that somebody had to, in desperation, come up with an idea. In sheer desperation The Home-owner's Protection Act was shoved in.

Now, that sounds a trifle far-fetched until one thinks back to the performance of the Premier in the question period following the throne speech in which he appeared as though he didn't know anything at all about The Home-owners' Protection Act. He refused to even talk about it, as if he had never seen it before. He knew the name but couldn't divulge details — on Monday! He had the weekend to bone up on it, but nothing, absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the Act was added to the throne speech at the last second. The government has introduced the legislation as though it were handled in this manner. Without it, the throne speech would have been a living example of an indictment of the democratic process.

I believe this throne speech, as well as the throne speech of last year and the year before that and the year before that, is a living testimonial of the need to streamline the rules in this Assembly.

I cannot help but agree with a *Leader-Post* editorial writer who Saturday night suggested that the throne speech debate this year was maybe the worst ever. He suggested that the entire exercise was one of the government's saying, "We're wonderful," and the opposition's saying, without very much to criticize in that throne speech as far as the actual content was concerned, "You're not so wonderful."

I cannot help but wonder whether everyone of us (and I'll take one-sixty-first of the

blame even though we don't write the throne speech yet) has not ripped off the taxpayer today and yesterday and the days before that when we were sitting. The government across the way called us in. They said there's business to do.

I asked my colleagues to think back to the session immediately following the 1978 election. Do you remember anything that we did of any significance, except kill a lot of time with the government's throne speech. We did a budget; we did some inconsequential Bills; we adjourned. Nothing.

Do you remember the next year — 1979? Much the same thing. The government called us in. There was a nothing throne speech, 90 or 100 housekeeping Bills. Had they not been passed, the people of Saskatchewan would probably have lived to move into the next year. Do you remember anything about that session? Nothing.

They called us back again the next year. We had our throne speech, about 100 nothing housekeeping Bills; we killed about 65 or 70 days. Again, I'll take one-sixty-first of the blame. But you called us in; you called the shots; and once again we ripped off the taxpayer. In short, since you won that election in 1978, you have done virtually nothing. Your sessions have been nothing; nothing has happened.

But this year it's just a little bit different. This year the economy of this country is lower than it has been at any time since World War II. We have 20 per cent-plus interest rates; unemployment is climbing; agricultural prices are dropping dramatically, the price of durum from \$6.50 initial to \$4.75 and hard wheat from \$5.50 down to \$4.75; out in the country, production costs are going up and interest is killing everybody. Now, we weren't unique in Saskatchewan. That was a familiar story and there were probably 50 million or 60 million individual stories like that in the North American continent. They had trouble in the United States. They had trouble in eastern Canada. They had trouble everywhere.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have a government which has always prided itself as having taken Saskatchewan from the role of have-not province to that of a have. I think it was fair to say that as this session was called, I believe the people of Saskatchewan (certainly those of us on this side of the Assembly) believed that this would be a session where things would happen. Interest rates were ravaging everybody, all sectors of our economy. The agricultural situation was in a serious mess. The only prospect was, if we can believe federal government sources, that it was going to get worse.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan were looking for something tangible. After all, the course of this year has seen much of our time devoted to the constitutional business. The head honcho over there has spent the last two years strutting on the national stage, looking pretty on television with a good make-up artist. In fact, try to find him in his office or to put a phone call to him. It was pretty tough to find him. He was too busy on the national stage.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — The darling of the eastern press.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Yes, he did a marvellous job for everybody except the people of Saskatchewan and his own department. We will come back to that a little bit later.

Mr. Speaker, when the throne speech came down it was an indictment of this government, an indictment of a government that has grown old and indictment of a government that is bankrupt and has totally run out of ideas. If ever there was a period



of time since World War II that some firm, decisive action was needed in this province, it was in this session of the legislature. Mr. Speaker, what did we get? We got that worthless, useless document that we have been aimlessly debating for eight days. I cannot think of a more wasteful process than what we have done. I suggest to this Assembly that the time has now arrived to streamline this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, if it is tradition to have a throne speech, then it is simply time to throw that tradition to the winds. It's a waste of time. Mr. Speaker, another time which I suggest to you is equally wasteful is when the budget comes down. The eight days of formal budget debate are eight days that the people of Saskatchewan could very easily do without and wouldn't miss a bit.

Mr. Speaker, I recall an incident last year when certain events in this Assembly led to the bells ringing for a prolonged period of time. The reasons for this aren't important. But I recall after the bells rang for some six or seven hours — I don't remember which — the Attorney General had a great deal to say about the cost to the taxpayer. He went on television and he charged the Conservatives with wasting \$20,000 of taxpayers' money. I believe \$20,000 was the figure. Well, Mr. Speaker, might I respectfully suggest to the people of Saskatchewan tonight that the six hours that were wasted in ringing those bells were equally as productive as the last eight days in this Assembly have been. I suggest that they received as much for their money in those seven hours of ringing bells as they have for any day that we've spent since this worn out, bankrupt, short-of-idea government called us back into session.

It is time to streamline this Assembly and it is time for us to move more vigorously into the committee system. This question of formal debate may have been great in the Victorian ages but it's 1982, just about. It's 1982, and it's too expensive to have us in here with support staff, and to go on in the pointless, silly, unproductive fashion in which we have been forced to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think in this country we should be too proud to learn from others. Everybody has weaknesses in their system, but it is time that we moved far more extensively into the committee system, and in this province, through the efforts of members opposite, the predominating economic forces today are in crown corporations. I in no way suggest that that is the way to go, but it is a fact of life. That's what it is today.

Mr. Speaker, we do a disservice to our taxpayers as we spend all our time in this Assembly debating chicken feed compared to what's out there in the Crown corporations. Probably next spring we'll debate, what, a \$2.5 billion budget or closer to \$3 billion? Mr. Speaker, compared to what our crown corporations are taking in and disbursing in the course of a year, that's not very much money. At the risk of being tagged with a C.D. Howe comment, \$3 billion is chickenfeed compared to what our crown corporations are playing with.

And what do we do? How do we look into our crown corporations? We have that pathetic excuse for a committee known as the crown corporations committee. Mr. Speaker, when you people are in opposition, I promise you one answer you are not going to get. When the books of the crown corporations are made available to you, we'll say to you, "There it is; ask whatever you want. Here's the head of the crown corporation. He will personally answer your questions." The one answer I promise you are not going to get is, "It is not in the public interest."

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, when we are running crown corporations, you'll have it all. You won't be dealing with matters that happened two years ago. The head of the crown corporation will be sitting right there. He will answer your questions. He is not going to be prompted by us. All the crown corporation heads are paid a lot of money; why shouldn't they answer the questions? They will under us.

Mr. Speaker, a disservice is done to our taxpayers by leaving our crown corporations the way they are. Consequently, that's why our crown corporations, in many respects are in many instances, are not being run effectively.

Mr. Speaker, if there were any doubt as to how badly this government is slipping, how quickly it is losing its grip, that doubt was dispelled in question period about three days ago. The Premier took a question from me, and the subject was the price of gas. We have been through the price of gas before. Just very briefly, I will repeat some figures. I asked the Premier to comment on why the difference in price on a gallon of gas between Calgary and Regina was 40 cents a gallon. I then asked him, "Isn't it a little unusual that the difference between Regina and Toronto should be 7 cents?" In other words, Ontario residents, in downtown Toronto, are buying gasoline for 7 cents a gallon less. They are buying it from OPEC, Mexico and Venezuela. We have it right here, and they are paying 7 cents less.

I put those questions to the Premier. Do you know what the Premier's answer was? How many remember what the Premier's answer was? The most pathetic, worn-out cliché answer they use over there — Alberta has a medicare premium. That's the stock answer to anything over there when you point to Alberta. The Premier, when asked to justify 40 cents a gallon, answered, "Alberta has a medicare premium." I've heard that worn-out cliché used by the Minister of Finance a dozen times; I've heard it used by some of your junior cabinet ministers, used countless times by the Minister of Health. Those people would give those kinds of answers and that doesn't surprise me. They have to hang their hats on whatever they have.

The Premier is usually pretty good in question period. Then, of course, when you take a close look at the Premier, you will note that he has aged quite a bit, that he isn't that cool cat which we have become accustomed to. You will notice the Premier just doesn't have the grip that he used to have. Mr. Speaker, I don't say that disparagingly about the Premier, because that is a brutal job he has. Nobody knows how brutal it is better than my family. It is a brutal, horrible job. It is a tough, demanding job. With the problems we face in our economy today, certainly it takes its toll on him. The comments I have made I don't mean disparagingly toward the Premier at all. In fact, for the Premier's own good, given the way he is deteriorating in front of us, I think he should consider packing it in. It's a heck of a job; he's had 10 years of it and that will take its toll on anybody. None the less, when you get to the cold, hard facts of running a province, the reasons don't matter. The reason is simply that the Premier has lost his grip. For whatever reasons, it's not there.

Back about a year ago, when the constitutional debate was going on, Pierre Elliott was sort of probing around. He was feeling should or shouldn't he go with it? Lined up firmly against him were Newfoundland, Alberta, B.C. and Manitoba. Saskatchewan was straddling the fence and sniffing the wind. Mr. Speaker, Pierre Elliott pushed further and further and, as the Premier checked the political wind, he just wasn't quite able to

get the feel of things, so he straddled that fence a little longer. Time will tell whether we got a good deal out of that constitution.

But, Mr. Speaker, had the province of Saskatchewan not vacillated, had it joined with the other western premiers at that time, one year ago, Pierre Elliott Trudeau would never have proceeded in the fashion he did. That supreme court challenge would never have been necessary. Instead the Premier straddled that political fence back and forth, and Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that he left something on that fence.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — I suggest to you that the Premier has not been the same since that constitutional debate. I suggest to you that one of the reasons we have a new constitution, which many of us in western Canada are not thrilled about but had to take as the best deal which could be manoeuvred, is that the province of Saskatchewan was a weak link at a crucial time. I state to you that if the province of Saskatchewan had stood up for western Canada a year ago, there would have been an entirely different situation come out of that.

The vacillation of the Premier didn't stop there. We had a nothing session afterward; he changed positions and he thought he did it fairly skillfully. He did it for one simple reason: he knew he was headed for opposition if he didn't. It's pure and simple. That is exactly why he did it. He did it for the most mundane, base, political reason. He wanted to keep his job. He was in opposition if he didn't, so he changed his position.

We all know what the results were; we now have a new constitution. The example of the Premier's accident with the picket fence came this fall. The Premier was speaking in Prince Albert, I think. He used words to this effect, when he spoke to the followers of the New Democratic Party: "It's three years since we were elected," he said, and he went on to suggest to the party faithful that an election would not be far in the future, to rev them up.

But even more interesting was the electoral office. You can usually tell when an election is coming by looking down the hall at the electoral office to see if there is any action. If there's no action there, obviously there is no election coming. That place was a beehive. Even your hacks would run down and have lunch and not sit there half the day. They were running back up to do some work, caucusing a couple of times a week. Everything happened as we moved toward an election. It looked for a while like you were going to get your issue. In fact, the issue was there. You could have provoked a medical care dispute with the doctors had you wanted to. By that time, when you had decided not to provoke such a dispute, you had decided not to go on with an election.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the Premier wanted to call an election this fall. No doubt about it. He did everything that you have to do to call an election without actually dropping a writ. We saw examples of members of the legislature making announcements that they didn't have to make — saying that they were going to run or they weren't going to run. We saw cabinet ministers saying, "I'm going to run," or "I'm going to quit." All of these were announcements that didn't have to be made — but they were made because you have to get candidates ready in those seats. Then, Mr. Speaker, they had their councils of war and the member for Biggar, who would love an election every six months, was counselling the Premier. Elwood is the hawk and he wanted the election, and the dove is the Attorney General who didn't want an election. Somewhere in the middle stood the Minister of Agriculture. Then, of course, the Premier weighed

the arguments. Mr. Speaker, basically the decision was made to go, and he called the big conference for down in Qu'Appelle — Echo Valley. He called the big conference and took all his hacks he had hired down there; he took his candidates, old and new, and their campaign managers. He called the meeting. But at the same time, before he called that meeting, he brought in a high-powered survey outfit from eastern Canada and that survey crew surveyed for 10 straight days prior to that Echo Valley conference, or whatever it was.

Mr. Speaker, some funny information came out of that survey. The first thing that was pretty significant was that the approval factor of the Premier was down dramatically from a year earlier. About a year earlier about 75 per cent of supporters of all parties thought the Premier was a pretty capable guy. Heavens, I thought he was a pretty capable guy. I still do, as a matter of fact. There was a 75 per cent approval factor a year ago. What did your survey tell you this time? He wasn't even 50 and sliding fast. It scared the life out of you, didn't it? What else did your survey tell you? Your survey told you that you were going to be virtually wiped out in rural Saskatchewan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Your surveys told you that there was just a heck of a lot of doubt that you were going to win this, just a heck of a lot. Now I see a hand going up.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Let me see if it was Baker's.

**MR. THATCHER:** — No, Henry we couldn't touch. There's no question about that. But let me tell you that you were in trouble and you knew it. But that is the only reason we're having this throne speech right now, because you people lost the nerve to have an election. Mr. Speaker, there's another example of the Premier vacillating — he watered it, went back and forth, whipped up his people and then he pulled back. He pulled back for the most mundane reason: he was going to lose. He was going to lose an election.

We say to the people opposite, "Heavens, why didn't you go? Why didn't you go?" You didn't go, because you weren't just going to lose that election, you were going to take a pasting. You were going to take a good pasting because you were going to be wiped out in rural Saskatchewan. You were going to have a few seats in Regina and Saskatoon, and your real hard-core ones. You know very well.

Mr. Speaker, I invite members opposite by saying that any time you are ready to face the people of Saskatchewan, we're itching to go and we're ready.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, the sooner the better, because when the day comes

that we bring in a throne speech such as we saw in this session, then the people should throw us out just like they're going to throw you out.

You know you have let it go too far, because all the hopes on that side of the Assembly are pinned on your budget. You're assuming that when it's budget time, you're going to sell the farm and buy your way back in. You're going to buy your way back in. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that it is not going to work because, regrettably, people expect you to do that. They are going to receive your giveaways. You know what, folks? They are not going to vote for you. That's a fact.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move for a few moments, as I wind down my remarks, to crown corporations. One crown corporation which has been particularly controversial in the past year has been the SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). It used to be SGIO until some genius in that company decided it needed a new image. So that genius commissioned a public relations firm in Toronto, to the tune of \$65,000, and that public relations company said, "For \$65,000 here's what you should do. You should drop the 'o' off SGIO and you should be SGI." I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan will be eternally grateful for that \$65,000 expenditure. More important, they opened up a new building recently, in the last year or so. Yes, that one did cost a little bit more than \$68,000. The most important thing that SGI did was to lose about \$55 million in the past couple of years. Perhaps the reason they lost \$55 million was that the minister who was saying, "Not so," seemed to have a little trouble reading his own annual reports. Perhaps that's why they lost it, and if the minister would care to open his own annual report and perhaps pay a little more attention to that company, perhaps there would not have been losses like that.

But after SGI had lost over \$500 million, obviously they moved to rectify the situation. Obviously, they moved to solve the problem, and they got right to the heart of the matter — they fired 13 employees who caused it all. They were adjusters and clerks. You remember what they were. They tried to hang that \$50 million loss on 13 middle-level employees. Mr. Speaker, when, in the annals of rotten, foul play, have you ever seen anything to top that in crown corporations? Where have you ever seen anything to top that? Well, I'll tell you where. Right back at SGI.

When the subject was being debated on the radio show between the minister and the member for Regina South (and this is one of the rottenest stunts I've ever seen in politics), when the member for Regina South was kicking that minister all over the airwaves, the minister pulled out the personal file of the member for Regina South. I've seen some low ones, but that one just had to be a honey . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You've had your change in this throne speech debate and I'll be finished in a few moments. I invite you to get up. I suggest to you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, that comment typifies that minister. That is exactly what we have come to expect, precisely. That is perhaps why everyone who has to insure with SGI, everyone who has a plate, hopes for goodness' sake that that minister will resign, and that possibly things in SGI will be sorted out without him. That sort of attitude and rhetoric coming from his is exactly what we have come to expect.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, SGI loses some \$50 million; they open a golden tower, as my colleague for Wilkie terms it; they fire 13 employees, on whom they try to hang the losses, instead of cleaning out the top four or five levels of management. They got out of their league by playing with the Irish, and got hooked up insuring Roman terrorists and the West German Baader-Meinhoff gang, or whatever they call it. Instead of firing all of those people, they fired 13 people. Ultimately, a change was made at the top in SGI.

Murray Wallace, who was probably the best you had in the public service, is certainly a very bright and capable individual. He was made head of SGI.

Mr. Speaker, during some of the high points in the debate last year, when the member for Regina South was kicking the minister in charge of SGI all over this legislature, I found it pretty amusing that this minister with the big mouth tonight, the minister in charge of SGI, when we went into the corridor to answer the questions of the press, conspicuously stayed in his seat, and if he left it, he strolled out there and ran to his office.

Who was there to answer the questions for SGI — questions emanating primarily from the member for Regina South, and the member for Wilkie? Who was there to handle the questions from the press? Murray Wallace was brought over here. Murray Wallace handled everything. The minister in charge of SGI couldn't even field a question, mainly because he knew very little about that corporation. Maybe this is why that minister is so sensitive tonight about criticisms toward SGI. I suggest to that minister that the sooner he retires and gives up that portfolio, the better off every plate holder in this province is going to be.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, I guess sitting on top of that tower could go to anyone's head. SGI announced these tremendous rate increases. What was it — 35, 40 per cent, in that range?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Forty-eight.

**MR. THATCHER:** — They rattled off these increases . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Is anybody home over there? Mr. Speaker, bear in mind this is a crown corporation with a monopoly. Everybody has to deal with them if they drive a car. So they put on these 35 to 40 per cent increases in a monopolistic position.

One day I happened to tune in to the 6 o'clock news, and there's Murray Wallace in his expensive office up there, and he's saying, "We're presently showing a profit of \$8 million." Good Lord, I would hope they would be showing a profit. With the kind of increases they announced, if they weren't showing a profit, they should lock the whole works of you up in jail.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — That was just brilliant, just superb management! You jack your rates up in a monopoly situation — 35, 40, 45 per cent. Who in blazes couldn't show a profit under those circumstances? But Murray Wallace says, "We're making \$8 million."

But you know what, Mr. Speaker, it goes even further than that, because it's pretty heady up on the top floor of SGI. I guess that \$8 million was going to his head, because about a week later I saw him on CKCK television. Wayne Mantyka was doing the interviewing. The subject had shifted. Murray was pointing out the door to the old SGI building across the street, and he was saying, "You know, there should be a hotel there. Nobody has bought the building from us to build a hotel. We, in SGI, feel there should be a hotel there. What we may have to do is build our own hotel there and lease it out." Mr. Speaker, can you believe it? These guys have taken a bath on everything they've touched, and here's the head of SGI talking about building a hotel.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — And a parkade.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Oh, and a parkade. Mr. Speaker, it defies the imagination . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Mr. Speaker, it defies belief, absolutely defies belief! We wonder why SGI is such a horribly run corporation. We wonder what happened to the \$50 million that you lost. We wonder why your rates have gone up. We wonder why SGI is in such a mess. With logic like that, it defies belief! Do you know what? Well, wait till I come to the high points.

Mr. Speaker, it's small wonder that we lost money with SGI. It's something everybody can see. Everybody sees it as they buy their plates. It's one of the many reasons this government across the way is going to go under.

To the Minister of Labour, if I may respectfully suggest, I believe you've had your comments and we listened to you very politely. I suggest that you go back to counting: the trouble is when he gets over 10 he has to take his shoes off.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on to Saskair. I think a most shocking thing, in the light of present economic conditions, came about a month ago when the public was stunned that this government had \$100 million to buy a broken-down, decrepit airline called Norcanair.

Now, this is the same government that has no money for the cattle industry — \$5 million, excuse me. They have no money for mortgage holders; they have no money to keep our hospitals going; they have no money to employ doctors, to keep our specialists here so that they don't go to Alberta. This is the same government that says Alberta has a medicare premium. You know what else Alberta has? They have good hospitals, good specialists and they have some medical care in their medicare. Oh yes, the stock answer is that Alberta has a medicare premium. Shocking! Heavens! You mean the fact that they have beautiful hospitals, the specialists, and the fact that they have a medical care program that makes ours look sick in terms of quality doesn't matter because they have a premium. But we had \$100 million to put into an airline.

You know what you can do with \$100 million? You know what you can buy with \$100 million? Well, to start off with, I'll just give you one little thing that it will do. It will bring water from the South Saskatchewan River right down into Regina. Not only that, it will take it beyond Regina. For \$100 million you could give Regina a decent water supply and irrigate half of southeastern Saskatchewan. That's what you could do for \$100 million. Do you know the people of Regina who drink that rotten slough water day after day have made a mistake? And Henry, I don't know whether you're going to be successful next year or not. But if you are making a representation to these people, even though they won't be there, I want to suggest that you don't come and say that we need money to bring decent water into Regina. Say that what we need is a crown corporation for water, because you people are so hung up that if anybody needs something for a crown corporation you have all the money in the world. But if it's anything else, if it's for ordinary people, you're going to cut that program.

Mr. Speaker, let me give them an example of how reprehensible they are. The city of Regina is very fortunate. You're lucky the city of Regina is in Canada because if Regina were in the United States, do you know what would happen? The federal department of the environment would walk in and say that this water is unsafe and condemn it. There would be no water supply here. Do you know what they'd say? They'd say you have a

river up there that's the envy of the world. Get your water in from there. You have in this province the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health which allow 1,400 parts per million solids and bacteria content. They allow it to be as high as 1,400. And what do they say? Tough.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You can chew that.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Just about. Do you know what the standard is in the United States? It is 500 parts per million maximum.

You know, in Regina it never gets below 500 parts per million — never. You have, to the north of us, one of the great resources of the world. Can you imagine what they would do with that river if it went through Utah, Arizona, Texas, or any of those arid states, or Alberta? Let me tell you, they would use that water. They would use that water and they would turn it into a garden. What do you people do over there with \$100 million? Oh no, that's fine, let Regina drink slough water. Let 175,000 drink slough water. What do we care? They are only people. Let them drink slough water. Or run irrigation further south and irrigate the arid land, the sandy lands in southeastern Saskatchewan, for \$100 million. What do you imagine the people would do? What do you great thinkers do over there? you buy a broken-down airline for \$100 million, and you let 175,000 people drink slough water which, by virtually any other standard in North America, would be considered unsafe, condemned, and shut down in no time.

But we have a government of the people. We have a government here that says, "We're for the little guy." Mr. Speaker, I suggest to this government across the way that the signs are there. For the same reason Sterling Lyon may have been defeated a few weeks ago in Manitoba, the same fate is in store for you if and when you conjure up your courage to call an election.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the last few weeks (and particularly the last few days) have seen a thorough crumbling of the NDP philosophy. It has happened primarily in the field of natural resources. Specifically, I am going to turn briefly to uranium.

Mr. Speaker, we have always supported the government in provincial control of resources. On that point we are with you 1,000 per cent. But when it comes down to how you do it, that is where we have differed sharply. Mr. Speaker, it has always been out contention on this side of the House that there were people who were willing to take the risks in northern Saskatchewan and that the people were far better served by the government being (for want of a better word) an auctioneer. In other words, you take a percentage of what goes out of it. Other people would take the risk and you tax them accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, on that side of the House we have the big operators, the big spenders, the high rollers. But on whose money? Borrowed money? Heavens no. Somebody else's money. The taxpayers' money. The heavy rollers over here, the big spenders, really know it all. They went into the uranium business. Lots of people were willing to do it. But they said, "Oh, heavens, we are going into uranium. We know everything that there is to know about the potash business. We made some profit. We don't pay many royalties, but we made some profit. We know it all." Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you today that the cornerstone of the NDP philosophy in resources is in shambles and is irretrievable.



Of course, the Minister of Minister Resources in question period said that everything is wonderful, that everything is rosy. "It is just coming up roses; there is no problem," he said. "The uranium market is just going to be great; there will be nothing but bundles of money coming in through the '80s." It is a funny thing that Esso Resources isn't saying that. It is a funny thing that Eldorado Nuclear isn't saying that. It is a funny thing that mining publications aren't saying that. Do you know who is saying it? SMDC is saying it. Of course, I think they've been reading press clippings of most of the cabinet ministers over there. Mr. Speaker, the high rollers over there, the big spenders, the know-it-alls have taken the taxpayers of this province into the bath. You've taken our heritage fund to the point where we don't have a heritage fund.

Wait a minute. It has assets. What are these assets? Billions of dollars according to, I think, the last budget. Didn't they say it would be a billion dollars? But what is it? About \$700 million of that is in interest-free loans to the potash business. We will deal with the situation in the potash business in coming days. Anybody want to give us a quick rundown on what a p & l sheet for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan looks like today? Anybody want to do it? Anybody want to bet that it's not in the black? Everybody knows it's in the red.

What goes into SMDC? Where is the rest of the heritage fund? Would you believe that it is basically in uranium? Would you believe it? Where is the heritage fund? It's a commonly held misapprehension in this province that ours is like Alberta's. The feeling is that ours is like Alberta's and has money in that account. The feeling is that there are funds in that account which are earning interest.

Mr. Speaker, the sad fact of the matter is that we don't have a heritage fund except in socialist imagination. We have no heritage fund. Ours sits in uranium mines and potash mines. Of course, everybody knows that PCS is for the best interests of Saskatchewan taxpayers. It will do the right thing in the potash field. Tell that to the people involved in that Central Canada plant expansion. Tell that to the people around the Colonsay mine. In everything PCS does, in everything the government does, they have long-term interests at heart. Oh yes, they told Central Canada Potash. Those people, incidentally, had the unmitigated gall and the absolute nerve to challenge this government in court, and you told them, "Don't bother to expand." That's just wonderful. But PCS — "Fine, go right ahead."

Look, we're going to treat everybody alike. PCS isn't going to be treated any different from any other potash mines. Anybody want to tell us about the potash business? Anybody want to tell us about the wisdom of that investment? Tell us about IMCC (International Minerals and Chemical Corporation) closing for 17 days because of markets. That's fresh off the press. Tell us about that one. I doubt anybody's going to stand up and talk about it.

Mr. Speaker, that's another reason you're going at it. You've taken our heritage money and made lousy investments that you didn't have to make. Somebody else was willing to take the risk. All you had to do was tax them accordingly. They expected to be taxed. Let me tell you, we would have taxed them. We would have taxed them as much as they could have handled. But, Mr. Speaker, the high rollers, the big spenders, the know-it-alls did it their way. What do you have to show for it? You guys didn't take a loss personally. You potentially blew and put into jeopardy all the revenue of the '70s from our non-renewable sources. That's what you heavy rollers, you big spenders have done.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that when you ultimately call an election, you are going to pay the price for that.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister of Labour, I suggest you move on and take your other shoe off.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have a right to expect some help in their time of trouble. What is an average person who is having difficulty with his mortgage or a farmer who is having a dickens of a time meeting his interest payments supposed to think when he hears there's \$1 billion in extra revenue coming into this province every year? What is he supposed to think? Maybe that the government is going to give him some help through this tough time. What does he get? They are going to spend \$100 million for an airline.

I suggest to you that for the very reason that Sterling Lyon was defeated, you are going to be defeated if and when you ever choose to call an election.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to deal very briefly with the field of education. I do hope the Minister of Rural Affairs will stick around for just a moment, since I choose to deal with some of his comments. We heard a comment coming from the Minister of Rural Affairs that school units are providing Cadillac services. Mr. Speaker, just to the north of where the minister made that comment, there is a school district which is primarily in the constituency of the member for Morse.

They did some interesting figuring over there. They looked at where they are and the costs which they have. They know it is possibly an election year. They know negotiations are going on with the teachers. They know the teachers are asking for 19.5 per cent, and the government through its negotiating committee is offering the teachers 10.5 per cent. They have come to the obvious conclusion (it's an election year) that the settlement will be in the range of 15 per cent. It's pretty good logic, I suppose.

They did some looking around. They get grants on a per student ratio, as does every other rural school district. Do you know what they concluded they are faced with? A 32 mill increase. This government, which has money for any crown corporation, will not make adequate grants to our rural school units or any school unit. Thirty-two mills! Sure it's an election year and the government will have some goodies to pass out in its budget. It had better have; otherwise, do you know what that school unit's options are? I am sure that that school unit is indicative of many out in rural Saskatchewan. Do you know what its choice is? To can 20 teachers and close down some schools.

Mr. Speaker, nobody wants that. They have the option to cut out 25 teachers and close some schools. The towns for which they are talking about closure are not exactly towns that are on the verge of dying. These are solid towns.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know from this government how it can tell us it is in favour of rural Saskatchewan. How can you tell us it is your position to keep people on the farms and in the towns when at the same time you are going to take away their schools? Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that this government has failed again. It has failed in the field

of education because you negotiate these settlements with the teachers. You said, "All right, we can do it better." You said, "We can do it better. We'll negotiate." But the very least you can do after you negotiate the increase is pay the bill. But what does this government do? It negotiates the increase, and then sends the bill to the units and says, "Here, pay it." Well, what choice do they have? They could either jack the mill rate up or they can cut services. Once again, just as we've seen in medicare, chop it in bits, chop it in statistics. Chop it in expenditures all the way through and now we're seeing it in education . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's exactly what we're seeing.

Mr. Speaker, once again, it's for those reasons I suggest to you that this government is well on its way under, because it has forgotten the basic ingredient of what got it there in '71. You forgot how you got there, and you've forgotten the people. You've gone on an ego trip. You've gone on a policy of aggrandizement of the New Democratic policy; crown corporations. You know, Mr. Speaker, in the case of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), in the case of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan), in the case of SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation), I have a very valid question to add on to their crown corporation ads. When this guy in the slick voice says, "It's your business." the very valid question to tag on it, "What the blazes happened to our business?" It's a pretty good question.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Fear not, I will. Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn now to the Attorney General. I wish he were in his seat, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . If you insist, all right, perhaps I shall tell you some stories going back to the period you are referring to.

Those of you who were here then may recall there was then a pretty capable attorney general on that side of the House: the member for Regina North-West. You remember him; the Minister of Labour will remember him; his name was Darrel Heald. Darrel Heald was a pretty capable individual, and Mr. Speaker will recall him. You may not have agreed with him philosophically, but I think most people would respect him as being fairly capable. He did bring in some legislation which at that time was regarded as progressive. Upon the change of government, Mr. Heald had left quite a bit of legislation on the drawing board. Consequently, with the change of government, the new Attorney General had a drawing board to use for the next two to three years. Do you know that much or many of the progressive things that the Attorney General's department did at that time came from his predecessor? They came from Darrel Heald. But then do you know what happened? The drawing board came to an end and was used up and all of a sudden the Attorney General on this side was on his own. He was on his own hook. And I ask you to think back to what has really come out of the Attorney General's office since about 1974-75.

Well, I suppose it's fair after 10 years to give him a rating. On a scale from 1 to 10 I think it's fair to give him a rating. Well, I was going to say about 1.5 and then we could debate whether it was on the plus or minus side of zero. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Department of the Attorney General is one that has suffered the most under this constitutional crisis. I think it's a fair comment to say that the Attorney General of this province has spent far too much time strutting on the national stage and far too little looking after the home fires in his office.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't think any Attorney General in Canada has had as much legislation challenged in court as has this Attorney General. Mr. Speaker, in

history I don't think any Attorney General has had as much legislation challenged as he has. Today was a prime example of strangely written legislation. The Bill was introduced into this Assembly today and we're all going to watch with interest as to how it is handled. Whether you're NDP or Conservative, read that Bill. Did you ever see a more clumsily written Bill? We're not all lawyers but, honest to goodness, did you ever see a Bill written like that? And before the member for Moose Jaw North makes a comment, I invite him to read the Bill. I don't know whether he has or not. Never mind what they tell you. Read it. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that that is an area in particular in which the Attorney General has fallen down badly.

But the area in which I intend to deal for the next few moments is the area of children's rights. Mr. Speaker, last year after waiting it out to see if the Attorney General was going to introduce legislation in this area which is so horribly, grossly neglected, nothing happened. So I introduced a Bill, Mr. Speaker, that was basically a non-political Bill, but I think it's fair to say that it did have significant support on that side of the House. Many fair-minded people on that side of the House looked at that Bill with some sympathy. Naturally they had a problem. Had it been introduced by anybody other than a member on this side of the House, it would have gone through like that. But I think basically members on that side of the House know full well that Saskatchewan lags sadly behind in the field of children's rights.

I don't suggest for one moment that I'm not vulnerable to criticism like, "How come you have taken up this issue? It's only because it affected you." That's a valid criticism and I accept it because it's true. Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to the floor of this Assembly. Basically those of you over there know what I say to be true. You know that we lag sadly behind. I cannot say more emphatically how disgusting and reprehensible I found the Attorney General's conduct in killing that Bill and using it as a negotiating tool in the wind-down of this House last spring. I just don't know how the Attorney General could use children's rights as a negotiating and bargaining tool as he did. I find it disgusting and reprehensible. We lag so far behind other provinces, other states, it's pathetic. You know when that Bill was in the Assembly, all we heard were lawyers' legal arguments.

I heard a speech from the member for Regina Elphinstone. It was a fair speech; there was nothing wrong with it. But do you know what position he took all the way through that speech? He gave it as if he were a lawyer in a courtroom. That's what he was trying to do and I don't fault him for that. But all of the Attorney General's arguments would be tough from a lawyer's point of view.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recount something which happened in a courtroom in one of my famed custody battles, from Judge M. A. MacPherson. This was an aside; it shocked me and it had nothing to do with the case. Judge MacPherson said, "You know, I've been making custody dispositions for some 25 or 30 years, and we judges just never get to know whether we've done the right thing or not. Only in one instance did I know whether or not I had done the right thing. That happened many years later when I received a letter. I don't recall whether it was good or bad." Mr. Speaker, can you imagine that in this province today, judges have been making dispositions and they themselves don't know whether they have been using the right criteria?

How many of you on that side of the House are aware that a social worker, who may have knowledge of that custody disposition cannot be called as a witness? The Attorney General knows. He cannot be called as a witness even if he has useful

information. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General knows all this, and yet, as we closed down the House, the Attorney General stood in this Assembly and he acknowledged the problem. He acknowledged that we could expect action in this field at the fall session of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I truly missed it in the throne speech. Do you know what I am greatly afraid is going to happen? I am afraid that nothing is going to be done. Sure, I can introduce the Bill and we're back to the same old problem. Members over there who know the Bill has merit can't touch it for fear of breaking party ranks. Certainly in an election year you can't do that. But, for the fair thinking members over there I ask, "Can your caucus pressure the Attorney General?" I cannot believe that everyone over there is as insensitive as the Attorney General is to an issue such as children's rights.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn to another area which I suggest typifies the shocking way that the Attorney General has let his department go down the tubes in many aspects. I am sure that many of you have heard about the Gil Johnson case which came to trial this week. Now Mr. Johnson, for those of you who may not be thoroughly cognizant, is a former director general for Employment and Immigration Canada. He was charged by the Attorney General's department for defrauding native people of \$72 million.

**AN. HON. MEMBER:** — Make it thousands.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Excuse me, \$72,000. Yes, laugh, gentlemen, just laugh. Let me see if you laugh after this. He was charged by the Attorney General's department of defrauding native people of \$72,000. Mr. Speaker, like most people, I heard this on a news broadcast some months ago and my reaction was to throw the book at him. That was my reaction on hearing it over the news. The man had to face the degradation of being transferred to Ottawa where he was until his trial came up.

Mr. Speaker, this man was charged by the Attorney General's department with defrauding native people. The Attorney General had to be involved in this.

Mr. Speaker, what were the facts that came up when the Attorney General's people took this matter to court? What came out of it? Well, I'll tell you what came out of it. The facts were that Mr. Johnson didn't defraud anybody. There were 70 people who were freezing to death in northern Saskatchewan, and they came begging, hat in hand, to this government across the way, and they said, "Give us anything; give us a tent." Do you know what this government said? "Run along back up north."

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You're sick.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Well, we'll just see in a minute who is sick, Mr. Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. Tell them about the help you gave them. You sent them back up north; you sent them back up that creek. What did Mr. Johnson do? Somewhere out of his budget he found \$72,000 to buy some trailers.

Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General charged him and held him up to public ridicule. People jumped to the conclusion that that man had pocketed \$72,000 and run off with it. That was the impression you would get from press reports. He had to go through that degradation. After those people had come and asked for help, and you said, "Get lost; go back up to Bear Creek," this man found the money. What does he get? The Attorney General's department charged him with defrauding \$72,000.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting what happened just the other day. On December 4, the crown entered a stay in the fraud trial. Do you know what that means? That's a legal term for saying it was thrown out of court. Do you know what was said? I can quote Justice J. G. McIntyre. He said, "This is only fair." Speaking to Mr. Johnson, he said:

You were charged with two very serious offences, yet I was wondering from the first day of that trial where the evidence was. I was in doubt whether or not any crime was committed at all. Now, it turned out to be a misunderstanding.

Isn't that wonderful?

The Attorney General's department destroyed this man, destroyed his credibility, held him and his family up to ridicule because he had a hear — a heart that you didn't have over there. But heavens, yes! You held the man up; you probably destroyed him . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now, there's a good comment. You send that to Mr. Johnson's family from the Minister of Urban Affairs.

The judge went on to say (this is Mr. J. G. McIntyre), "I regret very much that you are in that prisoner's box." This was in the *Leader Post* on Friday, December 4, 1981. I invite you to read it for yourself. I think it's a disgusting, reprehensible, revolting example of inefficiency in the Attorney General's department. There is just no excuse for that.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you the extent to which that Attorney General's department has deteriorated is that the Attorney General is walking around threatening to sue the member for Qu'Appelle, going up to the press gallery and threatening to sue members of the press — oh yes, that's big-time stuff. Do you know what that's indicative of? That's indicative of a government that is on the way out; that's indicative of a government that has lost its grip; that's indicative of a government that has to run around threatening people. Mr. Speaker, that's what has happened.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question in our minds that the people of Saskatchewan are ready for a change. There is no question at all. And for those of you who choose to walk, we invite you to walk out of here tomorrow. Do it today! Call it, call it! but they won't call it because, Mr. Speaker, the people across the hall know very well what's going to happen. They're not only going to get a beating; they're going to get a pasting. In every single area that you care to deal with, they're falling down in their actions. Their Crown corporations have totally forgotten whom they are there to serve. The Crown corporations think they're there to serve their own bureaucrats. They forgot that they're there to serve the people.

Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, to the Minister of Labour, who has his shoes back on, I suggest that you go and talk to the Premier tomorrow and invite him to go out and call an election. Go out and call one and you tell the people why it's necessary to run around threatening to sue the member for Qu'Appelle and to sue the press. Tell them about your tactics, how the uranium business has collapsed, how you've taken the people's money, how you have simply taken revenue from non-renewable resources and tubed it. Tell them about the decade of failure and about how everything that you touch is blowing up in your faces. Tell them about how you have all this money for anybody and anything, except education. No money for education, no money for health. You tax the people again.

You know, it's sort of an interesting thing, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how many of you

saw an ad in the *Globe and Mail* the other night, but there's a lot of truth in it. It's a good ad; you may see it again. It shows a gas pump. It says, "When you buy \$1,500 out of this pump, you know what you're getting? It's really \$500 worth of gas." One thousand dollars goes to your federal and provincial governments, wherever you may be. That's what you get for \$1,500.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you might think that in this particular province, where we talk about our oil wealth or, conversely have proximity to Alberta with that oil wealth, some of that could spill over and benefit the ordinary guy. But you know, every time that ordinary guy fills up his car in Saskatchewan, it's about \$7, if he has any size of tank at all. Every time he fills his tank, every time he puts that nozzle in that gas tank, seven bucks goes to the government. Isn't it wonderful to live in a socialist Utopia? Isn't it wonderful to live where the government has its own ordinary people at heart? Isn't it wonderful that we have Crown corporations that have everybody's interests at heart? Isn't it wonderful?

Mr. Speaker, it may come as a shock after these few brief comments that I think I'll vote against the motion.

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all, I notice by the clock that I have, if the conventional time is honoured, two minutes. The agreement that was made by the representatives of the Conservative Party, the member for Rostern and the member for Meadow Lake, with the NDP, said that the hon. member for Thunder Creek would get up about . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order! I'm having trouble hearing the person who presently has the floor, and that's the Attorney General.

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I was about to say that the agreement made between the representatives of the two parties, as has been the custom of this House for at least the 14 years that I have been around, is that there would be one-half hour for the government — from about 9 o'clock to 9:30.

It is interesting to note that an opposition that is so confident, so tough, and so fearless of this old, tired, decrepit, and failing government only gives us two minutes, so fearful are they of a rebuttal.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — So ailing and so failing is this government that the member for Thunder Creek (of all of the members opposite) said that he would allow the member for Saskatoon Riversdale two minutes. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the members of this House — I am sure the members on this side will agree — to stop the clock for 15 to 20 minutes for me to make a few remarks in rebuttal. Of course, knowing full well how they have this government on the ropes, I am sure that this tough, intellectual, mauling, brawling opposition will agree. So I intend to continue speaking until one of the members opposite calls it 9:30, if he does.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have just finished hearing from the hon. member for Thunder Creek. I want to tell the hon. member that very little, if anything, of the speech is worth rebutting, but I do want to say one thing. It is important to note one aspect of this political situation in Saskatchewan as it exists in 1981 and that is the parallel to 1971. And the parallel from 1971 is that it was our right-wing government, from 1964 to

1971, that did away with the Hatton gas fields, that did away with the Snakehole deposits of sodium sulphates.

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

MR. KATZMAN: — I believe the rules call for the vote to be called at 9:30.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The point of order raised by the member for Rosthern is valid. According to rule 13, subsection (4), it is incumbent upon me to put the question on the motion that is before the House at this time.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

#### YEAS — 34

Blakeney	Pepper	Allen
Kaeding	Snyder	Romanow
Smishek	Tchorzewski	Robbins
Baker	Feschuk	Rolfes
Mostoway	Banda	Vickar
Hammersmith	Kowalchuk	Thompson
Engel	Long	Cowley
Cody	Koskie	Matsalla
Shillington	Skoberg	Poniatowski
Prebble	Johnson	White
Nelson	Lusney	Solomon
Miner		

#### NAYS — 14

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

#### MOTIONS

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Minister of Labour, the member for Moose Jaw South:

That said address be engrossed and presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor by such members of the Assembly as are of the Executive Council.

Motion agreed to.

**HON. MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Minister of Urban Affairs, the member for Regina North-East:



That this Assembly will, at the next sitting, resolve itself into a committee of finance to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty and to consider the ways and means of raising the supply.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:38 p.m.