

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 24, 1982

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to be able to introduce to the members of the legislature a group of 40 students from Imperial School. They are grades 5 and 6 students. They are accompanied here this afternoon by their teachers, Wilma Riley and Radha Kaul. I hope their visit to the legislative Chamber and Legislative Building has been a pleasant experience so far. I hope it has been rewarding and that they will remember this for some time to come. I hope that it will assist them in their social studies. It is my intention, Mr. Speaker, to meet with them later on in the members' dining room. Perhaps they might have some questions to ask about the legislature. So on behalf of all of us, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the students from Imperial School, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CHAPMAN: — Mr. Speaker, It's my pleasure to introduce to this Assembly, through you, 33 students from the fine little community in the Estevan constituency of Macoun. They are from the division 3 at Macoun School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Gerald Kelly and Erwin Engel, along with their bus driver, Ray Liese. I trust, students and teachers, that you will have the opportunity to obtain some of the sense of the art of politics or the sense of government from this visit today. I trust it will be informative. I'm asking all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming the division 3 students from Macoun School.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I direct members' attention to the east gallery, where we have 20 grade 8 students from St. Dominic School in the city of Regina in the University Park subdivision. They are accompanied by their principal, Mrs. Paulette Vanderlinde. I'd just like to bring to the members' attention that Mrs. Vanderlinde has been instrumental in organizing in St. Dominic School a very fine oratorical contest. It's well received by the parents and I know the students enjoy it as well. I've had the great pleasure of being invited since its inception. It's a tremendous program and they're to be congratulated for it. I will have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to meet with Mrs. Vanderlinde and the students shortly. I hope they have an enjoyable and interesting afternoon. I'm sure all hon. members join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege this afternoon to introduce to the Assembly 39 grade 8 students from the town of Rosetown. They're accompanied today by Mr. Wiebe, Mr. Ford and Miss Cheryl Harder. I hope that they're going to enjoy their visit here. Some of them were delayed by a storm last week. I'm glad you were able to come today and I look forward to an opportunity to meet with you to discuss anything

that you have on your minds following today's question period. Would all hon. members join with me in welcoming this group to our Assembly?

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, Sir, and to the members of the Legislative Assembly, a set of students of a different kind. These are students in a sense, being nine external affairs officers from Ottawa in training, who are in the Speaker's gallery. Part of their training, of course, involves getting to know their country better. They're in Saskatchewan for, I think, a two-day period. They're involved in seminars with senior officials, getting a little bit of a sampling of what Saskatchewan landscape and weather can be like in the latter part of March of 1982. I would like to very briefly introduce them to you. I hope that I can pronounce the names okay. Mr. Claude Lambert is the group leader. Perhaps you might just stand as I read the names. The others are Francois Larochelle, Denys Laliberte, Gail Miller, Carole Robert, Kevin O'Shea, Michel Tessier, Marc Vidricaire and Michel Voghel. I think that's the group. Sorry for the Ukrainian accent on the French Canadian names. Welcome to Saskatchewan.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

CUPE Hospital Strike

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Labor. Mr. Minister, as you are well aware, the CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) strike is continuing. More hospitals are being affected by this. Thirty-eight hundred citizens of this province are out on the picket lines. My question to you is: will you use your offices to try to bring these sides back to the negotiating table so a negotiated settlement can be achieved in this serious strike?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member's question, he will be aware that last weekend marathon conciliation talks took place with a conciliation officer, Cliff Hagen, conducting those talks and acting as an intermediary between the parties. Those talks broke off at something in the order of 6 o'clock on Sunday morning with the parties still a significant distance apart and believing in each case, I believe, that their position was sound and just. Accordingly, the strike continues and the Department of Health, the Department of Labor and the government generally is monitoring the situation and doing it with some diligence and care, and anything to be done by the government or by the Department of Labor will be announced in due course.

We will be monitoring the situation closely, and I think it has to be said that in order to be productive, the parties have to indicate some degree of willingness to be flexible on the positions that they assumed at the bargaining session which concluded early on Sunday morning. The government is monitoring the situation carefully. Our anxiety, of course, is very real and our wish to have the parties reach a settlement is genuine. We'll be doing anything possible under those circumstances.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, my suggestion

was for you to use your good offices and become involved. I remember a few years ago scenes of you hurrying, scurrying from room to room in strikes that have taken place in this province, becoming actively involved to bring a negotiated settlement. I ask you: do you not feel that this strike of the CUPE workers, affecting the health care services of this province, is of a serious enough nature for you to take the action that perhaps you have in the past in trying to bring negotiated settlements in similar situations?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I'm glad that the members of the opposition have finally discovered that there's a strike in progress. This is the first occasion that they have taken it upon themselves to raise a question during the question period. I have to remind the hon. member that the negotiations are taking place between the health care association and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. As such, the government is not directly involved. We stand ready to provide conciliation services as we do on a regular basis in the event that those conciliation talks can be productive in any way. And we continue to monitor the situation with Cliff Hagen, the conciliation officer, being in regular touch with the parties in order to ascertain whether anything of value can be accomplished by bringing the parties together. Merely to bring the parties together without some indication of movement sometimes is less than productive and is sometimes counter-productive. But, I remind you again, the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association and CUPE are the principal players in the collective bargaining arrangement. We continue to monitor and we are concerned about the mounting degree of concern which is being expressed elsewhere. The government is not turning a blind eye to the many considerations which are involved.

MR. TAYLOR: — A supplementary question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I stood in this House last week or so and questioned the Minister of Health on this strike. Nothing has come about. Today we see a refusal from the Minister of Labor to take any action. I ask you, as the Premier of this province, will you show a little bit of fortitude and bring these people back to the negotiating table so the people on strike can receive a settlement and the hospital services in this province will not decay?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House yield to no one in our concern arising out of the circumstances of the work stoppage between CUPE and the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association. The situation is undoubtedly getting more serious by the day, and there is some indication, at least, that it's going to get very serious indeed in a relatively short number of hours. I don't mean a few, but there is a suggestion that over the weekend there may be a walkout at all hospitals which CUPE has organized; this is a very serious matter indeed.

We are certainly attempting to find the way that would be the most productive. I know my colleague, the Minister of Labor, is in touch with mediators who are in touch with both parties. We do not wish to take steps which would be counter-productive; however, we stand ready to take any step which we think will be productive. At the moment I do not think that my getting the parties together would produce any particular result, since, as I understand their positions, they are sufficiently distant so that nothing worth while could be produced by a face to face meeting, whether I am there or not. I am not a skilled mediator and some people whom we have with us are. Under those circumstances I would think that I would wish to leave this to the people who are best able to grapple with problems of this nature, and who are familiar with the background. I know they are doing their very best.

Assistance to Ambulance Service

MRS. DUNCAN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, the road ambulance program is in jeopardy of collapsing because of inadequate funding. And, many areas of our province are facing the very real possibility of soon losing their access to an ambulance service because of this inadequate funding. Do you not believe, as Minister of Health, that the administration and funding for an ambulance service should come under your department and not under urban affairs because ambulance service is a vital and necessary arm of medicare?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I would like to deal with that question since the ambulance service comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Urban Affairs. We, as a government, believe that ambulance services fall in a similar category to police protection and fire protection; it's a service for the people at large in local communities. We concluded some time ago that that service can best be delivered and organized by local communities. That has been our approach.

There now exist 99 local ambulance districts that deliver ambulance services. In some cases it is organized by volunteers, in some cases through union hospital districts, and in other cases they contract out with the private ambulance operators.

Mr. Speaker, we have, through revenue sharing, designated a portion of that revenue for ambulance service to provide grants directly to local governments which then pay the grant to the ambulance districts. Initially when the program was organized we provided \$1 million in 1978. Last year \$2.6 million was provided. This year \$3.2 million is allocated; in other words, an increase of 21 per cent. We say that that grant, together with the individual contribution of those in need of the ambulance service, together with any contribution that local governments will make, should provide a decent and basic level of service for ambulance purposes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. DUNCAN: — Supplementary to the Minister of Urban Affairs. That's a cop-out and you know it. Would you not agree that what you have established is a system of health care by putting the onus on the property owners because you are not giving municipalities enough through revenue sharing to cover the cost of maintaining a stable and viable ambulance service in the province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, it is my intention this afternoon to participate in the budget debate. I will be telling this legislature and the people of Saskatchewan in more detail what we are doing for urban governments. I submit that there isn't a government in Canada that contributes more financial assistance for local services than the Government of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — We are proud of the funds that we are providing so that local governments can deliver a high level of services, whether it be police protection, ambulance service, fire services or a multitude of services that local governments can best deliver at the local level.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Supplementary to the Minister of Health. You didn't answer my first question, Mr. Minister. You gave it to someone else. Do you, as Minister of Health, not believe that ambulance service for the citizens of Saskatchewan is a vital and necessary part of medicare and therefore should come under the administration and funding of your department? What is the sense, Mr. Minister, of having a health care system in the province if we in rural Saskatchewan are going to be dead on arrival because we don't have an ambulance to bring us to the hospital?

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I think the responsibility of where a particular program is going to be designated is the prerogative of the Premier of this province. The Premier has that right, and he assigns us to various duties. It's not my fault, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite don't know who is responsible for what portfolio. Some of you have only been around here for four years or so, and I know you're slow learners. But, Mr. Speaker, the next time around when I am elected, I shall bring an IQ test and conduct some tests for the members opposite.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite that in this province, we have the best comprehensive health care system that you will find anywhere in Canada. Mr. Speaker, you don't find any medicare premiums in this province as you do in Tory Ontario or Tory Alberta. Mr. Speaker, you don't find any user charges for dental programs in this province.

MR. LANE: — Supplementary to the Premier. Now that the body has been placed back in your lap, I wonder, Mr. Premier, if you wouldn't reconsider your administrative decision and assign the jurisdiction for ambulance service in the province of Saskatchewan from the Department of Urban Affairs to the Department of Health. I could give you a secondary suggestion to change your Minister of Health, but in the meantime, I'm mainly concerned that you make the decision to immediately transfer from the Department of Urban Affairs to the Department of Health the administration of ambulance services in this province.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member believes that that's the best way to organize the government. I do not share his view. In my judgment, a good number of services are best administered at the local level, and the fact that they may relate to several different departments of government does not, in my judgment, suggest that the department or government . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The hon. member for Bengough-Milestone asks whether the answer to the question is yes or no and the answer is, I believe, that the Minister of Urban Affairs is discharging his duties in an exemplary way and, accordingly, I have no reason to change the current organization.

May I just make two points, Mr. Speaker? We have, for example, a service offering transportation assistance for disabled people. I don't know where the hon. members would want that to go. It provides a grant to municipal government to provide for transportation for disabled people. By their logic it should be either in social services, or in the transportation agency, or in the Department of Highways and Transportation. It is in none of those. It is in the Department of Municipal Affairs where it belongs, because it is a grant program to municipal government. In the same way, we have a grant program to municipal government to provide ambulance services for their people. That is properly located in the department which deals with those municipal governments, the Department of Urban Affairs.

I do not share the view that because some service administered by a local government may be related to highways, or may be related to social services, those particular ministers should be responsible for it. I do not share that view. I take the view that we ought to strengthen municipal governments, that we ought not to send them to deal with 8, 10 or 12 departments if we can avoid it. They ought to feel that they have a focal point in the government in the Department of Urban Affairs; that is what they have, and I am pleased with that arrangement.

Discrimination in Granting Malpractice Insurance

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Mr. Minister, it has been brought to my attention that Saskatchewan Government Insurance will not sell malpractice insurance to the privately-owned ambulance operators in the province of Saskatchewan. Could you rise in this Assembly today and state why that cannot be done?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether the information the member has is correct or otherwise. I will take notice.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. While the minister is taking notice, will the minister also take notice that privately-owned operators in this province have been instructed to go out of province to Ontario to pay \$400 for that same insurance policy they can get in Edmonton for \$135, but SGI is funding, today in the province, malpractice insurance to hospital-based ambulance operators for \$155. Why are you discriminating? Why is SGI discriminating against the privately-owned ambulance operators in the province of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. ROBBINS: — Mr. Speaker, I said I would take notice of the question. I'm not sure the figures the gentleman gives are correct. I have never found any of his figures to be correct in the past.

Government Loans to Small Businesses

MR. LANE: — I would like to direct a question to the minister responsible for Sedco. Looking at your proposals in the budget, the government is basically proposing some small business loans up to \$25,000 at 1 per cent below prime, which on the full \$25,000 will work out for a businessman to about \$600 a year, perhaps. I call to the minister's attention recent press reports which show that retail sales in the province of Saskatchewan, for example, have risen less than 2 per cent in the month of February, barely over 2 per cent since the month of January, a significant drop based on past growth. I wonder why the minister would not give consideration to a better policy, a policy which gives small businessmen loans at a preferred rate of 9.625 per cent up to \$25,000, which would give some significant help to the small businessmen of this province?

HON. MR. VICKAR: — We base our interest rate to the customer on the cost of our borrowing power. We can't borrow money at 9.75 per cent. The hon. member well knows that. I have to say that even at 1 per cent below prime, we are probably the only province that has a program of that nature that assists businesses to the tune of \$25,000. I think you have to go an awfully long way to pick up another program of that magnitude.

MR. LANE: — Well, I call to the minister's attention the activities of the government opposite wherein it did arrange financing at a rate of 9.625 per cent to Chartwood

Developments for the establishment of the Cornwall Centre in the city of Regina. Your answer, I suggest, is not correct. In fact, the government opposite has the ability to borrow at 9.625 and has proven it in the past.

Your policy though, Mr. Minister, is deficient in that it is a floating rate so that businessmen who cannot borrow at 18 or 20 per cent, if the interest rate goes higher, will not have any plan to take advantage of. In other words, they won't borrow at the high rate. And is that not an argument in favor of a fixed low subsidized interest rate to help the small businessmen of this province?

HON. MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and the members across the aisle have presented that argument that we have loaned money to Chartwood Developments for 9.75 per cent often.

AN HON. MEMBER: — 9.625.

HON. MR. VICKAR: — Whatever the case may be. I might remind the hon. members that that was two or three years ago, when the interest rates was at that rate. That's why that rate was established. It's a different ball game altogether. It was your government in Ottawa and the present government that allowed interest rates to be on the increase so that we cannot borrow to allow that type of lending power.

Price of Gasoline

MR. ANDREW: — My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, the price of gasoline today is cheaper in Halifax, Moncton, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver than it is in the city of Regina. Mr. Premier, when we have such severe weather conditions in Saskatchewan, when distance is such a great factor, when we are one of the two producing provinces of crude oil in this country, why is it that the consumers of this province are being taxed and taxed and taxed at the gas pump by your government and your friend in Ottawa?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I cannot vouch for the hon. member's figures about the price of gasoline in the various places in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I will except Edmonton since certainly I know that the price of gasoline in Edmonton is lower than it is in Regina. I am aware, as hon. members opposite are aware, that the level of tax in Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax is exactly the same level of tax as it is in Regina. The prevailing tax rate, certainly in Vancouver and Winnipeg, is 20 per cent ad valorem. That fact is one which can be established by a simple reference to the records, which are clear for everyone to see. The fact that the retail price may be greater, if it is, is an effect of the competition existing and the pricing structures of the oil companies. Our tax rates are the same, and hon. members know they are the same.

MR. ANDREW: — Supplementary question, Mr. Premier. Are you telling the people of Saskatchewan it is acceptable to you that gasoline is cheaper in the city of Halifax than it is in the city of Regina? Is that acceptable to you as the Premier of this province?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I simply won't argue about Halifax, because the last time I was in Halifax those alleged facts were not the case. But I will talk about Toronto because I have seen prices in Toronto which are comparable and, for all I know,

possibly lower than in Regina. This, as I say, is not acceptable to me; I wish it were otherwise. It has been this way since time immemorial. Imperial Oil is the company which supports your party and not my party. It set this at a rate which means that we here pay more, in some instances, than people in Toronto. The tax rate is exactly the same; if in fact, gasoline costs more in Regina than it does in Toronto, the blame is with Imperial Oil, with Shell and with Texaco and not with any provincial government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance.

MR. TAYLOR: — It is indeed a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to rise in my place in this House to debate this most recent budget. I think a terminology that would be most common throughout Saskatchewan to describe the budget is the borrowed budget which the NDP has brought in. It is a complete flip-flop budget, where no less than six of the major issues of this budget have been brought forward by the members of this side of the House — the members of the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the members on the other side stand up and vehemently say that a rural gas distribution system is not feasible or possible in this province when our members on this side have argued for that to help the energy costs of the people out there in the province of Saskatchewan who have been suffering under the increasing inflation rate to which we are all subjected.

What about mortgage assistance for home-owners? As late as last December, our colleagues argued for putting some money on the line to help the people who are losing their homes in this province. The government opposite, Mr. Speaker, said, "Oh no, we can't do that." Here we see in the budget a complete flip-flop. That is part of their parcel.

Since I became a member in this legislature, I've argued for the removal of the E&H tax on children's clothing and school books. Well, we see that the boys took some of our ideas and went halfway again. A freeze on the public utilities — we've called and called for that. We see now that they're accepting the sound suggestions of the Conservatives, the suggestions that are out there to help the people of Saskatchewan. Now we see them borrowing them, riding on the backs of the Progressive Conservatives because they know they are sound policies. They know they are policies which will help the people of Saskatchewan so they come halfway with these.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TAYLOR: — I say: boys, if you're going to borrow the ideas, at least have enough guts to borrow them all and bring in policies that will help these people rather than half-measures that look like election promises. That's what the borrowed budget is. You know, Mr. Speaker, when I sat here and heard the Minister of Finance read out these things that were only so familiar to my colleagues on this side, I thought of driving a car.

I said, you know, it's like this, boys: if we can do that good a job riding in the back seat, for God's sake give us the wheel and watch this province go.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TAYLOR: — That's what we want to do in this province. Let the sound policies of the Progressive Conservatives be known and let those people have a chance at governing this province and that may come very soon, Mr. Speaker. I mention half-measures, half-measures indeed on the E&H (education and health) tax. They removed it on children's clothing — one of the things we've been talking about. But did they remove it on school supplies? No, it's still the taxation policy of the government opposite to tax educational supplies, the supplies that can help a young boy or girl in Saskatchewan be equipped to take his or her place in the labor market and make a life for himself or herself. They will tax those, but they will remove the tax, Mr. Speaker, on the lewd books that are on the stands in this province. I don't think that's the taxation policy the people of Saskatchewan want to see.

And I look at some of the exemptions, Mr. Speaker. I see a certain number of exemptions, but I notice that patterns — can you understand this, Mr. Speaker? — patterns to make clothes are not exempt. They tax yard goods. Mr. Speaker, it's the poor people in this province, who can't afford to go out and buy ready-made clothes, that have to make their clothes. Those mothers have to have patterns and yard goods, and the people opposite still say they should be taxed. If those are policies for people, Mr. Speaker, I'll eat my hat. That is not a policy for people.

Also on the E&H tax — the old people have continually increasing utility bills. You go through the areas of Saskatchewan and talk to them. The first thing they'll mention is their power bill. It is increasing at phenomenal rates, and what does the government opposite do? It continues to charge E&H tax above that increasing power bill — charging it on utilities. I say, shame; that is unfair; that is unjust; and that is not a policy the helps people. Now, if that government opposite really cared about the senior citizens and cared about the people out there with families, then we may have heard something in the budget about a rollback of utility rates. We didn't hear anything about rollback. They decided they'd put a short freeze on. They said they would set up a one-man inquiry to investigate, and we probably know the outcome of that investigation, which, by the way, I understand is going to cost \$100,000, a phenomenal rate for a one-man investigation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another thing that affects people in this province is the gasoline tax. Everybody in this province drives a car or else has to use a car to get from point A to point B or to their place of work. You know, Mr. Speaker, that the cost of gasoline today is higher in the city of Regina than it is in Charlottetown, than it is in Moncton, than it is in Halifax, than it is in Toronto — in an oil-producing province, Mr. Speaker. Why is that so? I'll tell you why that is so. It's because there's a sliding 20 per cent gasoline tax at the pumps, Mr. Speaker, and every time the price of gasoline goes up the taxes to the Government of Saskatchewan go up. We never heard anything about a rollback on gasoline taxes, Mr. Speaker, in that budget.

What about them saying that they are doing things to help taxation, that they are not taxing people? Mr. Speaker, the truth in this situation is as follows. The revenue received by the Government of Saskatchewan under its burdening tax policies is as follows: the corporate taxes are up 15 per cent from \$121 million in 1981 to \$139 million in 1982; the sales tax is up 16 per cent from \$309 million to \$358 million; the

gasoline tax is up 24 per cent from \$111 million to \$138 million. I ask again: are those policies that are helping people?

Mr. Speaker, the reality in this province and under the budget brought in by the NDP government is that the taxes have increased and have been raised \$300 for every man, woman and child in the province of Saskatchewan in 1982.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TAYLOR: — Is that a policy that helps people? I doubt it; it certainly is not.

I heard the other day the Minister of Education standing here saying what he had been doing to help the schools, the great amount of money put into education. Well, he certainly hasn't been reading the paper or listening to the school boards because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that every school board in the province of Saskatchewan is going to have to have substantial mill rate increases to finance the necessary education that we need for our young children. Is that putting people first? Certainly not. That is not putting people first. That is using taxation. They will not provide the funds from the taxation, the heavy burdening taxation upon the people, to give services to the people.

We called today for road ambulance assistance. What good is having a medicare system in this province if you arrive dead at the hospital, Mr. Speaker? That's the situation. The road ambulance program in this province is falling apart because of one reason — one simple reason — and that is that it is underfunded.

With regard to nursing home beds, you can travel throughout the province of Saskatchewan and you will find everyone wanting nursing home beds. They announced 133 for the whole province of Saskatchewan. I say that's a very big deal!

And what about the rebate they give to the home-owners and to the renters? Do you realize, Mr. Speaker, it amounts to 10 cents and 8 cents a day? Is that really a meaningful policy that will help to fight inflation? Indeed it won't.

You have heard me and other members in this caucus stand in this House time after time and ask for the double-laning of the Trans-Canada Highway. You know what the government opposite has given? It has given 0.6 kilometres at the weigh scale in Moosomin. I ask you: how many lives is that going to save, Mr. Speaker? Very few. That's a quarter of a mile on the biggest and most important highway in the province of Saskatchewan, the one with the heaviest traffic — a quarter of a mile in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, where is the money going? Well, I can tell you, there is \$400 million (let me repeat because to me \$1 million is still a lot of money, Mr. Speaker; it might not be to the boys opposite, but to me it is a lot) — \$400 million into uranium, and uranium markets are decreasing, Mr. Speaker. That is \$400 for every man, woman and child out there in Saskatchewan being put into uranium markets.

What about the Crown corporations, the family that they care about — not our family, but the big family of Crown corporations? They get \$2 million in this budget, Mr. Speaker. Again, that's an awful lot of money in my mind.

What about SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation)? It gets \$108 million. That is to drill in British Columbia. Saskoil money is put into it, and where

is it drilling? Not in Saskatchewan, in Manitoba. Are those policies that put people first? Certainly, Mr. Speaker, they are not.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this government which professes to put people first is certainly not living up to its word. The truth of the government, the Blakeney government, is that it puts taxes first. They tax the people; they tax the families; they tax the senior citizens; they tax all segments of our population. They will not remove the gasoline tax. We continue to have gasoline in this province more expensive than gasoline in Halifax, Moncton and other areas of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I say that we see this government is trying to make this budget, the borrowed budget, its election platform. They tried with the crowrate. It flew out the window on them, Mr. Speaker. The budget is known in Saskatchewan as the borrowed budget. I remember the Attorney General saying that the opposition is not credible, Mr. Speaker. Well, I tell you, boys, when you took our ideas and brought them in in your budget, you gave yourselves the fatal blow in this province because everywhere I go, they say, "The boys over on the other side have run out of ideas. They're old; they're tired; they're worn out. It's time for a change." It's time for a change to a Progressive Conservative government, a government that will not gouge and tax the people of this province, a government that will put people first and not what those on the opposite side put first; political power.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support a budget that would put political power and political manoeuvring before the lives of innocent people in this province of Saskatchewan. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will not be voting for the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this budget debate. I believe that this budget is an especially important budget because it stands in sharp contrast to the current trend of other governments toward the cuts in taxes for the rich and cuts in services for the low-and average-income earner. I commend the Minister of Finance and the Blakeney government for putting people first in a budget that will be an example to governments across North America.

Mr. Speaker, there are two contradictory schools of thought concerning how to manage an economy. The conservative view, whose most widely known spokesman is U.S. President Ronald Reagan, leaves everything to private enterprise. This view, popularly known as Reaganomics supports the user-pay concept which really amounts to the fact that those without do without. It supports low taxes, the dismantling of government services, and the tight control of money supply with high interest rates.

It is instructive, Mr. Speaker, that Conservatives here in Saskatchewan frequently point to the government of Ronald Reagan as an example they would like to see followed in this province. While the Saskatchewan Tory leader has publicly disavowed Dick Collver's call to join the States, he has been quick to pick up and repeat the federal Tory hymns of praise for Ronald Reagan and Reaganomics. After the annual Conservative policy convention the Regina *Leader-Post*, November 10, 1980, reported party President Gary Lane's statement that, "The provincial Progressive Conservative Party is shifting more to the right."

It was at that Tory convention that the new PC chieftain jubilantly told the delegates and I quote:

Americans showed the world they're not happy with the old Democratic Party . . . We will show the world we are not happy with the New Democratic Party.

That's from the Regina *Leader-Post*, November 10.

By mid-1981, those same Saskatchewan PCs were in a positive frenzy over their idol in the White House. In a report to the constituents that summer, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, who just sat down, the Tory critic for education, labor and economic supply, declared, and I quote:

We are living in a time that needs strong action and determination such as that exhibited by President Ronald Reagan in contrast to Allan Blakeney.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote a few examples of that so-called leadership provided by the Reagan administration.

Clarence Pendleton, President Reagan's choice to head the commission on civil rights in the U.S., has said this:

The best way to help poor folks is not to be one.

James Watt, Secretary of the Interior, is quoted as saying:

We will have a much better quality of life when President Reagan and I leave office in 1988.

Mr. Speaker, David Stockman, the budget director, has said this:

None of us really understands what's going on with all these numbers.

Mr. Speaker, it should be plain to everyone. Reagan's fiscal policies are a fraud and a sham. High interest rates put money in the pockets of the rich, who have the money to invest. Tax cuts keep it there and cutbacks in government programs further undermine any chance of a decent life for the poor, the handicapped and the pensioners on small, fixed incomes.

As Saskatchewan prepares for general elections, the spectre of Reaganomics and the Conservatives' blind adoration of his Washington wrecking crew hangs like a dark cloud on the political horizon. Saskatchewan has many social programs that present attractive targets to the Reagan-styled hit, and looking for funds to give away. Reagan hit school lunches; the Tories could hit children's dental care. Reagan hit medicare and social security; the Tories could hit the same targets here. Reagan hit the departments of education, energy, environment and consumer affairs; the same targets are here for the Devine crew. Reagan deregulated the resource companies; Devine says Crown corporations will be looked at like a big portfolio. The damage Tories could do to Saskatchewan is incalculable, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan is at a crossroad. In 1981, the province led every other province in real economic growth. The leader and the Conservatives have, for two years, been playing to the conservative swing that elected Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Mr. Speaker, I reject Reaganomics, advocated by Conservative politicians across Canada

and here in Saskatchewan. In this budget, the Government of Saskatchewan has presented an alternative policy. It has put people first. It is a traditional policy of the NDP, based on the principles common to successive budgets of NDP and CCF governments. This year's budget protects people from high interest rates, high inflation and high unemployment. It provides leadership through an ambitious program of investments and job creation measures to build for an even better future. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this budget contains special emphasis on programs for farmers and rural communities. These programs include a new \$12 million capital fund for rural Saskatchewan, the elimination of fuel tax for tandem-axle farm trucks, more funds and staff for rural hospitals, a new rural energy program and other important initiatives. The new five-year rural capital fund will provide financial assistance for capital projects which are aimed at improving the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan.

I am pleased to see that under this program the constituency of Redberry will be eligible for over \$427,740 over the next five years. I am sure my constituents will agree that this is real help for rural communities, help that opposition members laugh at, Mr. Speaker.

The elimination of fuel tax for tandem-axle trucks adds to the already \$30 million in benefits provided to Saskatchewan farmers through tax-exempt farm fuel for farm machinery and other farm trucks.

Community hospitals will be receiving increased grants to help meet rising costs. The sum of \$1.1 million will help beat ongoing costs for the new nursing positions announced by the Minister of Health in January. The number of level 4 beds will be expanded and staffing will be increased for currently improved beds through a \$1.4 million increase in funds. Pilot projects to expand the role of small rural hospitals in the community and preventive health will receive \$375,000.

Rural communities will benefit from a 35 per cent increase in funding for the correspondence school to offer a wider variety of courses to students in rural areas. The amount of \$170,000 is allocated for a major expansion of the rural transportation assistance program and a new pilot project to provide transportation assistance to senior citizens living in communities. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will even have new buses on Highway Number 40 to serve our communities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Mr. Speaker, the rural energy program announced in the budget will also be extremely important for rural Saskatchewan. The program is made up of two parts. Over the next three years the rural natural gas network will be greatly expanded at a cost of up to \$175 million. Thousands more SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) customers in rural communities and on farms will receive natural gas. In my constituency of Redberry, I am pleased to see that Vawn and Meota will be among those rural communities.

The second part of the rural energy program is equally important. For those who do not have access to natural gas, the Blakeney government will provide \$75 million for a major expansion of the Warm Up Saskatchewan program. Under this five-year program, financed by our heritage fund, home-owners will be eligible for interest-free loans of up to \$3,000. Small rural businesses, community halls, recreation facilities, schools and hospitals will be eligible to receive up to \$10,000 for energy saving

activities.

Mr. Speaker, these programs are real proof that this government is determined to keep rural Saskatchewan strong in the face of a rising cost of living. But, rural Saskatchewan is faced with another threat — the loss of the crowrate.

The Blakeney government has acted in the past to protect farmers. We made it plain that we won't back down on the crow this time either, Mr. Speaker. When the grain transportation system was in serious difficulty a few years ago, the Blakeney government helped Saskatchewan farmers. While the federal government has the responsibility to move grain, the successful Liberal and Tory governments have let the railroads off the hook. The Blakeney government stepped in and bought \$55 million worth of hopper cars on the principle that public investment means public control. Those hopper cars represent over one million tonnes of increased grain moving capacity that farmers and the Canadian Wheat Board can count on.

Mr. Speaker, the Blakeney government believes the same principle can deal with the crowrate issue. Scrapping the crow is not the solution. Instead, the Saskatchewan government proposed that the western provinces join together with the federal government and the railways to make a major capital investment in the rail system. Equity investment would mean a say over how the railroads are run. It would mean that Saskatchewan could insist on the principles of equal rates for equal distance and a fixed rate for the movement of grain. The responsibility for the well-being of farmers and the rural communities becomes a provincial one. The Blakeney government will fight to protect them against any attempt by the federal government and the Tories opposite to abandon the crowrate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — The Blakeney government recognizes that farmers face higher costs in all areas and unstable markets. I am pleased to see that new financial criteria have therefore been applied to FarmStart in this 1982 budget. The total loan limit has been raised from \$150,000 to \$200,000. The subsidized loan limit has been raised from \$90,000 to \$100,000. The net worth limit has been raised from \$144,000 to \$184,000.

When the federal government failed to provide beef and hog producers with effective stabilization programs in the face of rising prices and unstable markets, the Blakeney government stepped in. In 1982, this government will provide over \$10 million in payments to guarantee hog and beef producers a return on their investment. This includes \$1.5 million for the provincial hog program called SHARP (Saskatchewan Hog Assured Returns Program), and \$8.7 million for the first full year of the provincial beef stabilization program.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents can confirm the Blakeney government's commitment to rural Saskatchewan. In this year's budget, nearly \$6 million in capital spending has been allocated to the Redberry constituency. These expenditures will include community pasture development and grazing lease improvement programs funded by the Department of Agriculture, and over \$3.2 million to be spent by the Department of Highways on various construction projects. That's a continued expenditure for good roads in our part of the province and good roads for all the people of the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BANDA: — Revenue sharing from the Department of Rural Affairs for the Redberry constituency in 1982 totals over \$1.4 million. Unconditional grants of \$583,000, construction grants of \$800,000 and maintenance grants of \$47,000, add up to the largest allocation of funds ever received by the people of the Redberry constituency under the revenue-sharing program. Programs like revenue sharing are programs that keep costs lower for residents of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also means more for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation projects in my constituency. I know that senior citizens in Blaine Lake are happy to have their 24-unit housing project completed. I've had the chance to visit several new residents and I look forward to more new housing projects throughout my constituency. This year, we are looking at spending, through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, in the area of \$600,000 in my constituency.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to see that the Department of Education will spend nearly \$200,000 in 1982 for a gymnasium in the Borden school. They will spend approximately the same amount for classrooms in addition to a music room in the Marsden school.

This budget expands some of the excellent programs that have been of great benefit to my constituency and all of Saskatchewan. This budget reaffirms the Blakeney government's commitment to a healthy rural Saskatchewan, based on a thriving agriculture industry.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things that a member could talk about, but due to radio time I have to end my comments. I want to say that it is a budget that will be of great and lasting benefit to the people of this province, and I am most proud to be able to support it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I enter this debate on the budget.

First, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance and his officials for producing such a fine budget. The job of the Saskatchewan Minister of Finance and his officials is made somewhat easier by the job facing most other finance ministers in this country, and this, Mr. Speaker, is because of the Saskatchewan government's ability to manage and administer the affairs of the province, and because of the direction and leadership of one of the most capable leaders in Canada.

The government of Allan Blakeney is recognized as the most efficient and most prudent administration in all of Canada, and this endorsement is made by all fair-minded people, especially the fair-minded people of Saskatchewan. This strong endorsement, Mr. Speaker, of the Blakeney government is also made by many prominent people from outside of Saskatchewan. This endorsement was recently made once again by Gary Street, in the *Globe and Mail*. John Rosart of McLeod, Young, Weir, said about the Saskatchewan government, and I quote:

Saskatchewan is in excellent health, even better than Alberta in terms of future financial footing. Their resource sectors look very strong. They have an extremely capable administration and they tend to be a lot more prudent

than the other provinces in the way they spend their money.

I have that, Mr. Speaker, from the *Globe and Mail* dated Saturday, February 27, 1982. That comes from one of North America's leading brokerage firms, a firm with special expertise in analysing government finances. Recently, Barclay's Bank of England established a branch in Saskatoon. They did so partly because, unlike in Alberta, growth and development has been controlled by the provincial government.

The leading financial and brokerage houses in Canada and elsewhere agree that the Blakeney administration is very prudent, especially when it comes to financial matters. The New York money market has endorsed this government's capable administration by upgrading Saskatchewan's credit rating in 1981 from strong to very strong. Mr. Speaker, members opposite cringe at the mention of this credit rating. They cringe because the New York brokerage houses tend to be fiscally wise and their endorsement certainly is a stamp of approval on this government and on my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and on his officials.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good budget. It is the kind of budget that is responsible, possible because this government was, and continues to be, wise enough to make sound investments for our people and our resources. The benefits of those wise investments are now handsome dividends that allow us to put people first. All Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, will benefit from this budget, and the people of Melfort constituency are especially well served by the programs announced in the 1982-83 budget and estimates, introduced last Thursday by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, in the Melfort constituency we will benefit by over a quarter of a million dollars through the rural capital assistance program, and by nearly three-quarters of a million dollars through the new capital and recreational facilities capital grants program, and by \$125,000 for extra nursing staff in our hospitals. Farmers in Saskatchewan will now be permitted to burn farm fuel in their tandem-axle trucks, a significant cost benefit in a time of rapidly rising costs and, Mr. Speaker, a benefit that farmers in the northeast part of the province are very glad to receive.

In addition, the farm community in the Melfort constituency will again be served by the FarmLab program. FarmLab committees have been established over the past year in Melfort and elsewhere, and they have begun with enthusiasm their important task of guiding agricultural research.

A realistic rural gasification program, started years ago by the NDP government, will be expanded this year in the Melfort constituency. Valparaiso and district will be serviced this year, and an even greater area including the Fair Glen, Gronlid and Brooksby districts hopefully will be served within the year to follow.

And again this year many young Saskatchewan people will begin farming with the assistance of FarmStart.

Mr. Speaker, highways are important in every rural community, and important highway improvements will be made throughout my constituency this year. No. 368 from Pathlow to Beatty will be rebuilt and 339 east will be upgraded, and I am very pleased that much-needed additions and renovations will be made to school in the Melfort constituency. Star City will build a new school this year, and Melfort will undertake a great capital works project as well.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has developed over decades through caring and sharing. This principle is as evident today as it ever was. Because we care about our people, we have developed new programs and enriched existing ones to help people through these difficult economic times.

The federal Liberals and the Tory policy of high interest rates and high inflation and high unemployment is all a devastating blow to all Canadians. In Saskatchewan we have acted to help shelter our people from the adverse effects of these policies. The Minister of Finance is to be commended for introducing a mortgage assistance program, a shelter allowance program for senior citizens, and an extensive public housing program. We have significantly increased funding for health care, universities, and student bursaries. Mr. Speaker, we have done all this and more at a time when governments elsewhere are cutting back on these important programs. We have been able to provide these services to people of Saskatchewan because of our ability to develop and manage sound resource policies — policies from which Saskatchewan people now reap the great benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn for a few moments to the benefits and the programs for the business sector in this budget. In keeping with its mandate to foster economic development in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation (Sedco) has embarked upon a number of highly innovative programs over the course of nearly two decades. The intent of the corporation has always been to maintain the flexibility that allows quick response to the diverse problems facing the business community. The corporation has recently given more emphasis to the special needs of smaller firms hit by adverse economic conditions. This emphasis consists of several special programs offered by Sedco. Today I am extremely pleased to provide you with details of our latest program to assist small business firms — a program which was announced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, in his budget speech last Thursday.

The new program is another in Sedco's Small Business Window series to be known as the retail operating loan. The object of the program is to assist small to medium sized retailers engaged in merchandising from inventory. Assistance is in the form of once-only loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000. The exact loan amount is linked to the retailer's normal inventory levels with a maximum of 25 per cent of that value. The funds may be used for a variety of purposes and the only major restriction prohibits the use of the funds to purchase real property or to reduce a mortgage. To qualify, borrowers must be able to demonstrate viability.

Mr. Speaker, the retail operating loan presents a number of advantages to qualifying borrowers. Now, one of the key benefits lies in the terms of repayment. During the first year, only monthly payments of interest are required and the principal is amortized over the duration of the loan, commencing with the second year. Thus, the retailer will have a significantly improved cash flow position through these arrangements. Another feature is the lending rate. The retail operating loans preferred rate of interest will be 1 per cent below commercial prime, adjusted once a year. This rate, Mr. Speaker, will result in a significant reduction of interest for small businesses.

The introduction of this program reflects the present state of the economy. In spite of the general healthy rate of growth within this province's economy, Saskatchewan businesses are still subject to the far-reaching effects of national and international economic conditions. The economy is causing concern for even the large retail organizations. For the smaller retailers with limited access to financing, and with cash

flow limitations, the future is uncertain; the present is difficult. Retail operating loans will provide retailers with opportunities for growth — opportunities which would be otherwise impossible. The program benefits consumers as well as retailers. I'm speaking, in particular, of small communities where the implications of a retail closure can be awfully severe for the consumer. In some instances, I'm sure that the retail operating loan will prove to be a decisive factor in keeping the retailer's doors open for business.

As I stated, the retail operating loan is one of a family of programs designed to meet special needs of the business community. Another of Sedco's Small Business Window programs, similar in some respects to the retail operating loan, is the assistance for inventory and manufacturing expansion, more commonly known as AIME. The aim of this program is to provide supplementary working capital to manufacturers to cover peak working conditions with their capital requirements.

Also under the Small Business Window, the corporation provides advisory assistance to firms which may be considering new plans. This service is confidential. It is offered without charge. It is available up to a point where specialized professional studies or further in-depth analyses are indicated and can be obtained from commercial sources or other government programs.

Expediency is central to the success of all this assistance. The programs are primarily addressing problems of a short-term or cyclical nature. Whether financial or advisory, it is vital that assistance be administered quickly. Accordingly, application requirements for these programs have been streamlined. That is certainly true for the retail operating loan program. Sedco has adopted new simplified application forms for this program.

In its diverse endeavors since 1963, Sedco has achieved what I feel is an enviable record of success through varied and flexible responses to business needs. Sedco, indeed, has played a dynamic role in the economic growth of this province. I have every confidence that the retail operating loan program will serve as a valuable form of supplementary financing for Saskatchewan retailers.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry and Commerce will, this year, increase its funding of the Aid to Trade program by 50 per cent. This program assists manufacturers to locate and build new markets around the world. Last year alone, this program helped generate more than \$14 million in additional export sales.

I am also pleased that grants available through the interest abatement program will be doubled this year to \$500 in communities over 6,000 population and \$1,000 in smaller centres. These grants provide substantial interest rate reductions for new or expanding businesses and for the purchase of fixed assets.

Mr. Speaker, Liberal and Conservative high interest rate policies are taking their toll on Saskatchewan businesses. I am pleased that our government is able to help alleviate some of this hardship.

There are other programs of assistance in the budget for Saskatchewan business. The Department of Industry and Commerce has introduced the advanced technology assistance program. High technology is a rapid growth industry and has tremendous employment growth potential. Saskatchewan firms are moving rapidly into the field of

high technology.

The advanced technology assistance program has two basic objectives: first, to foster the growth of advanced technology firms in Saskatchewan and, second, to encourage existing firms to become more competitive through the adoption of this technology. Assistance under this new program will be of two kinds — grants and loans. Grants will be made for up to 50 per cent of the direct costs of research projects leading to the development of new or advanced materials, devices, products or processes in Saskatchewan. These grants will ease the applicants cash flow pressures, which are associated with high-risk, high-return ventures; loans will be made for up to 75 per cent of the costs of developing these advanced technology products, and the introduction and adoption of technology into the production line of the processing of the commodity or a product.

Saskatchewan has great potential for the development and use of advanced technology. The advanced technology assistance program illustrates this government's commitment to fostering the growth of this important new industry.

Small business, Mr. Speaker, would benefit in other ways by this budget. The commission for collecting provincial sales tax will be increased from 5 per cent to 7 per cent. The property improvement grant for small businesses will be increased by \$40. Small businesses not served by natural gas will be able to borrow interest free up to \$10,000 to increase the energy efficiency of their businesses. Besides great savings in energy costs, Mr. Speaker, this program will save each participating business in Saskatchewan hundreds of dollars a year in interest charges.

Mr. Speaker, these new programs combined with existing and strengthened programs is the most comprehensive package of assistance to businesses that can be had. No other province provides such an array of assistance. The construction industry will be greatly stimulated by a massive public housing program. Besides obvious benefits for the people requiring shelter, this program will mean tens of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs for the construction service and supply industries.

Mr. Speaker, this is a balanced budget. Because it is balanced, it is not inflationary. This budget is also balanced in other ways. It provides economic protection to those hardest hit by the difficult economic times. It brings relief to all sectors of our province's population. Mr. Speaker, it does more than that. It also looks to the future. It assures that in dealing with today's issues this government does not forget our future and our children's future. Mr. Speaker, I will strongly support this budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I begin by extending my congratulations to my colleague, the Minister of Finance, for presenting last Thursday this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan with a courageous, progressive and far-reaching budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is almost 18 years since I was first elected to this legislature. During this period I have sat and participated in many sessions. I have never witnessed a more pathetic performance than that of the present PC opposition. Mr. Speaker, they are weak; they are disorganized; they don't know what they are doing; they are leaderless; they lack credibility.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, the shining example of this lack of leadership, direction and credibility was demonstrated to us last night when their own members showed such lack of confidence, almost contempt, for their own leader and their own budget critic.

This was their own motion that they placed on the order paper last Monday — the traditional non-confidence motion — and all that they were able to muster was two speakers. Only 2 out of 15 members they had in this legislature were prepared to speak and support their own motion, Mr. Speaker.

What that really means is that they do not have confidence in their own motion. The truth is that they show disregard and non-confidence in their own financial critic and they rejected the advice of their own leader who, I am certain, had a major role to play in framing their own motion.

Mr. Speaker, this is the party and the leader that are trying to convince the people of Saskatchewan that they have the capacity to govern this province. That performance last night was conclusive proof, if we ever needed it, that they have neither the ability, the leadership nor the skills to even control their own motley crew, their own caucus, let alone try to govern a province of one million people.

Mr. Speaker, the budget has been described appropriately and properly as a "people's budget." It's a budget that touches in a positive way upon the lives of every citizen of the province — young and old, farmers and workers, teachers and students, business people and professionals, rural residents and urban dwellers. It's a budget that introduces new initiatives for our native citizens, too. It's a budget that is telling the people of Saskatchewan that this government cares; it cares about inflation and it cares about interest rates. It cares about the sick and the old and it cares about the children, the farmers and the workers. It cares about all of the people of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, it's a budget that expresses clearly the philosophy of this government — building a more equitable community in which caring and sharing are part of the process of government. It is a budget that tells us that by co-operation, by working together and by developing our human and natural resources we have come a long way since Saskatchewan became a province 77 years ago. The programs set out in the budget are part and parcel of a planned and cohesive approach to share the benefits of the growing bounty of this province and our attempt to build a more compassionate society.

Mr. Speaker, even since becoming an adult I have held the view that a fair and compassionate society had a responsibility to ensure that every citizen had access to the best possible health services without regard to ability to pay. We must also ensure that no person goes hungry, that every person has equality of opportunity to get the best possible education and that every person, every family, has a decent place to live — a good roof over their heads. Mr. Speaker, I believe these to be the basic essentials of life, regardless of a person's status, regardless of a person's creed or color.

In this province, over the years, we have taken steps to ensure that people don't go hungry and that no one is denied access to good health services, and we have equality of opportunity for education. I'm not saying or suggesting that everything is perfect,

nor am I suggesting there is no room for improvement. There is; there always will be.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget, we as a government concluded that there was need for significant improvement in housing. It has been my long-standing belief that we cannot develop and have healthy bodies and healthy minds when living in poor and inadequate housing accommodations. I am very pleased that the new and expanding housing program, as announced in this budget, will make housing more affordable for the people and will create thousands of new jobs.

I am pleased with the advice and the help which I have been able to provide to make this particular initiative inaugurated in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget we propose to spend \$380 million to make housing more affordable for the people of Saskatchewan. Of this total, \$316 million is provincial expenditure. We propose to build over 4,000 new units of housing at a cost of \$229 million. The type and distribution is as follows:

1. 570 subsidized rental units for our senior citizens at a cost of \$30 million;
2. 1,325 newly built and a purchase of 175 existing units for low and moderate income families and individuals, at a cost of \$81.1 million;
3. 1,980 units (almost 2,000) for home-owners at a cost of \$118 million;
4. \$14 million to repair, rehabilitate and modify 13,000 existing housing units;
5. over \$29 million allocated for land assembly and land development;
6. budgeting for an expenditure of \$108 million for subsidies, grants, tax credits, interest costs on free loans, renters' rebates and housing tax rebates.

That is \$108 million on these programs to assist people to make housing more affordable. The amounts break down this way: a minimum of \$12 million for the new home protection program and an additional \$9 million for the mortgage interest tax credit program — the only program of its kind in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the Conservatives in 1979 talked about this kind of a program during the federal election campaign. Since then, not single a Conservative government in Canada has had the courage to introduce that type of program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Neither did the Clark administration. They had 200 days to implement that kind of a program but they failed to do it. It was nothing but window dressing.

Mr. Speaker, \$4.5 million is allocated for shelter allowances for our senior citizens. This is the initial stage of the program. Next year there will be more money — \$60 million in subsidies for low-rental housing projects and home-ownership loans that were completed in previous years. There will be a cost of \$1.2 million to the government to provide interest-free loans for the Warm Up and HELP programs, and \$65 million in property improvement grants, not including the property improvement grants paid to the farmers and businessmen, Mr. Speaker, — truly a

program of which we can be proud.

Mr. Speaker, let me now provide you with some further details on these programs. I first want to talk about the new home protection program. It will come into effect on April 1. This program is the second phase of our plan to protect home-owners against the ravages of record high interest rates.

Mr. Speaker, during the fall sitting of the legislature The Home-owners' Protection Act was passed. This act prevents mortgage foreclosures for a period of one year when the family is unable to meet the higher mortgage payments resulting from mortgage roll-overs at record high interest rates.

Mr. Speaker, we had hoped that the federal government would have assumed its responsibility for introducing an effective program of helping families facing mortgage renewals, but obviously it's too much to expect of Ottawa these days. They do not seem to believe, Mr. Speaker, in helping people. This morning, Mr. Speaker, I saw in the headlines of the *Leader-Post* that the federal Minister of Housing made an announcement about some new referents. In that story he says that the only new initiative was a \$30 million program of forgivable loans for home renovation in areas of high unemployment. Obviously we will not be able to take advantage of that program in Saskatchewan because our rate of unemployment is very low.

The second component is that \$1 million will be spent to double the number of interest-free loans available to builders of apartments. The program now will help finance 30,000 new units instead of 15,000.

Mr. Speaker, what is needed in this country is not little piecemeal operations; what we have to do in this country is make a commitment to build at least 250,000 units of housing across Canada for the next 10 years. That is the kind of commitment that needs to be made, not 30,000 units, Mr. Speaker. Really, the federal program is too little, but I suppose we should be grateful, Mr. Speaker, for small mercies.

High interest rates have been the cause of our housing problem. As well, high interest rates have been the cause of creating massive unemployment. At the present time, 1,116,000 people are purportedly unemployed. Mr. Speaker, high interest rates are the responsibility of the Government of Canada. Families are being threatened with losing their homes because of high interest rates. Mr. Speaker, we do not feel that this is acceptable. Therefore we are introducing a Saskatchewan home protection program which will provide a cash subsidy of up to \$2,400 over 12 months. Mr. Speaker, let me give some further details.

This subsidy will reduce the family's effective mortgage interest rate to 15 per cent or to their lowest previous interest rate since '79 if that rate is more than 15 per cent. Assistance will be available to families earning less than \$34,600 per year. The maximum benefit of \$2,400 will be available to families earning less than \$25,000 with assistance reduced as income increases for higher income families. Benefits will be provided on the first \$50,000 of the mortgage debt. The program will be available for a 12-month period beginning on the mortgage renewal date, if the mortgage is renewed between April 1, 1982 and March 31, 1983. If the mortgage was renewed before April 1, 1982, assistance will be available starting on the anniversary date of the mortgage renewal. For example, if somebody's mortgage came up in February 1982, he will be eligible to get the grant and the assistance starting on February 1 of next year,

for a 12-month period, Mr. Speaker.

The combination of this new assistance program with The Home-owners' Protection Act will make existing mortgages more affordable for low- and moderate-income owners, and will prevent foreclosure on any family that even with this assistance still cannot afford higher mortgage payments. Mr. Speaker, these programs provide a one year breathing period, giving home-owners some time to adjust. They also give the federal government time to recognize the failure of its high interest rate policy, a policy that is supported not only, Mr. Speaker, by the Liberals, but also a policy that is supported by the Conservatives in spite of its obvious inequities and lack of success.

I remind this House, Mr. Speaker, that when the Tories took office in Ottawa in June 1979, mortgage rates stood at 11.16 per cent. When they left office in March 1980, interest rates had climbed to 14.69 per cent. In other words, Mr. Speaker, in 200 days of Clark administration interest rates in this country went up by more than 30 per cent. High interest rates seem to be the hallmark of both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, the program that I have just described shows that the NDP cares, cares about people, and is willing to provide meaningful assistance and meaningful protection. But that is not all. We also care about the needs of low- and moderate-income families, and senior citizens who need new and improved housing accommodation, and the need, Mr. Speaker, to maintain and increase employment in the construction industry. Over the years we have achieved major successes in all of these areas in this province: over 14,000 new housing units constructed; over 8,000 building lots developed in conjunction with local municipalities; 6,200 acres of raw land being developed for future housing purposes; over 50,000 loans and grants for home repairs. And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to say that we are expanding our role in the housing market in 1982, in a significant way.

One of the major priorities of this government has always been the needs of our senior citizens in Saskatchewan. They are, after all, the people who built this province and struggled through two world wars and a great depression to make Saskatchewan the great place it is today. My colleague, the Minister of Social Services, will give details of a new shelter allowance program for senior citizens which will provide in the initial year \$4.5 million of assistance to our senior citizens. And no doubt he will tell us more about the new nursing home unit that will be built.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the initiatives of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. The corporation has, since 1973, financed over 7,000 low-rental public housing units for senior citizens as well as over 800 non-profit units sponsored by charitable organizations.

In this budget we expect to finance a minimum of 570 units of subsidizing housing for our seniors. The senior citizens home repair program which was introduced in 1973 has provided grants to 42,000 senior citizens over the last nine years. Starting in September of this year, we intend to extend this program to provide close to 10,000 new grants, Mr. Speaker. Under the new program the maximum grant will be increased this year from \$650 to \$800. The maximum income limits for the program will be increased from \$11,000 to \$16,500 for married persons and for single senior citizens from \$7,000 to \$10,500. All senior citizens will be able to immediately apply for a grant under this new program. Amendments to The Senior Citizens Home Repair Assistance Act have already been introduced and I hope will be implemented soon.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget we are providing \$98 million in provincial capital to be available to finance 1,700 single family housing units, including 300 co-operative housing units, 400 farm housing units, and an additional 1,000 units for first-time home buyers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — The major feature of these programs will be interest rates related to the province's rate of borrowing money. The interest rate will initially be set at 16 per cent and there will be a 10-year guarantee that the interest rate will not be increased. Provincial mortgage subsidies of up to \$1,800 per year or \$150 per month will be available, based on need. Mr. Speaker, funding is also provided for 280 rural housing units costing \$20 million for low-income families in smaller centres in Saskatchewan, bringing the total package to \$118 million, for which we will build 2,000 units of new, single-unit housing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — That is not all, Mr. Speaker. There is \$25 million being set aside for additional rental housing. This will finance 500 new, non-profit rental units in the province. Units will be allocated to those centres throughout the province, both large and small, most severely affected by the sharp downturn in rental housing construction. These will be market rental units designated to meet the needs of moderate-income families and individuals. Construction of these units should have a significant impact on the currently tight vacancy rates in the province.

This new program is in addition, Mr. Speaker, to the 1,000 provincially-financed rental units under the existing program at a cost of \$56 million. In other words, the commitment that we are making is to build 1,500 units of low- and moderate-income housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals who will be able to afford decent accommodation at a cost of \$81 million to the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the \$380 million housing program that I have just outlined is a program of which this government can be proud. The financing of over 4,000 new housing units for low- and moderate-income families and senior citizens will not only assist these groups in obtaining good quality housing at a price they can afford, but also will generate over 5,000 jobs in the construction industry and related activities. We will do everything possible to encourage the house building industry to make maximum use of Saskatchewan-made products such as lumber, cement and other products, thus creating other jobs through the spin-off effect.

The home protection program will eliminate the hardship that has been experienced by many families faced with mortgage roll-overs at high interest rates that they simply cannot afford. The shelter allowance program for our senior citizens and the expanded senior citizens home repair program will assist many of our pioneers to remain independent in their homes, Mr. Speaker.

It is my belief that on a per capita basis, Saskatchewan will have the biggest housing program introduced in this country this year. Again, Saskatchewan is taking the lead. Again, as in health services, Saskatchewan is taking the lead and showing the rest of Canada what can be done and how it can be done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — But the opposition says it will vote against the \$300 million housing program. The opposition says it will vote against the 570 units for senior citizens. They say they will vote against amendments to The Senior Citizens' Home Repair Assistance Act. They say they will vote against increasing the senior citizens shelter allowance program when we introduce it.

Mr. Speaker, we will be telling the senior citizens about the performance of the PCs. We will be telling them how they voted against the senior citizens. The PCs say they will vote against the new housing program — the 1,000 single-unit houses and the 500 units of rental housing we proposed. They say they will vote against the jobs that are to be provided. They say they will vote against the home protection program, a program which will provide subsidies for mortgage holders that will reduce their mortgages to 15 per cent. They say they have something different to propose. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's see what it is. They have had a chance. Why didn't the opposition critic tell us what their mortgage assistance program is all about? Why didn't he include it in his non-confidence motion?

Mr. Speaker, obviously, they are trying to dream up something that maybe looks similar to what we are introducing now — what we are doing now. We are committed to it. It's in the budget. People will get it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have no alternative but to tell the people of Saskatchewan that the Tories are against mortgage assistance, but that shouldn't surprise us. They will tell the people of Saskatchewan that they really are believers in the Clark policy of high interest rates and they are really supporters of the Trudeau high interest rate policy. High interest rates, Mr. Speaker, were nurtured by Clark and are being supported by Dr. Devine and his motley crew. The Tories tell us they will vote against the \$108 million in special assistance to the people of Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, we will tell the people — whenever the time comes — that they voted against the HUDAC (Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada) proposals, that they voted against job creation, that they voted against all the measures to provide more affordable housing to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we are also trying to do other things. We are trying not only to protect home-owners and renters and farmers and businesses against inflation, we are taking other initiatives to help many people. Not only are we reducing the impact of high interest rates, we are also acting to reduce the impact of increased property taxes. We are sharing our resource revenue with our local municipalities through increased revenue sharing and other assistance. Mr. Speaker, as I have already mentioned, we are also sharing directly with our home-owners and renters through increased property tax rebates.

I would now like to provide, Mr. Speaker, more detail on the urban affairs initiatives. Continuing high inflation (coupled with the federal government's high interest rate policy and cancellation of the federal assistance to municipal governments) has forced local governments to increase property tax levels over the last few years. Mr. Speaker, this government has, however, moved to shield taxpayers from the full impact of that increased tax burden in the form of revenue sharing, in the form of capital grants, and in the form of property tax rebates.

My colleague, the Minister of Finance, has already announced increases to the three rebate programs. The property improvement grant will be increased to \$270 — an

almost 300 per cent increase since we took office. The renters' tax rebate will be increased from \$115 to \$140 — a 22 per cent increase. The senior citizen school tax rebate will be up from \$460 to \$500. Adding all this up, Mr. Speaker, in 1982 the province will make grants of almost \$86 million to Saskatchewan property taxpayers and renters — an increase of \$74 million since we took office in 1971. That, I submit, demonstrates this government's commitment to sharing provincial wealth with all of the citizens and all of the taxpayers in the province.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a closer look at the average property taxpayer to see how, positively, this government's support to our municipalities actually affects him or her. In 1981, provincial grants and assistance amounted to \$1,489 for every householder in Saskatchewan. I want the hon. members to take note that every householder in the province received provincial assistance to the tune of \$1,489. The total amounted to \$484 million. This included operating grants for schools, grants for school construction, revenue sharing, community capital fund and other capital grants to municipalities, and property tax rebates. At the same time the average property tax burden on that same householder was \$892.

The individual taxpayer paid \$892; the province provided \$1,489. In other words, for every \$1 paid by a taxpayer in support of local government services and capital projects in Saskatchewan, the province contributed \$1.67 — almost double the taxpayer's contribution. That, I submit, Mr. Speaker, is dramatic evidence of how this government takes concrete action to lessen the burden of inflation on municipal taxpayers.

Revenue sharing is our major source of unconditional operating assistance to urban governments. It provides our communities with a source of revenue which reflects the growth and vitality of key sectors of the provincial economy. In 1978, almost \$35 million was transferred to urban governments as the first phase of revenue sharing. In 1979, a further \$10 million was added to strengthen the base. Since then the revenue-sharing pool increased automatically in response to the performance to the key sectors of our economy.

For 1982, the overall increase in revenue sharing will be 11.5 per cent. The increase is composed of an 8.3 per cent increase in the escalator plus a cash enrichment of \$1.6 million into the revenue-sharing base. This will bring the total urban revenue-sharing pool for 1982 to just over \$60 million — \$6.1 million more than last year. Now, Mr. Speaker, when we took office in 1971, less than \$1 million was provided to municipalities to assist them in operating costs. In 1982, \$60 million — an increase of 600 per cent.

In calculating the 1982 unconditional revenue-sharing grants, we have had to use the preliminary 1982 federal census figures. On that basis, Mr. Speaker, some centres have declined in population, but we are mindful of increasing municipal costs. We also know that our urban municipalities depend on unconditional revenue sharing to help pay these rising costs, thereby helping to keep the mill rates down. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the government will guarantee that all communities will receive at least as much in unconditional revenue sharing in '82 as they received in '81 . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — . . . even if the federal census indicates a population decrease.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this government has shown that it uses both common sense and compassion in helping our communities and their taxpayers "with spiralling costs."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, over the last year, SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities' Association) and individual local governments have asked that one of the tax bases which determines the revenue-sharing escalator, the gasoline tax, be changed from the volume-based tax to a value-based tax in line with the value approach to gasoline sales introduced by the province in 1980. Mr. Speaker, that is the very tax that the members opposite want to reduce and want to freeze. Where would that leave our local governments, Mr. Speaker?

We, very clearly, considered the SUMA request. It is not without merit. In a sense, Mr. Speaker, we have acknowledged their request and more. At the same time, however, we see a number of other factors which could influence the way revenue sharing works — tax changes introduced in the recent federal budget, population changes and others. When recognizing all of these factors influencing the revenue-sharing formula, Mr. Speaker, we propose to initiate a review with SUMA and SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) later in 1982.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that protective services such as police, fire and ambulance are best provided for at their local level but with strong provincial support. That is why these services are funded through revenue sharing. Because ambulance services do come under revenue sharing, they would also receive at least an 11.5 per cent increase in the overall funding in '82. However, Mr. Speaker, we know that the increase is not large enough to meet rising interest, fuel, equipment, training and staff costs for ambulance boards and operators in the province. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will be increasing overall funding for the municipal road ambulance program to \$3.2 million — a 21 per cent increase over last year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this is positive support for the ambulance service but there is more. These increases will be prepaid. They will be prepaid in June of this year, regardless of the anniversary date of the ambulance board agreements. That means that a board with a November anniversary date, for example, will get five-twelfths of its increase before November — more money now to continue a good level of ambulance service throughout the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, when our government took over from the so-called free enterprise government in '71, municipalities received a paltry \$2.6 million in capital funds. This year, capital funding will total close to \$60 million — a very major increase in the sharing of provincial wealth with our local governments.

Let's look at some of the highlights for '82. Eighteen million dollars will go from the heritage fund for the community capital fund to continue to assist municipalities to provide needed capital improvements, as will almost \$17 million for water supply and sewage treatment for our cities, towns and villages. A highlight of the water and sewage package is a 50 per cent increase in the budget for the municipal water assistance

board to \$4.5 million to ensure that our towns and villages continue to have adequate water supply and sewage facilities.

As well, \$1.2 million is provided to enable communities that have already received approval for a drought proofing program to complete it and submit claims by March 31 of next year.

There will be \$18 million for urban roadways to improve traffic flow in our urban centres and almost \$6 million for urban transit to ensure the continuation of this key urban service. That's an increase, Mr. Speaker, of 44 per cent over last year. This very substantial increase is the second stage of a two-stage increase I mentioned in the budget debate last year. It is further evidence that this government keeps the promises it makes.

The basic annual per capita transit service grant will increase from \$3 to \$5 per capita for the four largest cities. For other communities with public transit systems, the per capita grant will increase from \$2 to \$3. Mr. Speaker, these enriched per capita grants, when combined with the incentive grants, will provide almost \$3 million of assistance to our four largest centres for transit operation in 1982 — Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert.

But, Mr. Speaker, small communities will also be major beneficiaries. Small communities that operate their own transit systems will be receiving very substantial help to maintain and improve services. In 1982 almost \$1.2 million will be provided for transit for the disabled — a 68 per cent increase over last year. Before 1980 there were only seven communities, Mr. Speaker, with transit for disabled services. Now there are 30. And it is interesting to note that all the new services are not located in the major centres. Services are also located in the small communities. In fact, the added services are really in the small communities of between 400 and 2,500 people. What better evidence could there be that this government program serves the needs of all our citizens, regardless of where they live?

Mr. Speaker, there is even more: funding for the first phase for a Regina railway location scheme, agreement with VIA Rail for the development of Regina Union Station into a multimodal terminal, almost \$200,000 in 1982 to assist Prince Albert and Swift Current with the implementation of urban parks, and provision of \$465,000 to cover 100 percent of the cost of establishing and operating regional planning commissions in Regina and Saskatoon. The establishment of these commissions was recommended to me by the advisory committee representing 35 urban and rural municipalities in these two areas.

This is a very impressive list of capital projects for our local governments. The funding provided through these programs will enable our communities to improve services. In turn, this provides a direct benefit to the individual taxpayer in his or her battle to fight inflation and to maintain a decent standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, during the SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities' Association) convention the leader of the Conservative Party, Dr. Devine, accused the government of passing the buck to local municipalities. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have passed the buck. In fact we have passed almost \$200 million worth of bucks to our urban communities and taxpayers in this budget. That's proof positive that this government cares enough to share resource wealth to help our communities and their citizens fight inflation and improve the quality of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to talk about our efforts to bring about real economic and social equality for people of Indian ancestry. This is the third time that I have had the privilege of commenting in this legislature on programs for our native citizens. We know that the people of this province think it wrong to give out handouts. We know that this is not what the native people seek themselves. Native people seek the tools to change the stereotypes that lead to racism and poverty. These tools include better education and training, economic development opportunities and basic social and housing requirements. What does this mean in concrete terms in this budget?

First, let us look at education where we are increasing our commitment for native education programs. It's up by 46 per cent over last year. That's a substantial allocation. This will enable us to expand the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program and add to the number of community schools, carry out some demonstration projects in community schools in the rural areas, and add to the capacities of the Gabriel Dumont Institute in promoting early education committees. Mr. Speaker, there is no short-term pay-off in these programs. What we are doing is building a foundation which will lead young native people to a more secure future through better education.

Mr. Speaker, to address the employment and training needs of adults, special remedial programs are necessary. We are increasing our effort in the public service programs designed to increase native employment in government and the native career development program which supports the hiring and training of native people in the public service. A new program of training native persons in house building trades, management and administration will also be initiated this year. It will be managed on a co-operative basis between government departments, the private sector and native housing agencies.

I spoke earlier of the need for decent housing. I think it is essentially appropriate that native people participate as well as be recipients in this particular area. Native non-profit housing corporations have a major role in building and administering housing. This year we are adding new funding to address this need. Housing is an area which illustrates the relationship between social programming, education and economic development. It is in this sector of economic development that Saskatchewan native citizens are most underrepresented. This government committed itself last year to an economic development program to stimulate economic opportunities for native citizens and long-term residents of northern Saskatchewan. Two corporate bodies will report to the foundation: one in the North and one in the South. We are providing substantial start-up and operating costs for both these corporate bodies and foundations.

We have budgeted a total of \$7 million for economic development programs for our native people. Money will be available for commercial loans, equity assistance, venture capital and bridge financing of projects. Mr. Speaker, I have faith in both native and non-native people in this province and believe that they both support the kinds of measures that I have outlined. We are creating more opportunities to learn to appreciate each other's differences and each other's problems.

Mr. Speaker, last November the government helped sponsor the Omamawi-Atoskewin (Working Together) conference. This was a conference with a difference. Indian and Metis people have ample opportunities to discuss the problems they encounter. Non-native people certainly discuss these problems as well. But, they don't discuss them

together. At the Omamawi-Atoskewin conference they did and a surprising thing happened. They tended to agree with each other. What I expected from the conference was a greater awareness in the non-native community of the problems faced by the Indian and Metis people. Mr. Speaker, what happened is that native and non-native joined together.

I believe that anyone who examines the recommendations that came out of the conference, out of the workshops, will agree that the measures contained in this budget go a long way to meet the common demands of the participants. I know those participants would support, Mr. Speaker, the measures for native people in the budget. Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Assembly to do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a good deal of election talk lately. There has been a good deal of election talk in this legislature. There has been a good deal of press speculation on when an election might be called. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are in our fourth year since the last election was held and one should get ready. I want to tell this legislature and the people of Regina North-East that the Regina North-East NDP constituency association has been getting prepared. I have been nominated and we have been putting together our election campaign and our election strategy.

Mr. Speaker, one-half or perhaps more than one-half of the Regina North-East constituency (the new one) used to be in the Qu'Appelle constituency, particularly that portion that is east of the Ring Road. You know, Mr. Speaker, I have had a chance to meet quite a number of those people. The people from that part of the city seem to feel that they have been neglected. They said that they wanted a shopping centre in their neighborhood. I can tell you that as Minister of Urban Affairs we worked out a compromise with the developers, the city and a shopping centre now is under construction that will serve the people of that part of the city.

They have asked me to take steps to provide better access to the Ring Road. I have discussed the matter with the city and have received assurances that the city will make provision for an entrance and exits off Dewdney Avenue. I have already represented them and represented them well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they have been requesting a high school. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate and thank the Minister of Education, the member for Regina Lakeview, in announcing today approval in principle of a new high school in Glencairn, Mr. Speaker. The approval is conditional because details have to be worked out with the Regina Board of Education, and we believe that in the final analysis it is the board of education that has the responsibility to make the decision about the new school. I want to assure the people of Regina North-East that I will work with them and with the board of education and the Department of Education to see that their children have a high school.

Mr. Speaker, just as I intend to represent the new portion, I am also committed to represent the old portion of the constituency. I believe the people have been appreciative of the representation that I have been making on their behalf, and I hope to continue making that representation on their behalf, come the election whenever it may.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to have the opportunity today to reply to the budget speech. I'd like to say how much I've appreciated the four years that I've had here to represent the constituency of Rosetown-Elrose. Indeed, it's a very fine constituency, and one that I think has been short-changed by this government over the past few years. I would like to explain to you some of the areas where I see that the Rosetown-Elrose and surrounding areas have been short-changed by the Government of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to touch briefly on the education field and the fact that the government has announced a 14 per cent per student increase in the funding for education. It's a very small increase. That's 15 — I withdraw the 14 and I put in 15. What I was looking at was the salary agreement that was set for teachers at 14 per cent and I crossed the two figures. But that's minor. I want to point out to you that to put 15 per cent per student out there to fund education when inflation is running as high as it is at this point in time is not nearly enough. Last year the education system suffered under this government and the mill rates increased across that area of the province by about 15 to 16 mills last year. This year we see again that the mill rate is increasing from 14 to 19 mills per school division, and I'd like to just give you some idea of what that means.

In the Eston-Elrose School Division the mill rate increased this year to 99 mills from 80 mills a year ago. That's an increase of 19. That's highly assessed land in that area, and on a quarter of land assessed at somewhere around \$4,000 (and there's a lot of it that's higher than that in western Elrose division) that amounts to \$396 a quarter section, and if you have 10 quarters that gets pretty close to \$4,000 of education tax. That's a very severe tax on those people. If you look at the municipal area it's doing exactly the same thing because you have underfunded the municipal level of government. Those people are going to be paying up to 20 mills extra in municipal taxes as well this year. So I see the people in Rosetown-Elrose taking a real trimming at the hands of this government because it is not putting the dollars in to provide the services that are essential out there in rural Saskatchewan.

Now we will talk about education and in that area you say that you fund 70 per cent, but because you add the property improvement grant and the senior citizen school tax rebate a lot of that money really never touches the education scene. It touches the individual, but it doesn't come back to the school division. Though you say you fund 70 per cent, the portion you are actually funding is dropping and has been dropping. And the percentage of the budget for education has dropped, so education is not the high priority it should be in this country; rather, our young people are being short-changed by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Let's take a look at agriculture and the great things that are being done there. In agriculture the big thing you have done is to follow the suggestion which I have made a number of times in this legislature and provide purple fuel for tandem-axle trucks. I would like to say that I thank the government for that move; it has been long overdue, and I am glad it is here. But, there are very few other things in the budget which will add to the capability of the farmer who is established to continue to operate in these inflationary times. When you see that the grain prices for this year are down from last year, and the minister responsible for the wheat board has said that we can expect they will be at the same level next August as they were last August, then indeed we have slipped 10 per cent, 11 per cent or 12 per cent, depending on what the inflation was in that year. But the government has done nothing — not one thing — to assist those

people.

You know, \$40 million going into the land bank program to buy out people who cannot continue to operate because of the price of land and the cost of inflation isn't going to assist very many people. It's going to put a lot more land into the hands of government, and will make many more people out there sit on government land as a renter. I don't see that as assistance to farmers, but rather as a detriment to farmers. The government boasts that it has accumulated \$400 million in capital gains on land held in the land bank by the government, but that \$400 million should really have been accruing to young farmers, if they are to be given a decent opportunity to own their own place.

I am sure that as the years go on and we see more and more government takeovers, we are going to find that the productivity of Saskatchewan agriculture will decline because of your moves. If you take away the pride of ownership you will also take away the productive capacity for this province.

You increased the property improvement grant to individuals living in the towns and villages of the province by \$3 per month, but that's a pretty small increase for people. You say you're concerned about people; well, you certainly aren't showing it in that kind of an increase. And, for the renter — \$2 a month is even worse! I don't believe that this government has any concern for people, but, rather, it is concerned about retaining office and it is going to do so at all costs.

I might mention another item in the agriculture budget. I really wonder how much it is doing for agriculture. I see again the same figure that was there last year — \$7.128 million for an ethanol plant. Why that isn't in the energy budget I'll never know. If it's supposedly an energy program, why is it coming in agriculture? But then, I suppose, you have to spend some money in agriculture so it is energy over, call it agriculture, and try and fool a few people. The people don't buy those ideas. You know we saw that \$7 million last year and it wasn't spent. We see it in this year's budget and I wonder: is it going to be spent this year or is it going to be carried over next year so that you can announce it again? This is next year country, I guess, and that's the way the Minister of Agriculture looks at it.

Going on to the beef stabilization program, the minister announced the other day that there were 165,000 head of cattle enrolled in the program. I don't know just how many dollars those cattle will sell for when they go to the market because the price has slipped considerably from last year. But supposing they sell for \$600, \$700, \$800 an animal because they are to be fat cattle, that amounts to a considerable number of dollars. But what do I find? When cattle are sold through the beef stabilization program, the farmers have to wait from two to three weeks to get their returns from it. They wait two or three weeks before they get their cheques. If you look at the regulations that were posted in the *Saskatchewan Gazette* about how you are supposed to pay for cattle that are sold, this is what is says in point 91 on page 306:

Licensed livestock dealers or livestock dealer's agents shall pay for livestock purchased within three clear business days from the time the livestock dealer or livestock dealer's agent has ordered the removal of the said livestock from the sale premises.

Now, if the livestock dealer has to pay in three days why doesn't the beef stabilization program come under the same regulations that are set by the department? Are they a privileged few? Do they not have to pay in a reasonable length of time? You take two and

three weeks and you consider the amount of money that we are talking about from 165,000 head of cattle. We are talking of perhaps \$120 million that the government saves two or three weeks interest on. That's what it is all about. It's a saving for the government and the beef stabilization program.

Look at the net farm income that was listed in this year's budget. It shows that in 1981 the net farm income had risen to \$1,534 billion. If we were to go back to 1975 we would find that the net farm income at that time was \$1,465 billion. That's an increase in six years of a mere \$69 million in net farm income. If you were to take a look at the inflation over those same six years, we have not gained. We have actually lost in net income. We're receiving less and less money every year for agriculture, and we are finding that Saskatchewan is losing a large number of farmers. Since this government has come into power we have seen a steady flow of farmers going out of the agriculture business because it isn't paying enough for them to support their families.

I believe that this government has not really had a concern for people, and that's the reason that we see them moving away. If you think about the income tax field alone, as the income increased in 1981, and the income tax collected by the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan takes its cut on that larger figure, that area alone would have meant a decline in actual income to the farm people.

Farmers today are going to find it very difficult to meet the costs of fuel, costs of fertilizer, costs of agriculture chemicals that have been increasing at a very rapid rate, and when they fill their fuel tanks this spring with diesel fuel, and they fill their gas tanks with gasoline, they are going to find that the bill indeed is steep.

I see a very small amount of money in this year's budget for irrigation. You know, the Government of Alberta put in \$340 million last year to expand its irrigation program. In Saskatchewan this year we see \$867,000 for grants to farmers for irrigation. That is a very paltry sum compared to the job that needs to be done out there. The increase in the land assessment that you have charged to the few people who have been able to irrigate has been unreasonable completely.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You don't like it?

MR. SWAN: — No, I don't like it, and I don't think it's reasonable. You know, when people pay very serious increases of up to 300 per cent on their land assessment for irrigation and when their other costs of irrigation have gone up so high, we find that these people are making almost no increase in profit because of the government's land policies . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . When we talk about assessment, Mr. Minister of the Environment, you won't find a quarter section in this province that is assessed at \$200,000, so I think you had better stop and reconsider what you're talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch a little bit on the new brochure handed out by the Minister of Highways and Transportation last night entitled "Project Array," where he announced a 19 per cent increase in the highway budget. That sounds good on the surface, but when you look through the project array, in the Rosetown-Elrose constituency you won't find one inch of highway that is to be built, and you won't find any resurfacing or anything else dealing with highways in the whole Eston-Elrose School Division, or the Rosetown-Elrose district. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, what concern the Minister of Highways has for that very fine constituency. It's a big area; it's a big chunk of land; it pays a lot of land tax, a lot of property tax, a lot of education tax, a lot of income tax, a lot of highway tax. But where do we get any benefit out of this year's

highway program? We don't get one nickel's worth.

I believe that if we were to analyse this carefully we might find exactly which seats we're going to win, fellows, because those will be the seats where the highways are going — the ones where they feel they're in trouble. Those are likely the seats we are going to win this time.

I hope that the Minister of Highways will take a drive around in my constituency. He's been out a little, electioneering, at times and I wish he would drive some of those highways. It's not because all the highways are in good condition, gentlemen. Many, many of those highways that I drive on in my constituency are really a disgrace to the province of Saskatchewan and need upgrading and need it very badly. I drive thousands and thousands of miles every year in that constituency and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Highways, if he has ever been in the constituency looking at highways, must have had his eyes shut or he would have indeed seen highways that need improving.

I'd like to take just a brief look at the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, and I don't want to go into a lot of figures but I want to just look at the operation of that department. I've been on the public accounts committee for a few years, and I've read the provincial auditor's reports for the last few years, and every year it seems to me that the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and its administration have been picked out as the department that really is not following the guidelines laid down by this legislature. They don't do a good job of administration, and I think that falls squarely in the laps of the minister, the deputy minister and staff. I'm disappointed again this year to find that the auditor's statement has spent a good portion of its time dealing with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. I think it is time that the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan took hold of his department and tried to clean up his act, because I believe that department has been in trouble for a long time.

Well, Mr. Minister, when the court last year came out with a judgment, and Mr. Justice Noble made a statement like this about your department, I think it's serious: Mr. Justice Noble described the Department of Northern Saskatchewan as "a bureaucracy run amuck" and said that not only did they (the Department of Northern Saskatchewan bureaucrats) stand by and let you (I won't mention the gentleman's name) go about your business of ripping off these unfortunate people, in some ways they even actively assisted you. I think when you have that kind of a comment coming from a judge who has been sitting in on a hearing, that's a very, very serious statement indeed; apparently it had no effect on the minister because he didn't do anything to clear up what he was doing there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The minister who is now with the Department of the Environment let that department get into a lot of trouble. I realize that. But you haven't done a thing to clear it up. So we see that the Department of Northern Saskatchewan again is headlined time and time after time in the auditor's report, and I would like to see the minister take charge of that department and improve it and provide the kind of service that the people in northern Saskatchewan need.

I was indeed interested, when the Prime Minister was in town last week, in some of the comments that he made about the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. You know, the Prime Minister said that he didn't think the women's group should be out picketing and hollering and yelling at him, instead they should be complaining to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. He said that is was Premier Allan Blakeney who didn't want women's right in the constitution. He said it was Premier Allan Blakeney who did not want native rights in the constitution. It was Premier Allan Blakeney who did not want

the bill of rights that allowed you and I to own property in this province. He wanted that deleted from the constitution. I wonder whether the Premier is really responsible and whether he's the kind of guy that we should have heading this province. I think he has been sitting on the fence long enough and we should put him out to pasture. He has been around quite a while.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — When we talk about negotiating the crowrate and they say that we're going to send Allan Blakeney, I don't know. A man who has made as many mistakes in the constitution as this man, the man who we sent to negotiate an energy agreement and who brought back an agreement which is causing problems in our oil industry that we see today — I don't want that kind of man negotiating for me. I believe that he doesn't know what he's even supposed to do when he goes out to negotiate. If the first thing he's going to throw on the crow negotiating table is over \$2 billion, then I would say that we could do a lot better than send a man like that. I believe the people of Saskatchewan deserve much better than that. After this election, we'll put a man in who knows what negotiation is all about. He'll do a good job. We'll send Grant Devine, a man who has a good education and a man who will do a job that will be beneficial to the people of this province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — I'd like to touch a little bit on the education and health tax coming off children's clothes. We've been asking you to recognize the needs of people out there and to take the education and health tax off children's clothes. We've also asked for it to come off the school supplies and we've told you that it should not be on irrigation, power and a number of other areas. So what have you done? You tried to copy us but you only go a very, very small portion of the way. In that small portion, all you do is take it off children's clothes. Then you draw a long line of things and anything you missed, and didn't think about as children's clothes, won't be covered under this. As soon as you draw up a list, you exclude a lot of items. I'm sure that many of the clothing stores in this province are going to find that, as people come to buy clothing, many of the items that children need are not going to be covered by your legislation.

I'd like to also mention the move in the health field. I think it's a move in the right direction but it didn't go nearly far enough. When your government moved to charge a room-and-board rate to senior citizens who needed nursing home care, you set the rate at \$390 a month for levels 2, 3 and 4 in this province. In that process, you forgot to look around at what other provinces have been doing and are doing today. We shall see in this province of Saskatchewan that the people in our nursing homes are still paying the highest rate of any of the western provinces . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they are. I believe that if you are supposed to be the province, as you say, that is providing the best health care and so on, you should show a little more concern for those people, and provide that kind of care at a cost that is in line with what others are charging. I would ask the Minister of Social Services to go and talk to his counterparts in Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba and try to bring our costs in line because he has been out of line for quite a while.

Mr. Speaker, we raised the gas tax in question period today, and the fact that we indeed pay a higher cost for gasoline here than almost any province outside of Quebec. I think it's shameful on the record of the province of Saskatchewan, an oil producing province,

that we cannot come in with a better price on gasoline than that. You know, when we see this province taking a bigger share of the gas tax than even the federal government, it shows the greed of this government and the lack of concern that they have for people. I believe that it's time that people had an opportunity to see what the gas tax was in this province. I would ask that you . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order, order please! I think we could do with a little less assistance from both sides of the House here, and I ask the member to carry on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You know it does get a little hard to holler loud enough to even hear what you are saying yourself with the noise that's been in here. I would like to encourage the government to start to post its gas tax on a form right on each gas pump, so that when you drive up to fill your tank it will show how much tax you pay for the province and for the federal government, and how much money is left for the people who produce the fuel. One came to my desk just a few days ago, and it showed the gas pump showing \$15, but it says of that \$15, \$10 is tax and only \$5 goes to the oil company that produced the fuel to begin with. I think that's a very greedy tax, indeed, and I believe it is time that this government made a change in its policies and started to be concerned with the individuals who must drive in a province like ours in order to get to any place in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I've touched on just a few areas of the budget. I cannot agree with the strategy of this government, and I will be voting in opposition to the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — Mr. Speaker, I was most pleased to hear that the member for Rosetown-Elrose wouldn't be supporting this budget, particularly with his great distortions of the truth. For a man whom I expect to be telling the truth, I find his distortions to be among the greatest that I have listened to. He knows full well, for example, that there is a 20 per cent ad valorem tax in every province in Canada except Alberta. He knows it full well, and tries to pretend that it is a higher tax in Saskatchewan than it is in any other province. I will deal with a couple more of the points he raises a little bit later. Suffice it to say that he loves to stretch the truth.

It is indeed an honor for me to rise in this House and speak once again on behalf of my constituents in our fine community of Yorkton. But before I go any further I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to those members who are retiring from this House: Auburn Pepper, the member for Weyburn; John Kowalchuk, from the neighboring constituency of Melville; Mr. Robbins, the member for Saskatoon Nutana; Mr. Skoberg, the member for Moose Jaw North; Bev Dyck, the member for Saskatoon Mayfair; and Norm MacAuley, the member for Cumberland. I would like to offer them my sincere congratulations for the service they have given to their constituents, to their province and to their country.

We in this House have watched you fight for what you believe, and we know that yours was a service that was most valuable. An indication of the quality of that service is that you are retiring voluntarily, not at the request of your constituents as will be so in the case of so many of those members opposite.

May I say to those members, and to you too, that your friendship and your counsel will

be greatly missed in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — I would like at this time to say a few words about my constituency and the friends and neighbors there who are my constituents. Yorkton is a fine city of just over 15,000 people. It is an active and growing city in an active and growing province with a vital economy. Yorkton is the main shopping area in the mid-eastern part of our province. Any day of the week, you can meet people in our stores and shops from south of Moosomin or north of Hudson Bay. You meet people from Dauphin, Manitoba, from Balcarres, Foam Lake and Wynyard to the west.

We are proud of our little city. We are proud of the fantastic mix of people whose ancestors came to us from all parts of the world. We consider ourselves an example to all parts of Canada. Our mix of people from all cultures and nationalities live and work together with good will and harmony. Yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are an aggressive mix of people which makes Yorkton a healthy, vital and exciting place to live.

Mr. Speaker, a major factor in the growth and vitality of Yorkton, a major factor which assists our people to utilize their natural intelligence and aggressiveness has been the Saskatchewan government. I would like to list a few major government contributions that have come to Yorkton since 1971 — contributions and developments that have had a major impact on the economy of the whole northeastern area of our province.

In 1971-72, as an example, Yorktoners saw \$14,200 under revenue sharing. By this year, 1982-83, Yorkton will receive \$899,205 in revenue sharing. Since 1971, well over \$5 million in revenue sharing has been received by the people of the city of Yorkton, helping to keep the property taxes down in our fine city. From 1975 to 1981, Yorkton received \$1.7 under the community capital funds (CCF) one and two. Under these two programs, construction of capital projects, like water, sewer and sidewalks, are just a few improvements which have made our city greater. The new five-year CCF program will bring another \$100 per person to that city. Approximately \$1.5 million will be added to help in the growth of our city.

The Saskatchewan Department of Highways made capital expenditures in Yorkton from 1971 to 1978 of \$6.7 million. Provincial hospital operating, construction and capital funds to Yorkton hospitals from 1971 to 1980 totalled \$59.6 million, and this year with the capital construction grant increase up to 70 per cent of the costs of the new addition to our hospital, it will add even more to the quality of the regional hospital in Yorkton.

Sask Tel's five-year construction program in Yorkton from 1975 to 1980 resulted in over \$11 million in telephone equipment, land, buildings and towers, and Yorkton was the first in the link of the Sask Tel's new fibre optics network.

Western Overlay Industries have constructed a 12,000 square-foot building for manufacturing form ply to be used in concrete pouring and for many other purposes as well.

And Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, is just one example in our province that shows why Saskatchewan has become a have province while the economy of PC Ontario slips and slides in a disastrous way.

The Blakeney government has had 11 consecutive years to build programs for people, to enact its policy and bring its philosophy before the people of Saskatchewan, and now Saskatchewan is reaping the fruits of those 11 years. The unfortunate people of Manitoba had their progress interrupted by four disastrous years of Lyon PC government, a government that believed in following slavishly the policy of Reaganomics, but now with the re-election of an NDP government our sister province of Manitoba can also look forward to a sensible government that will apply common-sense practices to the management of their resources for all of the people of that province.

The only cloud on the horizon, Mr. Speaker, is the rampant Reaganomics that is being practised in Washington, Ottawa, Ontario and Alberta — Reaganomics that is praised by members opposite, such as the one for Indian Head-Wolseley.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in its history Saskatchewan is a have province. The brilliant leadership of our Premier, Allan Blakeney, along with the rest of his government has developed policies that have made Saskatchewan lead the whole country in development. I'm proud to support this government, its record and its plans for making Saskatchewan an even better place to live.

And where else but in the PC Party of Saskatchewan could you find anyone to come out with a cure for that prosperity that everyone but they can see? As I said before, Saskatchewan is a have province for the first time in its history, but the PC Party put out a province-wide pamphlet that they called a cure for the Saskatchewan condition — a cure for the Saskatchewan condition, Mr. Speaker. And the former Premier Lyon of Manitoba showed what that cure would be: a \$256 million deficit and the worst economic conditions in western Canada. That's their cure. I'll have you know, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan will say, "No, thank you," to that type of cure.

And that leads me to my theme, Mr. Speaker, which is where else but in Saskatchewan? And first of all, where else but in Saskatchewan could you find an opposition that could make so many faux pas and still believe themselves to be credible, although I doubt that one as well. Last Thursday we had the best budget that has ever been presented in Canada presented to this House. Everyone I meet tells me that it's a fantastic budget and urges me to congratulate the Minister of Finance, Mr. Tchorzewski, his whole staff and the entire government. Everyone, everyone but the hardest of hard-core Tories say to me, "It's a budget that's second to none. It's a budget that will allow me to plan my future with confidence."

Where else but in Saskatchewan with its 11 consecutive years of brilliant government could there be a budget like this one? Nowhere, Mr. Speaker. And where else could you find an opposition that is thrown into such utter confusion by the mere presentation of a budget? On budget day the PC finance critic said, "Oh, that's a sleazy budget. We might have to vote for it." And then, when he got up to speak on Monday, he spent 80 minutes trying to find some weak excuses to oppose it. Mr. Speaker, besides the usual core of programs that all budgets must support, here we have a budget that provides many new people-oriented programs that exist nowhere else in Canada. Here is a budget that expands existing people-oriented programs that exist nowhere else in Canada. Where else but in Saskatchewan do you find an opposition that, after they have studied the budget, would say, "That is a budget? That budget is sheer hypocrisy and sheer deceit because it doesn't serve people" Everyone but the blinders-on-the-eyes PCs see it as an excellent blueprint for economic stability, a budget that will serve

the people of this province well.

Let's just look at a few of the new programs, Mr. Speaker. There is \$50 million for a program to try to prevent illness in this province. But I guess, according to the PCs, people won't be served by that one because people will be getting ill. There is \$10 million for cultural facilities, but I guess the PCs don't regard that as a people-oriented program because they have no culture. There's \$175 million to expand the natural gas network to rural Saskatchewan. There's a \$3,000 interest-free conservation loan to people in areas where natural gas can't be placed, and a \$10,000 interest-free loan for energy saving activities in businesses, community halls, and the like. I guess the PCs think that those programs aren't necessary because they believe there are natural gas wells capped all over Saskatchewan. I've asked my friends in the Yorkton area to be nice and uncapped the gas wells in their back yards or on their farms. But, you know, they just won't do that. For some reason or other they just don't seem to be able to find those gas wells all over Saskatchewan.

Another addition in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is a grant of up to \$2,400 per home-owner to help alleviate the astronomical interest rates — interest rates that all supporters of Reaganomics see as the one single solution to all the economic woes of our world. It's a high interest rate policy that the Tories advocate by their support of Reagan and his Reaganomics.

But just look at a few of the expanded people-oriented programs that this budget provides, like a 15 per cent increase in per pupil operating grants for schools. And the member for Rosetown-Elrose tried to tell us in this House today, Mr. Speaker, that there has been no increase in school grants. There's a 25 per cent increase in the capital grants for school construction, an increase in funding to day care of over \$9 million, and a 43 per cent increase in funding for the 7,000 nursing home residents of Saskatchewan. But the Tories say the NDP doesn't care. Where else but in the ranks of the blinders-on-the-eyes Tories could you hear such a statement.

Mr. Speaker, the only government in Canada that makes use of a Crown corporations committee to examine its publicly owned businesses is in Saskatchewan. The federal government and the B.C. government have legislation on the books to allow for the examination of Crown corporations, but the legislation is never used. The federal Crown corporations committee was never even used in the halcyon days of the federal Progressive Conservative government in Ottawa between 1957 and 1964. Yet the PCs here attack the government because they say our Crown corporations are not adequately examined. Mr. Speaker, I have sat in the Crown corporations committee and I have to say that the PC opposition does an unbelievably bad job of examining the businesses of those companies and corporations which are so vital to the economic life of this province. So it is only in Saskatchewan. Where else but in Saskatchewan could you have an opposition who could botch their job so badly and then blame the government for their own botch-up?

It's a terrible government in Saskatchewan, say the PCs, but I've been doing a bit of reading about the Government of Saskatchewan and its Premier in the independent news media of Canada. I would just like to read a couple of quotes for the members opposite because it appears that they can't read, as they don't seem able to give anything but bad news. The February 27, 1982 issue of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* supports the Conference Board in Canada's assessment of the economic growth and potential of our province in a full-page article. Referring to Saskatchewan's economy the article quotes John Rosart of McLeod, Young, Weir's financial department as

saying, and I quote:

Saskatchewan is in excellent health, even better than Alberta in terms of future financial footing. Their resource sector looks very strong, they have an extremely capable administration and they tend to be a lot more prudent than other provinces in the way they spend their money.

More prudent in the way they spend their money than Tory Alberta — just imagine that, Mr. Speaker. The same article quotes Regina businessman Paul Hill, and I again quote:

I believe in free enterprise but I have to say that Blakeney is doing a good job. Blakeney has gone the route of Crown corporations. He's created head offices here that wouldn't exist otherwise. He's attracting good people back to the province to work in challenging jobs and he's given us some power over our economy. Without the Crowns we'd just be hewers of wood. Saskatchewan has the most capable administration in the country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — I could read countless others, but I don't think they would understand, Mr. Speaker. In other words, everywhere in Canada and everywhere in Saskatchewan, people praise our Premier — our premier statesman, the most capable premier in Canada, they say. We have the most efficient government in the country — the best at handling money of any government in the country, and on and on it goes.

Mr. Speaker, what I will do is give the opposition full marks for their attempts to discredit one of the most respected men in all of Canada — our premier statesman, Allan Blakeney.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — I will give the PCs full marks for a lack of imagination. I'll give the PCs full marks for ineptitude and ineffectiveness.

Now let me turn to the Crow's Nest Pass freight rate agreement. For years the NDP has defended the crowrate. For years our party has talked about the social and economic disaster which would befall western Canada if we lost that rate. But for years whenever they have talked about the crowrate, the PCs, federally and provincially have said and implied that the crowrate must go. For years on end, the present leader of the PCs in Saskatchewan, Grant Devine, has written voluminous scholarly dissertations all with the same theme: the crow must go. "The crow must go," says Mr. Devine, but now he says, "Oh, dear, I've been quoted out of context," in spite of his voluminous dissertations.

But now, Mr. Speaker, where else in the world could you find a party, other than Saskatchewan's PCs, that could so suddenly take the opposition tack and then accuse the NDP, the constant crowrate defenders, of doing a flip-flop? Where else but in the PC Party of Saskatchewan? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Speaking about flip-flops, Mr. Speaker, the member for Thunder Creek is a prominent PC member who has thundered openly and long about the ineptitude of his leader. But last night, we were treated to talk by a strangely repentant boy, Mr. Speaker. The member for Thunder Creek has turned tail and run.

I wonder if it could have anything to do with a nominating convention in his constituency where he had 170 people — or was it 150 people — voting against him? I wonder if it could have anything to do with that? The member for Thunder Creek told us in his virtual apology to his leader — and that's about as close as he'll ever come to an apology — that the NDP is underestimating this fellow that he sees as a sudden paragon of PC virtue — this great Grant Devine that he has suddenly discovered. Let me tell the PC . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I have two pages. Patience, patience!

Let me tell the member for Thunder Creek and all of the PC members opposite that we'll be back stronger than ever in this government. We'll be back because we worked for it. Let me tell the PCs that the people of Saskatchewan expect their government and their members to work. The people of Saskatchewan don't want members who are so lazy that they don't even speak to their own amendment. They can't even carry their own amendment, they're so lazy. The people of Saskatchewan won't vote for members who are so inept and so ineffectual that they can't even talk in this House on such vital issues as the Crow's Nest freight agreement or on the budget. I'll tell the members opposite what Saskatchewan people will vote for. They'll vote for a government that has given people in the most economically viable province in Canada more control over their lives than is found anywhere else in this country. The people of this province will vote for this government in the upcoming election because they like what is happening in Saskatchewan.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — Everywhere I go, people are saying to me that nowhere else in Canada, nowhere else in the world, do people have things so good as we do. Mr. Speaker, I, like most people in Saskatchewan, must support this budget, the only motion that is left before the House, because where else in Canada do we have such an excellent outline of the development of a province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. DUNCAN: — Mr. Speaker, many things have been said about this budget in the last few days by members opposite but I can tell you one thing. I have noted a very distinct lack of enthusiasm and a very distinct lack of vim and vigor. You're hurting. Your budget has flopped. People are not accepting your budget because your budget does not address the real problems facing people today. That's why you people aren't very enthusiastic about it. I would challenge the Premier to come into the House, screw up his courage and call an election on the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. DUNCAN: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said this budget has done nothing to address the problems which are facing people today. This government has been out of touch with the citizens of this province. It does not understand at all what they are facing or the dire needs that they are in today. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I have a long list of things to say about the budget tabled last Thursday. I would like to propose a few alternatives to it. I therefore beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend The Senior Citizens School Tax Rebate Act

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a bill to amend The Senior Citizens School Tax Rebate Act be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 42 — An Act to amend The Senior Citizens Home Repair Assistance Act

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a bill to amend The Senior Citizens Home Repair Assistance Act be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 43 — An Act to provide Shelter Allowances to Senior Citizens

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a bill to provide shelter allowances to senior citizens be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:05 p.m.