

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 26, 1982

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and to members of the House, a group of students sitting in the west gallery from the St. Luke's School in the Elphinstone constituency in north-central Regina. There are about 23 in number, accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Jim Frolick. They are students in grades 7 and 8 at that school. I trust that their visit to the legislature will assist them in their social studies and in their general appreciation of how our government works. They will have had an opportunity to tour the building. I will have an opportunity to meet with them later to have a brief discussion, and I know that they enjoy the opportunity to be with us here in the Chamber. And through you, Sir, I greet them all on our behalf.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome a special group who is here with us this morning. They are six young people and adults from the vocational program of the Saskatchewan Council of Crippled Children and Adults. It is located at 825 MacDonald Street in the city of Regina. They are enrolled in a special program that the council initiated some time ago. The leader of the group is Lynne Demeule. She is accompanied here by two staff people and two volunteers. It's good to have you with us and I hope that you will keep coming here. We in the government are trying to develop new programs to assist people with disabilities, and I think the program is paying off because there is a great deal of concern and awareness that has been created in 1981 in the Year of the Disabled. It is good to have you with us, and I hope to meet with you a little later.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. KOWALCHUK: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this House, a group of 30 grade 8 students from the Ituna school. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They have come here on this blustery day — quite a little trip — under the supervision of their teachers, Mr. Bill Hudema and Mrs. Theresa Karpuk, and the bus driver, Dennis Filarczuk. I'm sure, as are the other members who already introduced students, that they will have something to learn here today. I will be meeting with them later on to have a picture taken and I know these students, after their participation here this afternoon, will be asking me a lot of questions at that time. So, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that all of us here wish them well, a good trip and a safe journey home. I hope they enjoy their stay here this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure also to welcome a group of students to the Assembly. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are from the Watrous elementary school. There are 30 grade 7 students who have planned this trip for some time. I am very happy they were able to make it on a particularly important day. This is the day on which the budget is voted on and the concluding remarks are made. It is a rather special day in the House. The students are accompanied by their teachers and chaperones, Vern Rudneski, Pauline Mensch and Rose Reifferschieb, and their bus driver Steve Fuxa. They will stay here for the question period. I will meet with them later to take pictures; I look forward to that. Hopefully, if the members opposite and the members on this side of the House continue to debate long enough, I might even be able to have a drink with them later. Through you, I welcome them and hope they have an enjoyable and educational stay in the Assembly this morning.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

CUPE Hospital Strike

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Labor. Mr. Minister, for the past week I have stood in my place during question period and asked you to use the offices of your department to bring about negotiations in the CUPE strike. Last night I noticed during the debate, you were out of the House for a considerable amount of time. I want to ask you again: have you accepted your responsibility as Minister of Labor in this province? Have you taken any action to bring these two groups back to the bargaining table?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that some dialogue was carried on last night, because he had the member for Rosthern prowling around the corridors, in his sleuth-like fashion, attempting to determine what was going on.

The meeting that was being conducted in my office during the period of time when the debate was in progress here resulted in a frank exchange between my deputy, me and later Cliff Hagen, the conciliation officer, who was aboard in order to determine whether any marked changes in position were to be advanced. That did not happen. Late last night, somewhere around 11 o'clock, after some additional costing figures were worked on and some additional considerations undertaken, it was concluded that the position of CUPE did not vary in any significant way from the position which was assumed when the bargaining table was left at 6 o'clock last Sunday morning. So, no significant change has taken place in terms of the outside figure — in terms of all of the cost compounded over the two-year period. We were convinced that there had not been any significant move from the position taken at the bargaining table at the last hour, at 6 a.m. Sunday.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I understand that you were meeting with senior officials of CUPE last night. Did you meet with the other side to see if they would move toward a settled agreement? Have you had discussions with them? I ask you that.

Secondly, there is still today. Are you using your good offices to continue to attempt to

bring these two groups back to the bargaining table this morning?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — In answer to the member's first question, we have had firm assurances from the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association that the last position which was floated by the conciliator on Sunday morning is virtually the end position they are prepared to entertain. Accordingly, meeting with them did not have any prospect of producing further movement from them. Accordingly, I did not meet with the SHA (Saskatchewan Health-Care Association) last night, having been given assurances that they were not prepared to move from a point where they believe they have already overextended themselves. Accordingly, I did not meet with the SHA nor did I talk to their representatives last night.

You will know that there still remains a possibility, even with the passage of the bill that is before the House, of carrying on with negotiations. I believe the bill provides for a period after the bill is passed when negotiations can continue. I would certainly hope that would happen and that there still may be a negotiated settlement prior to an arbitrator being called upon to make the final judgment.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, so actually what you are telling me is that you did not talk to the SHA last night, that there is nothing going on this morning. Is that an admission by you that there is no further influence that you, as Minister of Labor, can bring today, this morning, before the passage of this bill, to get these people who yesterday said that within three hours (I'm sure it is shorter than that this morning) they could be back at that bargaining table? Are you saying that there is nothing more you can do other than legislate them back to work?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate all the theatrics and the dramatic episodes that the member engages in. Obviously, I am telling the hon. member that everything that is possible for us to do has been done. In retrospect, I can't think of anything further that could have been done by the Department of Labor that has not already been done. Obviously, there are going to continue to be contacts made with both parties in an effort to get them back together when there is some indication of movement. If the hon. member believes there is some advantage in calling people together face to face, when there are firmly held positions and no indication by either party of an inclination to move, in order that they may snarl at each other across the bargaining table — I have never regarded that as being a particularly productive kind of event. And history has proven that. If the member knew anything about collective bargaining, he would know full well that an indication of movement on the part of one party or both is necessary in order to consummate any kind of an agreement. I think it has to be said that every effort has been made by the department and my officials, and the officials of the Department of Health, to bring together the parties whenever anything productive could come from it.

Splitting of Bill 45

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. In light of the fact that the efforts of the Minister of Labor to bring the parties of the dispute back to the negotiating table have failed and in light of the fact that the withdrawal of services by this particular union is to be extended this weekend to include several hospitals in rural Saskatchewan that haven't yet been touched and may endanger the health and safety of the people of Saskatchewan, there may be and in fact is probably a valid argument to pass part 1 of this bill. Part 2 of the bill, however, Mr. Speaker, is a different ball of wax and I think deserves considerable debate in this House. There is no need for speedy

passage of that particular section of the bill unless, of course, the Premier is intending to call an election today or . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Does the member have a question? I'd like to hear the question.

MR. BERNTSON: — In light of what I've just set out, Mr. Premier, would you give some consideration or would you in fact indicate to this House whether or not you'd be prepared to split the bill, and bring in part 2 as a separate bill?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, we have no present intention of splitting the bill. The reasons for the two parts of the bill, I think, are fairly well known. In any case we'll have an opportunity to debate that when the bill is debated, and perhaps not during question period. In answer to the hon. member's question, there is no present intention of splitting the bill.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, part 2 of the bill is just awesome and powerful. Is it your intention under part 2 of the bill to hold this hammer over the heads of teachers and highway workers and power workers and just virtually every working person in the province of Saskatchewan, simply because you want to call an election today or tomorrow or whatever?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, once again we are getting into debate on the merits of the bill. The point made by the hon. member is that he does not like the terms of the bill. I do not think that it is appropriate for me to comment on the terms of the bill and just what they are. I can't answer the hon. member's question without a detailed reference to the bill, since he, I would think, has rather clearly misinterpreted the contents of the bill. And I would prefer that this debate (and debate it is) take part when the bill is before us, and it is already on the order paper.

Ambulance Operators' Protest

MRS. DUNCAN: — Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Urban Affairs. Yesterday, Mr. Minister, you met with the ambulance operators who congregated in front the of legislature from all over the province. They presented some very, very deep concerns that they have about the viability of their industry to you, and you in turn indicated to them that you would be taking up their problems with members of cabinet. Can you indicate to the House at this time whether you presented to cabinet the difficulties placed before you by the ambulance operators and what was the result of discussions with cabinet?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I met with the ambulance operators' executive. I did tell them that I would be discussing their proposals with my cabinet colleagues. Cabinet has not had an opportunity to consider their proposals in detail, but we will be doing that and making our position known in due course.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Mr. Minister, the ambulance operators have indicated to you and to the public that as of midnight tonight they will be responding to only emergency calls within their own designated areas. Do you not think, Mr. Minister, that that is an awesome thing and important enough that you would convene a special cabinet meeting to discuss ways of settling the difficulties they have, without having them withdraw their services?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know what concept the hon. member has of the way cabinet functions. There are people who make proposals for consideration. Cabinet meets on a regular basis. I do not call cabinet meetings. Those meetings are called by the Premier. The only thing that I can assure the hon. member of is that we as a department consider the matter serious and so does the Department of Health, and we are making contingency arrangements in the event that the position that they have expressed is implemented. It has to be kept in mind that the ambulance operators have agreements with the district ambulance boards. We hope that they will honor those agreements and provide the service to the people.

MRS. DUNCAN: — What contingency plans do you have in place to transport people from rural areas to the major centres of Saskatoon and Regina in the event of the withdrawal of services?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — We have now made arrangements, Mr. Speaker, so that we have two Navahos that will be available. We operate an air ambulance service, and two Cheyennes will be available if that is necessary. Having four aircraft available, we think we can cope with any emergency situation if it is a matter of transferring patients from one hospital to another. We are also making arrangements with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan to have their aircraft available for transportation in an emergency situation.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, are you saying that, as of midnight tonight, the people of Saskatchewan are going to have to rely on an airplane coming from Regina to Wilkie, where there isn't a paved or lit strip, to haul sick or injured people to either Saskatoon or Regina? Will you now not admit that because your government has not properly funded this program, the lives of people in rural Saskatchewan are in jeopardy because of this government?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, for the information of the hon. member, back in the early '40s Saskatchewan introduced the first air ambulance service in North America. That service has been very useful and is very much appreciated by the people of Saskatchewan. Thousands of patients have been transported; I don't know how many lives have been saved. I have confidence in the air ambulance service which we provide. Many other provinces in Canada and states in the U.S.A. have come to look at our service, have copied it, have introduced it. Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member, we will ensure that the service is available to the people in case an emergency arises.

MR. GARNER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we could have a car accident and have six or eight people injured anywhere out there in rural Saskatchewan and there could be storm here in the city of Regina or in any other part of the province and the plane could not leave Regina. What do you expect them to do? Do you expect us to go back to the old ambulance system of hauling people in?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I have something to say as well. A rule that governs question period is that members cannot set up hypothetical situations. Order, order! The members will assist if in setting up their questions, they do not set up hypothetical situations. Then, all that can be given is a hypothetical answer which takes up valuable time in the question period.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, will you take full responsibility for anything which occurs over this weekend if your so-called emergency ambulance situation or proposal, as you

have set up in the province of Saskatchewan, does not work and we have serious repercussions?

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, obviously, the hon. member has not even troubled to inform himself as to what the ambulance operators are saying. They have said they will operate the ambulances within their districts. They are not stopping that service, at least that is what they told me. That is the information I have. They have also indicated they would withdraw service in case there was a patient to be transferred from one hospital to another. That is the information they have provided us. The member either doesn't understand or comprehend what they are saying, or he is trying to inflate the situation.

Mr. Speaker, we think we can cope with the problem in the event there are emergencies which are not attended to by the private ambulance operators. There is every reason to believe that the voluntary service will continue as it has. The same thing in the case of the service which has been provided through the union hospital districts — it will continue as it has continued. I have reason to believe that we can cope with the problem.

Energy Agreement

MR. ANDREW: — A question to the Premier. The oil industry is not rebounding from the energy agreement entered into last November. It seems to be getting more and more serious in the southwest field as the field now appears to be shut down, not for a period of two months but perhaps six months or perhaps even longer. The Premier of Alberta is presently making a lot of representations about the energy agreement and saying that it has to be changed. Are you doing anything, or are you still going to take the do-nothing, hands-off policy and accept that the energy agreement is a good agreement and there's nothing that you can do about any changes to that?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I must have mistakenly misled the hon. member. The energy agreement in all its ramifications has not worked out well for Canada or for the oil industry. I wouldn't want people to feel that everybody is happy with the energy agreement.

I would, however, want to say it is my information that the difficulties surrounding the southwest Saskatchewan oil field do not stem in any way from the energy agreement but stem from quite extraneous circumstances, and if the energy agreement weren't there or were there in different terms it still wouldn't provide a market for southwestern Saskatchewan crude.

With respect to the general question of the hon. member, certainly we are looking at the energy agreement to see whether or not some joint federal-provincial action might assist the oil industry. The member will know that we as a province took no part of the increase in the price last October provided for in the energy agreement. That was split between the industry and the federal government. We took no part of the increase in the oil price provided for January 1 in the energy agreement, again split between the industry and the federal government. We provided some further royalty cuts for low productivity wells so that our total royalty cut for low productivity wells in the last six or seven months would be in the order of 30 per cent.

An effort has been made, certainly on our part. We did not anticipate nor I gather did anyone anticipate the market problems arising from the oil glut, and I know

my colleague, the Minister of Mineral Resources, is studying this matter to see whether or not any joint federal-provincial action could be proposed to assist the oil industry.

MR. ANDREW: — A supplementary question to the Premier. We have not only the southwest but also the northwest region, on which you staked a lot of the future of this province with regard to the development of heavy oil and tertiary recovery. What is happening is that since the energy agreement between you and the federal government, there has been very little exploration in the northwest region — in the heavy oil field, where you suggested there was great growth potential. Are you going to do anything shortly to try to stimulate some activity there since the areas of Lloydminster, etc. are becoming very depressed, much like the Swift Current area? Have you anything in the near future that will suggest to the industry that there is some chance, or is it just going to be left to ride for six months, nine months or a year down the road?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — First of all, I want to say that my officials were in Ottawa this week, meeting with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, putting forward some proposals with respect to the difficulties that we are experiencing in marketing our crude oil in Alberta and in Saskatchewan — particularly the medium and heavy grade crude oil. We have put several proposals before them to which we expect them to react in the next week to 10 days. Obviously, the sooner the better, as far as we're concerned.

I have been in contact with the Government of Alberta, with Mr. Leitch. My department has been in contact with officials of his department and they, too, have put some proposals before the federal government for change. I don't know what the federal government's reaction to those proposals will be, but again we expect them to be in the reasonably near future. I think both Mr. Leitch and I have made the point with the federal government: we feel that speedy redress of the problem of the shut-in heavy and medium grade gravity crude oils in Saskatchewan and Alberta is something that needs to be addressed very quickly.

With respect to the heavy oil area, the industry, I think, is awaiting the announcement of our enhanced oil royalties. I expect those to come out in the reasonably near future. I want to say that it has taken a little longer than we expected, because we have attempted to have full consultations with the industry to float some proposals and ideas before them. Those discussions have taken a little longer than expected. I think one needs to realize when you deal with enhanced oil recovery that both the industry and the government are operating in an area where neither have a lot of experience in Saskatchewan. There are people in the industry who have experience in heavy oil outside the province, but when it's applied in here it's going to be difficult to know what the costs, etc. will be. So we've moved cautiously there in putting together the enhanced oil recovery royalties. So that, Mr. Speaker, is my response.

SPECIAL ORDER

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I'd like to beg the indulgence of the House to say that I'll be asking leave of the Legislative Assembly, which I'll require later today after the special order, to return to the debate which was discontinued last night at 10 o'clock. I'll be asking the leave of the House to so do, including extended hours of sitting and other matters as they may arise.

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.

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to participate in this budget debate. It is rather unfortunate that this budget has not stimulated the opposition to participate to any great degree.

My words today, Mr. Speaker, will pertain to many aspects of the health department, but before I get into the specific remarks I wish to make I want to direct some attention to the members opposite and the remarks they have made in this budget debate which relate to health. I can sum it up very quickly, because they spent less than 30 seconds, Mr. Speaker, on their criticism of the health portion of that budget. The health critic yesterday spent less than 10 seconds. In fact, Mr. Speaker, she made three statements which were false in fact, and I want to say a word or two about her statements.

First of all, she said health and education spending in the province is at a low level, which is false, Mr. Speaker, and I'll prove that this morning. Secondly, she said that Saskatchewan virtually has no specialists left, which is false. And she said that we have thousands of empty and unfinished hospital beds, which is also false. Mr. Speaker, those words come from the health critic of the members opposite. Surely if any member on the opposite side should know something about health, it should be the health critic. Mr. Speaker, in my address today I want to show to this House and to the people of the province that when it comes to health this government gives it number one priority.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I must take this opportunity to advise the people in the gallery that they have no opportunity whatsoever to take part in what is going on in this Chamber other than to observe. In order to take part in what's going on in this Chamber, people must be elected to this Chamber by someone in a constituency. I want to make that adequately clear at this time.

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I am proud of the support this government has given to the health care system, not only in this budget but in the decade that we have been the government of this province. And I will show, Mr. Speaker, in my speech today, that not only do we adequately fund the health care system but we lead most other provinces in the funding that we provide.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for the excellent budget he has brought in. I say excellent, Mr. Speaker, from a biased point of view because I happen to be the Minister of Health. The Minister of Finance listened to our requests and gave us a tremendous increase in our budget. I noticed that the member for Regina South had nothing, Mr. Speaker, to say about the health care system in his speech, except to make some very ridiculous charges that we only build hospitals in NDP constituencies and not in PC constituencies. I want to indicate to this House that of the 10 small cities mentioned in the budget — 10 small hospitals that are to be built — three are, Mr. Speaker, in foreign territory or opposition territory — in Nipawin, Indian Head and Davidson. I know, Mr. Speaker, that they will probably only be opposition seats for a short period of time.

Hospitals, Mr. Speaker, are going where hospitals are needed. Expansion of the health care system is going where expansion is needed, simple logic based on this government's profound dedication to the principles of medicare, Mr. Speaker — the principles of universality, accessibility and premium-free service.

Where do the Tories stand, Mr. Speaker, on these principles? They stand 10 feet short and 20 years behind the times. Twenty years after the birth of medicare in this province Tories across Canada are still trying to destroy medicare. They say they support medicare. I say that is nonsense. They don't support medicare; neither do they support the principles of medicare. I say you can't stand for a concept if you don't believe in the principles. But the Tories say they can; I say, more nonsense.

This is what Tories support, Mr. Speaker, — let's look across Canada. They support health premiums of \$552 per family in Tory Ontario. They stand, Mr. Speaker, for health premiums in Alberta at \$228. Mr. Speaker, Tories support deterrent fees for hospital and dental programs and they support huge increases in these fees in Tory-like British Columbia. Mr. Speaker, what else do Tories stand for? Well, Tories stand for a \$100 million deficit for hospitals in Ontario. Tories support hospital administrators as Las Vegas-type entrepreneurs in Tory Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at some of the headlines. These sordid headlines — and you can see, if you look at these headlines, what kind of health care Tories support: "Hospital Projects Face Axe," in the *Edmonton Journal*. Another one, Mr. Speaker, "Patients Died While Waiting Surgery" (in Edmonton), *The Medical Post*. Here's another one, Mr. Speaker, "Extra Billing By Alberta Doctors Hits Seniors Hard," the *Leader-Post*. "Waiting Lists have Doctors Playing God," from the *Vancouver Province*. Here's another one, Mr. Speaker, and this one, Mr. Speaker, is very interesting: "Posh Care For The Paying Patient," the *Globe and Mail* in Ontario. In other words, if you can afford to pay, you can have your steak and champagne. If you can't afford to pay, then you have to go without — two types of medicare systems for the people of Ontario.

These stories, Mr. Speaker, make good headlines but they don't make for good health care. They do show Tory lack of support for medicare.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is good news for Saskatchewan. It offers the same kind of continued leadership that brought to North America the first hospital insurance plan 35 years ago and the first medicare plan 20 years ago. It offers the same kind of leadership that gave Saskatchewan a prescription drug plan, the children's dental plan and the aids to independent living program.

In the face of federal cutbacks and Tory examples across Canada, this budget offers a 21 per cent increase over last year's health spending. The Saskatchewan budget, Mr. Speaker, stands by the principles of medicare. It offers accessibility, not financial barriers. It offers expanded services, not cutbacks. It is motivated by compassion, not the pocketbook. It offers services, not stone walls.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about what this budget means for the people of Saskatoon. Our university will be strengthened through a 17 per cent increase, not a cutback. I think I can say, without be contradicted, that that will be the highest increase that you will find anywhere in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Our home-owners will be protected through increased property tax rebates and the mortgage protection act. Our seniors will benefit from the seniors home repair program and any number of other programs directed at our deserving pioneers.

Our workers will have jobs because of the initiatives of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Our downtowns will be revitalized and our services will be increased — all because of initiatives taken by this budget.

There is a great deal more, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to say, but because of time, I want to outline quickly what this budget offers to the people of Saskatchewan in our four health-related areas: community health, mental health, hospital operating costs and hospital capital costs.

This budget provides \$21 million for community health programs, an increase of 26 per cent over last year. This dramatic increase will allow our public health nurses, nutritionists, speech therapists, health inspectors and other people to continue providing first-rate service to the people of Saskatchewan through our health region structure. It will allow the department to move even more vigorously into preventive health programs, building on the number of pilot projects which were announced in last year's budget. What this budget does is put to rest, once and for all, the misguided Tory assumption that little can be done in the way of new community and preventive programs because hospitals and traditional medical services devour all available resources. Last year's budget show, and this one offers final proof, that with sound fiscal planning and management, we can have both. We can have both and we can improve on what we have. As an example Mr. Speaker, this budget approves 10 additional speech therapy positions. This doubling of the community health speech therapy resource will help to meet the demand for assessment and treatment in our health regions.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health works very closely with the city health departments in Saskatoon and Regina. This budget provides an increase of 73 per cent in the per capita grants to the city health departments, from \$2.50 to \$4.25 per person. This increase will assist the city departments in dealing with the rapidly emerging community health problems such as teen-age pregnancies, problems experienced in single-parent families, and health problems of Indian and native people.

Native people, particularly those of our cities, experience a unique series of health problems. For instance, the infant death rate is double the rate of the total population. To combat this problem a pilot project in counselling by Regina Native Women's Association was launched. The project has been well-received and new funding will allow them to expand the prenatal and postnatal counselling services. Mr. Speaker, \$35,000 will be provided for a Native Alcohol Council education program, focussing on the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse among the native people in the province. Finally, for native people, \$55,000 will be provided to fund hospital workers of Indian ancestry to improve communication and understanding between native people and the hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken often on the need for more and more visible programs in the field of preventive health. To increase our preventive services for youth, \$72,000 will go to the Saskatchewan Alcoholism Commission for the development of preventive programs and counselling services for youth who abuse alcohol and other drugs. And

we will increase our non-smoking program by developing a major campaign to increase awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco and to reduce the percentage of smokers in all age groups. Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to congratulate and thank all those citizens who have written to the Department of Health and my office to congratulate us on our anti-smoking campaign.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to our psychiatric services. I want to say a word about this budget, which provides, I think, a substantial increase in psychiatric services in Saskatchewan. First of all, it provides \$27.9 million, an increase of 19.5 per cent over last year's budget. That money will be used to strengthen and expand our community-based approach to delivery of mental health services. The community-based approach was pioneered in Saskatchewan and it has given our province an international reputation as a leader in the mental health field. One of the cornerstones of medicare is accessibility, and the strength of this system is that it offers both accessibility and flexibility of services. It brings help to people in need rather than forcing them to travel long distances. Communities are important, and what makes community life amenable is a full range of services close at hand.

Our community-based approach includes a number of support services: sheltered workshops, approved and group homes, community service centres, and day hospital programs. Last October, the Battlefords Union Hospital opened its mental health centre, and with that opening each of our eight mental health regions is now virtually self-sufficient in dealing with its own mental health needs.

With this increase in this budget we can now further improve and expand the services we offer, and we can move into the important areas of prevention, early intervention, and promotion. In some areas we will be anticipating the final report of the task force on mental health which will be completed later this year. With its preliminary report in May 1981, the task force has already created a higher level of public awareness and interest in mental health issues. The task force report will suggest ways in which we can improve mental health programs.

Certainly one area which demands urgent priority is services to children and adolescents. If we can prevent problems from occurring in the first place, or at the very least prevent problems from getting worse, that will be a real accomplishment. The whole area of child and youth services presents immense difficulties in this direction. Investment in services to young people now pays dividends throughout their entire lives. Because this fact is self-evident, we've launched a number of preventive pilot projects for children and youth in 1981. There is a school-based health program in the Moose Jaw health region, a prenatal nutrition counselling project in North Battleford, a recently announced provincial child safety committee, health promotion and counselling for high-risk youth. These pilot projects are proving themselves and the government is committed to continuing them in 1982. To strengthen these programs, this budget provides \$433,500 for expanded mental health services to children and youth. This includes funds for a provincial director, as well as 16 new positions to be distributed throughout the regions most in need. In particular, new child and youth services teams will be developed during 1982 in the Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Yorkton, and Prince Albert regions.

As important as preventive services are for children and youth, they are not limited to the young. Our elderly people represent an increasing proportion of our population with mental health needs. This government plans to strengthen mental health support services to nursing homes so that they may better cope with the increasing demands

made on them. To meet this increasing demand, this budget provides \$106,250 for increased clinical and consulting support services to long-term facilities and their residents. This includes four staff positions which will be dispersed among regions where the greatest need has been identified.

In addition to these programs for our youth and the elderly, this budget provides funds for the following: a specialized group home for difficult-to-manage patients; increased efforts to recruit and retain psychiatrists, particularly for our smaller cities; the development of a day vocational rehabilitation program at the Yorkton Psychiatric Centre. In total, Mr. Speaker, this is 24 new positions and \$1 million for new or expanded programs. Saskatchewan intends to stay in a leadership position in mental health services. This budget, Mr. Speaker, demonstrates that commitment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, let me turn now, very quickly, to hospital operating costs. The largest part of our health care budget is for the operation and capital needs of our network of 133 hospitals. We are very excited about our initiatives in the fields of community health and preventive medicine. But until the day comes when our citizens stop getting sick or having accidents, our hospitals will remain the cornerstone of our health care system. A complete health care system needs both the curative and the preventive. This government is committed to supporting both.

As proof of this commitment, Mr. Speaker, consider that from 1975 to 1980-81 Saskatchewan has increased its spending on hospital services faster than any other western province. Mr. Speaker, I have before me a chart which I would let anybody peruse and it will simply bear out the fact that in 1975 we spent \$138 million and in 1982-83, \$351 million — a 154 per cent increase over seven years or, on an average, Mr. Speaker, a 22 per cent increase. I challenge any province in this nation to meet those increases that we have given over the last seven years.

Mr. Speaker, let me get one more chart here for everybody to see. It says, "Increased Hospital Expenditure Per Capita (Acute Care) 1975 to 1980-81." On this chart, Mr. Speaker, I have five provinces and the Canadian average. Ontario, over those five years, spent 54 per cent; Manitoba spent 61 per cent; the Canadian average was 69 per cent; Alberta spent 70 per cent; B.C. spent 76 per cent. Mr. Speaker, if the opposition's accusations were correct, you would think that Saskatchewan would be below all of those. It is not so, Mr. Speaker, because on top of all of those is Saskatchewan with a 77 per cent increase, the highest of all of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, the facts as they relate here simply do not bear out the falsehoods that the opposition is trying to spread around this province.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's 1980-81 expenditure, as I indicated on a per capita basis, was the highest, Mr. Speaker, of almost any place in Canada. Also, Mr. Speaker, since 1979 we provided more than 1,100 new positions in our Saskatchewan hospitals. Saskatchewan also continues to provide funding for more hospital beds per 1,000 than in any other province in Canada — any other province in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there are no hospital cutbacks here and there are no hospital cutbacks in this budget. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has provided for huge

increases in the health care system in this budget.

We took a bold move this January by announcing supplementary grants of over \$5 million to be distributed among all our hospitals. That, Mr. Speaker, is in contrast with what the Minister of Health in Ontario did when he asked the hospitals there to simply increase their meal prices, increase parking lot fees, set up shops in the hospitals and turn them into business places in order to raise money to cover the \$100 million deficit that they were facing. We came up with the bucks, Mr. Speaker. Ontario's government simply told the people to turn their hospitals into business places.

We are now continuing, Mr. Speaker, in expanding that initiative by bringing in a budget that provides an increase of over 20 per cent of the last year's budget.

This government believes our 112 rural hospitals play a vital role in the community life of our province. We believe they should expand their role. Community hospitals are the centres for community and preventive health. They are the logical place for integration and co-ordination of health services in rural Saskatchewan. To help them to fill that role, Mr. Speaker, this budget offers \$1,353,000 for the addition of 50 level 4 beds to improve local accessibility and \$375,000 for a package of demonstration projects to give rural hospitals an expanded role in community and preventive health.

These projects may include a respite and vocation bed program, support service through the home care program, or other health promotion programs in the community. Base hospitals in Regina and Saskatoon will also share increased funding for specialized services such as intensive care services for newborns and cardiac services and for newly expanded facilities at the Pasqua Hospital.

Last year I was happy to announce that our grant to the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation was to be increased by 30 per cent to enable the foundation to continue its vital work. We are increasing that grant another 18 per cent to \$12 million. Mr. Speaker, a 50 per cent increase over two years is further evidence that cutbacks are simply not in our vocabulary.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that this budget provides \$200,000 for the operating costs of the first of two patient lodges being developed by the Canadian Cancer Society in Regina and Saskatoon. These lodges will be operated by the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation and will provide a suitable environment for out-of-town cancer patients who must come to the city for radiotherapy or other cancer treatment. As well as providing a better environment, these lodges will relieve pressure on hospital beds.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat that these initiatives are being launched without asking for hospitals to increase their fees for parking lots as in some other provinces. This budget does not ask our hospitals to sell wine with their meals or to build curio shops to raise additional money, as in Ontario. This government believes that the job of hospitals is to operate as hospitals, and I am proud that we are providing them with the resources to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the last part of my speech today, and that is on hospital capital costs. The Minister of Finance announced last Thursday that as of April 1, 1982, a new hospital capital grants policy will take effect. This new formula, Mr. Speaker, does two things. First of all, it recognizes the increasing costs of hospital construction and the subsequent burden on communities to meet these costs, so the basic

provincial grant is to be adjusted upward. For small community hospitals the basic provincial share of the costs of approved construction will be increased to 50 per cent. For large community hospitals the provincial share will increase to 60 per cent. For regional hospitals, which provide services to people outside their immediate area, the provincial share goes to 70 per cent. Depending on the kind of hospital involved, these changes represent increases of from 25 to 50 per cent over previous levels.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this policy includes a new cost protection feature, which provides additional support to hospitals undertaking major capital projects and having a limited tax base. For our municipally-owned hospitals the new formula will ensure the local districts' maximum contribution will not exceed a principal amount equivalent to 5 mills on the equalized assessment of 10 years. For religious hospitals special protection for large projects will be provided by means of a further 50-50 sharing of owner costs in excess of \$500,000. This new cost protection feature provides a greater degree of equity in hospital support, substantially increases the overall level of government commitment, and establishes a reasonable ceiling on local taxation. In short, Mr. Speaker, this new policy ensures that hospitals will be built or improved where they are needed, not only where the local community can afford them. For Saskatchewan communities to maintain their traditional way of life, they need accessible hospital service. This government has no intention of applying the Pepin plan to health care. As well, Mr. Speaker, for construction projects already under way, we will reassess our level of funding so that no community will be penalized for beginning under the old formula.

In addition to this bold, new construction grant policy, I'm happy to note that the budget includes grants of \$6 million for a number of construction projects outside Regina and Saskatoon. Major renovations or expansions will take place in Prince Albert and — I want the opposition to note — Davidson, Maidstone, Indian Head, Melfort and Yorkton. New hospitals, Mr. Speaker, are being planned, however, also in La Ronge, Cutknife, Lloydminster and Nipawin. In Saskatoon, as part of the ongoing renovations at University Hospital (a \$30 million package), \$6 million will be provided this year, as well as funds for continued planning at both City Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital. In Regina, a \$120 million hospital regeneration program will continue with the Pasqua Hospital receiving \$10.4 million and Regina General receiving \$10.1 million.

Mr. Speaker, across Canada today we hear the words "cutbacks" and "deficits." We hear of projects delayed or axed everywhere but in Saskatchewan. And it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that except for Saskatchewan and Quebec, all the other provinces have Tory governments. We read of \$100 million deficits in Tory Ontario. We read of an indefinite postponement of desperately needed projects in Tory Alberta. Cutbacks, deficits, overruns, user-pay systems — these, Mr. Speaker, are the trademarks of Tory medicare plans. That is not the Saskatchewan way.

What do you find in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Well, this budget provides for us a real determination, but it also provides money to improve our hospitals without putting a double burden on our taxpayers.

I look at the evidence across Canada and then I read how the members for Arm River and Meadow Lake love medicare. All I can say is, thank God there is still one government in this country which still believes and acts on the fundamental principles of the medicare system that was founded in Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to again thank the Minister of Finance and this government for their commitment to medicare and to health. And I have no difficulties at all, Mr. Speaker, in supporting this budget. In fact, I support it very proudly.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite trying to use the approach of Washington, or Ottawa, which is generally referred to as Reaganomics — and that is, Mr. Speaker, you slash the programs that pertain to people. This budget does the opposite; it expands and supports programs that affect the very lives of our people.

The federal budget was based on despair; it was based on helplessness. That kind of leadership we can do without. This budget is built on hope. It is a good budget. It is a beacon of economic sanity which builds rather than destroys. It increases services to the people of Saskatchewan. It will build hospitals; it will not cut them back. It will expand community preventive and mental health programs; it will not restrict them. It is a budget which proudly adheres to the Saskatchewan tradition of providing first-rate health care.

The Minister of Finance, as I said before, must be commended. In these times of conflict and frustration he has shown courage; he has taken economic leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, I proudly support the budget and will oppose any other.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege and a pleasure for me to participate in this budget debate on behalf of the people of Bengough-Milestone.

Since my election in 1978, I have had hundreds of concerns brought to my attention. I have dealt with each and every one of these on an individual basis. While dealing with these concerns the general consensus that the people of Bengough-Milestone have been expressing to me is discontent and distrust for the NDP and the Allan Blakeney government.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to review a number of major Progressive Conservative proposals that the NDP shamelessly adopted in the 1982 budget.

In March, 1981, in the PC budget reply we asked for a freeze on utility rates for one year. The PC Party realized in 1981 that utility rates were getting out of hand. The NDP response, from the minister responsible for Sask Power, on May 13, 1981, was this:

It is impossible to give any kind of guarantee that there will be no rate adjustments.

Now it is an election year and we see the NDP adopting a freeze on utility rates.

We have been calling, ever since 1978, for a rural farm and community natural gas distribution system — a motion put before this legislature in March of 1980. The response from the members opposite, from Mr. Blakeney, was, "I regret to say that it is unlikely the provision of natural gas to farmers would in any way relieve the financial squeeze." That's taken from *Hansard*, November 28, 1980. Now this being an election year, they are calling for a natural gas network.

Another proposal that we put before this Assembly and asked for on many occasions was to phase out the E&H tax. The NDP response was simply this to a question asked by

Graham Taylor: "Mr. Speaker, the answer is no." And that was given by Wes Robbins, the NDP Minister of Revenue, Supply and Services in this House. This being an election year, now they are moving the sales tax from children's clothes, which we have been asking for for years now.

The PCs proposed a public utilities review commission, endorsed by the Saskatchewan consumers' association in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* and the Regina *Leader-Post*: "This watchdog agency would protect the consumer from needless high increases in utilities." The response from the government, taken out of *Hansard*, was and I quote Don Cody, the Minister of Telephones: "What good is a rate review board?" That was taken out of *Hansard*, December 4, 1981. Now we have an election year coming. The NDP says now we need a commission to study how to allow more public input into utility matters.

We expressed this many, many times: allow tandem-axle farm trucks to use purple gas, a PC policy resolution passed in November 1980. When we asked this question, Mr. Allan Blakeney answered, "I regret that Saskatchewan is not in the happy position of being able to have no tax on gasoline." Now we have an election year. What do they come out with in the budget? Purple gas for tandem-axle farm trucks.

In an election year, this NDP government suddenly finds it is bankrupt of ideas. The NDP has run out of ideas and as the *Leader-Post* said, "The budget is cluttered with distinctly Tory ideas." Why should the voter of Saskatchewan settle for an imitation when you can have the real thing? A Progressive Conservative government, duly elected in the next election, would give them that dream.

Mr. Speaker, Bengough-Milestone is a rural riding and I want to take a few moments to touch on the record of failure in agriculture by this government. They have stooped to an all-time low in deceit in their play to make the crowrate an issue. The crowrate must remain statutory and the federal government must pay. This is the policy of both parties sitting in this House.

Farmers cannot afford to pay higher transportation costs for their grain because they are being hurt by spiralling costs in other areas such as fuel prices, fertilizer and electrical rates, while grain prices are going down. The Trudeau government announcement must be viewed with extreme caution and skepticism. The proposed changes to the freight rate are unclear and unfair and leave too many questions unanswered.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the farmers of Saskatchewan: save the crow; let Trudeau and Blakeney go. The PC stand is that the crowrate must remain statutory and the federal government must pay. This is the policy that was passed at our policy conventions year after year, and I challenge the NDP to prove otherwise.

And what about the NDP gas tax? Twenty per cent of each gallon of gas goes to the NDP and five per cent to SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). Two years ago the gas tax was 19 cents a gallon. Now it is 20 per cent. If gas is \$2 a gallon, the NDP gets 50 cents a gallon. If gas is \$3 a gallon, the NDP gets 75 cents a gallon. Again, I would like to go back and say that two years ago the tax was only 19 cents per gallon.

The NDP cancelled the farm-cost reduction program — some help to farmers that is. The difference between Alberta and Saskatchewan on a 20-gallon tank of gasoline is \$12. I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that Premier Blakeney can no longer be trusted. Let me

give you a few examples of the comparison of the Premier to our leader, Grant Devine. From the *Ottawa Citizen*:

Blakeney has lost respect. There is suddenly the impression of a Prairies' pomp politician. There is suddenly the spectacle of a ditherer unable to decide whether to bet on the pot or walk away from the game.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PICKERING: — Also from the *Ottawa Citizen* — the headline reads "Saskatchewan's Man to Watch":

A new and articulate political voice for prairie populism is about to emerge in Saskatchewan.

And again from the *Ottawa Citizen*: "Blakeney played perhaps the sleaziest role of all the Premiers in the constitutional debate."

From the Regina *Leader-Post*:

By choosing Devine as leader, here is a university professor who could be Blakeney's intellectual equal, a man above reproach.

That was by Dale Eisler from the Regina *Leader-Post*.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PICKERING: — Here is another quote from the Regina *Leader-Post*: "Blakeney bills show blind pursuit of dogmatic socialism."

Also from the Regina *Leader-Post* written by John Twigg:

It's another sign that Saskatchewan Tories under new leader, Grant Devine, are evolving into a populist party and moving away from dogmatic Conservatism. The provincial government will have to stay on its toes to stay in power.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PICKERING: — Another editorial from the Regina *Leader-Post*: "PCs have earned credibility by proposing alternatives."

And, I might add, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the alternatives turned down by the government until this election year.

I would now like to turn briefly to agriculture. Agriculture is Canada's largest and most important industry, but, if you look at the record of the current government, it makes you wonder whether it believes it. During the past nine years the farmers in the province have suffered because of neglect by the Blakeney government. The Progressive Conservative Party recognizes the importance of agriculture and advocates programs for farmers after we are the government after the next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PICKERING: — A PC government will honor all land bank leases. We will also initiate a Saskatchewan family farm purchase program. This would provide once in a lifetime \$350,000 loans to young people who are just getting started on their farms. The interest rate would be 8 per cent for the first five years and 12 per cent, or prime, whichever is lower, for the remainder of the pay back period — something this government opposite has failed to adopt.

We would also initiate a Saskatchewan irrigation capital grant program to provide family farms with the economic incentive to fully capture the benefits of irrigation in this province, and a Saskatchewan agriculture and food processing program to provide both investment capital and tax incentives to enable farmers to fully participate in the benefits of a growing world market.

We would initiate a program to help cow-calf producers, such as is found in other provinces. Mr. Speaker, I believe the *Leader-Post* summed it up very well when it wrote, "Blakeney's Scare Tactics an Injustice to Electorate." Allow me to quote from that editorial:

Premier Allan Blakeney, usually a reasonable man who gets his facts straight, obviously lost some reasonableness and a few facts on his way to the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party's annual convention in Saskatoon. Blakeney's speech to the party faithful last Sunday included a fiery defence of the role of Crown corporations. There were suggestions from the Premier that the Tory sympathizers were somehow anxiously waiting in the wings to swoop down and peck away at the entrails and dismantle Crown corporations following a Conservative win.

This, Mr. Speaker, is absolute hogwash. Rules of the party would ensure that Crown corporations would not be dissolved, but we will open the records so the people of Saskatchewan can decide which Crown corporations are viable and which ones are not.

In a short time we will be going to the polls, and the NDP of course will give a deathbed repentance for their sins, but it will be too late. They will be defeated, and I have given you a number of reasons why. The voters of Saskatchewan will recognize that this NDP government will stoop to any level to retain power and that this government is not interested in the problems facing the real families of Saskatchewan. What have they done for the families of Saskatchewan? Well, if you're a home-owner the NDP will give you 10 cents a day as announced in the budget. If you're a renter the NDP will give you a measly 8 cents a day, and if you're a businessman, really they don't have anything meaningful at all. For the farmer and rancher, it's the same thing — really nothing. For the senior citizens, there is really nothing but big power bills with education tax added to them. They say they are helping the real families of Saskatchewan. Now 8 cents a day for renters and 10 cents a day for home-owners seems to me to be a great help. It's just a joke, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Bengough-Milestone I will be voting against this budget, and at the same time I challenge the government and the leadership of Allan Blakeney to have enough nerve to go to the polls even today.

MR. MacAULEY: — Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate the hon. member for

Humboldt, the Minister of Finance. I think he has done a terrific job for all of us, not only in the South but also in the northern part of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to learn that the budget speech has brought good news to northern Saskatchewan. I commend the government for committing itself to working for northern people and for looking at our economy and social development in northern Saskatchewan.

The strategy is now to provide educational opportunities for Northerners. The training and technical facility for La Ronge that is now in the planning stage will no doubt give great encouragement to our younger people and assist them to put forth greater efforts in seeking job opportunities. I must emphasize the necessity for the strong school system and skill training for our northern people. We have been fortunate since the DNS was established in northern Saskatchewan to have three community colleges established across the northern part of this province. These three community colleges are playing a big part in northern education, and many of our young people are taking advantage of these educational opportunities.

I also want to commend the government for announcing the construction of a new hospital at La Ronge at the cost of \$5.5 million. The existing old hospital will become the first long-term care facility for our senior citizens in the northern part of this province. Because of the good medical services we in our province are receiving, many more of our northern people are reaching senior citizen status and our northern people are not moving south as they did at one time. Better facilities all around are making the North a good place in which to live and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, it has been very noticeable in the last little while that the Indian and Metis people are seeking better opportunities to participate in many areas of economy and life in their communities. This present NDP government is to be commended for the opportunities provided in this respect. Mr. Speaker, the CCF-NDP government in Saskatchewan has had, since 1944, a long tradition of sound financing and management, and it is giving the northern people today a good feeling.

Mr. Speaker, although the northeast part of this province, Cumberland constituency, is large, our northern people have managed to get closer to one another through meetings and good relationships with one another as communities. This is something we never had when the Liberal government was in power in this province.

Mr. Speaker, may I say a few words about business in northern Saskatchewan? Considerable planning has been done to get smaller businesses going in northern communities. The people of younger generations are not following the traditions of their forefathers as they did in the past. The younger people are looking more to the modern age, which we expected. Mr. Speaker, this is the result of schools being established for a number of years in these smaller communities. Students are now finishing their grades 11 and 12.

Grants must take place to encourage small businesses in these communities, if they and the populations are going to survive. The fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan is not producing as well as it was one or two decades ago. Mining alone will not absorb all employment needs of northern Saskatchewan. They have to have something in that area. Mr. Speaker, when we look at southern communities with the high costs now prevailing, and realize that in the North air freighting is much more costly than road transportation, then the only thing we can see viable to small

manufacturing and processing is articles that can be packaged in small quantities for transportation south, utilizing our forest products in that way.

We also have a large deposit of silica sand that can be used for housing construction in my area. A new program by government is under way in this regard, but a great deal must be done by the local people to get ideas working smoothly. The program itself is not a handout but an idea to get people on their feet in these communities, and we hope to get results from it in the future.

Mr. Speaker, it must be realized that unless industrial progress takes place in this smaller communities, we can anticipate unemployment in northern parts. Governments, both provincial and federal, have been assisting with housing in many of these communities and in some cases water and sewer. The people in this province should take note that the government can just do so much in this area and it is necessary for the people of the North, as well as the South, to get up on their feet and help to establish viable businesses to keep communities going.

Mr. Speaker, now I want to talk a bit about highways. We have some good news for northern people. I know they are listening today. The spot surfacing for La Ronge south is 2.5 kilometres, and Highway No. 2 from La Ronge to Nemeiben River is 25.4 kilometres, and Highway No. 2 north to Nemeiben Lake, 1.9 kilometres for grading. Also, on Big Sandy Lake, Highway No. 106 from Big Sandy Lake to mile 190, 37.6 miles will be built this coming year.

Mr. Speaker, regarding highway systems in northern Saskatchewan, three main roads, Highway No. 155 on the northwest side, Highway No. 102 in the central part, and Highway No. 106 on the Northeast side, are now in place, and most have been completed with hard surfacing. This will benefit the northern half of the province in the future for easy transportation of goods.

Smaller communities have been grumbling because they have not received paved highways to their doorsteps. These roads will take time to complete, because many of them are hard to deal with because of rock surfaces and formations. These will take time, with much input of money. Most of these roads are standard now and they can be used for pretty well any kind of hauling in those areas.

What I would like to see now is people of northern communities using these roads for the transportation of wood-related manufacturing goods.

Mr. Speaker, I now would like to speak a few words in Cree, naming these roads which I have just spoken about a minute ago. I would like to say this in Cree over the air so that the people of that area will know what parts of the roads are going to be worked on this coming year.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MacAULEY: — Mr. Speaker, when I presented my first speech in this House in 1975, you allowed me to speak a few words in Cree, and it was the first time Cree was spoken in this House. I thank you for allowing me that departure from the norm because it allowed the Indian people of this province to know that at least the Cree language had been spoken in the Saskatchewan legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in my closing remarks on this budget speech, may I thank my colleague,

Mr. Pepper, who has been so kind in assisting me to learn my duties as a member of this House. I also want to thank all my colleagues who have been supporting me in many ways. I thank the people of the Cumberland constituency also, who have been so generous in helping me to support their efforts, on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying, I support the new motion, and the budget speech of 1982. I thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — You know, after 14 years of political experience, I'd love to give some sound advice to the Conservative opposition and, Mr. Speaker, there are only three of them sitting in the benches. I suppose that's par for the Conservatives in showing their interest in the affairs of the people of Saskatchewan.

It is a great honor for me to participate once again in the budget debate, as I have done many times before. Mr. Speaker, it is most likely the final budget speech I will be making in this House, as there is every indication that we will be having an election in the not too distant future — maybe May, June, July, maybe even October.

I recall last year. My comments then were that the 1981 budget was good enough to go into an election with. This 1982 budget, a people's budget, is one that I would love to fight an election on. It's a budget for the times. I want to congratulate the Hon. Minister of Finance for the sound, constructive, dynamic and, most of all, timely budget he brought down on Thursday last. The opposition cry out, "Oh, yes, timely — timely for an election." And I say, yes, even for an election, but that is the least important.

I want to congratulate my fellow colleagues who have spoken in a concise and precise way to outline the benefits of this 1982 budget, Mr. Speaker.

Now going back to the question of it being timely, I say it's timely because of its content and purpose — assistance being given to people when assistance is needed. What better time is there than now to help people through rampant inflation and the high cost of living and to maintain the high standards of service the people of Saskatchewan deserve to have protected? And that's what this budget does and more. It makes possible economic progress and encourages growth and building, rather than bringing in massive cutbacks as the federal Liberal and many provincial Conservative governments are doing throughout Canada. It's a budget that boldly projects Saskatchewan into the future. And what's most noteworthy of all, Mr. Speaker, is that in times like these, when growth in all other provinces is almost zero, Saskatchewan is still vibrant and healthy and, of course, the most important thing — the budget is balanced.

Mr. Speaker, the vitriolic condemnation of this budget by the opposition is unbelievable. Words such as "inflationary, waste, not enough" were the litany of criticism levelled against this budget by the Conservatives. Then, in the same breath they say, "It's not enough; it's niggardly," and make suggestions for increases with no thought of a balanced budget. There is total inconsistency in their argument, Mr. Speaker.

I want to make a comment on something that was said yesterday in the House. The member for Maple Creek takes the Oscar for her so-called contribution in the part of this budget debate that the Conservatives have taken. The member for Maple Creek said, in budget debate yesterday afternoon, that the budget and its contents insults "the intelligence and integrity of every man, woman, and child in this province." Mr. Speaker, once again, in the desperation and frenzy with which these Conservatives want to get their hands into government, into the treasury coffers, they will say anything, anywhere, anytime.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to the comment made by the member for Maple Creek. If intelligence and integrity were ever insulted in Saskatchewan, it was by the member for Maple Creek. It is unacceptable and insulting. Let me tell the lady member of this legislature that by taking the intelligence and integrity of the Saskatchewan people so loosely, she has done the citizens of Saskatchewan an irreparable harm. The estimate made by the member for Maple Creek of the ability of the Saskatchewan people to gauge and judge what the budget is all about is unbelievably insulting.

The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are not stupid. They know what the budget is all about. They know what is in it for them. They know where the money is coming from. I challenge the member for Maple Creek to issue her statement to all the people of her constituency. I wouldn't bet a plug nickel that she will be re-elected come the next election after that kind of thing.

When the budget speech was given by the Minister of Finance, the opposition Conservatives kept up a steady barrage of catcalls, "our ideas, our platform," when the budget referred to some items which had been discussed in this House and outside the House, not just by Conservatives but by New Democrats in convention and in caucus. Mr. Speaker, when financial resources became available, this New Democratic government dealt with them.

Let us take only one of these items which they are talking about — the interest subsidization on housing. The Conservative members point to the fact that we have expressed opposition in the past for assistance to home-owners in mortgage rates. Of course, we have, Mr. Speaker. I am opposed to the already exceedingly outrageous fat profits made by the banks which are getting fatter by the day, by the minute and by the second. I am just as opposed today as I was yesterday. But, Mr. Speaker, we in the NDP believe that sometimes there comes a time when there are overriding causes which must be considered, that concern for people comes first. Yes, Mr. Speaker, if it means that it will help to save a home, then you leave political considerations aside.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — It is pure and simple as that. I know the Conservatives are so hidebound in their dollar and cents philosophy they almost always never see the human side of the situation. But that is to be expected in this era of the Reaganomic thumb-screw approach. I say that the people of Saskatchewan will be watching; the people of Saskatchewan will judge all that bombast and rhetoric by the Conservative opposition to see if it is real concern for the Saskatchewan people or nothing but empty words, a political ploy and a sham.

Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't mind wagering my last pay cheque on all the bluster about how much of the budget is Conservative platform. I would like to know if they will be voting for or against it. I think they will vote against it because the Conservatives would do anything, as I said before, anytime and anywhere to distort the truth, distort the right, and distort the positive.

Mr. Speaker, do you really believe they would ever have instituted any one of those items which they talked about had they been in power? I say, never, Mr. Speaker. They, like the rest of the Conservative governments, including Clark and Crosbie and Sterling Lyon, would have religiously followed the Reagan line, and that is, what John Crosbie the Conservative budget whiz kid, indicated to the people of Canada when he presented his budget in Ottawa. This is what he said, roughly speaking, "Get your nose up to the grindstone, John Q. Public; you have to suffer first before some benefits will accrue to you."

Do you really think, Mr. Speaker, that these divided Devine Conservatives would have provided the kind of humanitarian budget like this one? Again I say never; the complete reverse would be true. For one thing, Mr. Speaker, under their philosophy of more for the rich, there would be no resource revenues such as this government has put into place to finance such a budget. They, the Conservatives, are believers in Reaganomics. "All economic ills," they say, "unemployment, inflation and low interest rates will be cured if you give the industrialist, the financier, the rich and the powerful monopolies unimpeded profits and lower their taxes." "Recession will be beaten," they say.

The possibility of the so-called monopoly benefits of the rich and the powerful being eventually filtered down to the middle class and the poor people is as likely, Mr. Speaker, as the proverbial camel going through the eye of the needle. I think another expression would be "like a snowball in hell."

Mr. Speaker, all the evidence we are getting from the United States and Great Britain is that that theory is an illusion that will cost this world most dearly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you, Sir, and to all members of this legislature, that I am going to miss this place. After more than 14 years one develops a sense of closeness with the surroundings and the people that work here. I certainly will miss the comradeship of my New Democratic colleagues — as fine a group of stalwart Saskatchewan citizens as one can find anywhere. I will even miss some of the opposition members. But I can tell you one thing, I am not the only one that will be missed in this House, as I am quite certain that most of them will be missed in this House after the next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — History moves on, Mr. Speaker. I am proud of the recorded 10 years of Saskatchewan history as written by the Allan Blakeney government. I know that the people of Saskatchewan are proud of that decade of accomplishments as well. But, Mr. Speaker, there are dark clouds on the horizon.

I recall that last year in this legislature I reflected on one aspect of the case for separation based on the debate raging in Canada; the constitutional debate was almost entirely Anglo-Saxon versus the French, fighting for their own rights with almost total disregard in their heated clashes for other ethnic groups and Indian and Inuit people in this country.

I said then, Mr. Speaker, that the ethnic groups weren't asking for special consideration. All they wanted in this country was recognition as good Canadians, having contributed most diligently to the overall good of the province and Canada. They wanted to be recognized as having added immensely to the overall wealth and culture of this country, as an integral part of the whole make-up of this nation and particularly the mosaic make-up of western Canada.

We should not ever forget that these small and some not so small minority ethnic groups have been long-suffering and overrearingly patient in their aspirations. But, Mr. Speaker, no one should take all that for granted. Mr. Speaker, the cracks of western separatism are not emanating from the ethnic groups — not yet, and I don't believe they ever will. You will find no one as strong in support of one Canada as these people. But, Mr. Speaker, if we are to remain as one country, then all people, and particularly politicians — federal and provincial right across Canada — had better address themselves to the realities as they affect all the people of Canada, including minorities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — They must do so because, if continued disillusionment in the West persists, then the job of keeping Canada together will be insurmountable.

I would like to turn a little bit to my Melville constituency. Melville constituency is made up of that kind of a pattern, Mr. Speaker, of German, Ukrainian, Anglo-Saxon, Polish, Hungarian, Scandinavian, and many other back grounds including Indian people — a constituency I am exceedingly proud of for a lot of good reasons, but one in particular. It is another place in Saskatchewan where racial discrimination is rare and where people are recognized for what they are. Even though only 20 per cent of the population of Melville constituency is of Ukrainian origin, they have elected and re-elected me, an ethnic, for four consecutive terms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — I say, Mr. Speaker, in light of this and many other such situations, it bodes well for Saskatchewan and for Canada when representation is chosen for this House from across the whole make-up of the population. Mr. Speaker, it bodes well for true participatory democracy. One has only to look at the government side of the House in this legislature to see that kind of true democratic representation. Mr. Speaker (I say this with sadness), how notably absent was such democratic representation in the Lyon Conservative government of Manitoba prior to the last election. Then, Mr. Speaker, some nitwit or some nincompoop in the newspaper business had the nerve to write just lately in a news column. "The ethnics gave strong support to the NDP in Manitoba" — with good reason, Mr. Speaker, with real good reason.

Melville constituency was represented by a New Democrat for the last fourteen and one-half years and will continue to be represented by a New Democrat, Pat Krug, after the next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — Melville constituency has benefited in the past decade more than they have benefited in the past 40 years of administration prior to the NDP government. Melville people are looking at this budget and saying, "It's one we can vote for."

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that Melville city is celebrating its 75th birthday in 1982. I want to express congratulations to Mayor Don Abel and council for the great celebration they are planning. Melville has a great history — a history of the pains of birth, of deep depression, of coming into its own in the past decade. Melville is a CNR town disillusioned with its bosses in their management of the railway. Nevertheless, it is a co-operative community — a community that works together, a community that is one of the finest in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to inform this House that every village and town from Melville west came on site as the Grand Trunk railroad progressed west. Fenwood, Goodeve, Hubbard and Ituna are all going to celebrate birthdays progressively as the years go on from this year. Goodeve celebrated its 70th birthday in Celebrate Saskatchewan year. To all of them, I want to extend congratulations and the best in the future. To the people of Melville, I express deep appreciation for the confidence they have had in me for all of these years. To serve them was an experience which was challenging and rewarding. I will miss some of this political atmosphere, but I will continue to fight for the concerns of the people. I will still be there.

With these few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to say most emphatically that I support the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the second time within a year that I have had the opportunity to speak on the budget speech in this Assembly on behalf of the people of Kelsey-Tisdale.

To begin with, there are some very interesting suggestions brought forward in the budget that I think come from this side of the House. They are new ideas, Mr. Speaker, from a new party, a very aggressive party, and a very aggressive opposition. One thing, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that they brought forward (and I think everyone over here has been asking for it for the last couple of years) is purple gas for tandem trucks. That is a very essential thing in our farming communities with the long hauling of grain we have. Mr. Speaker, that is one thing we really need.

One other thing is a rural gas distribution system. How many years now have we been asking from this side of the House for exactly that? And how many years has the government been saying, "Oh, no, Mr. Speaker, we can't afford it; it costs too much; it costs \$1 billion"? Then all of a sudden they come out and say, "The Conservatives are right; it costs \$175 million and should be done." I'd like to congratulate them on that, Mr. Speaker, because I think that they have finally seen the light. They realize that rural gas distribution in the province of Saskatchewan is a must.

Another thing they brought forward which we have been suggesting is mortgage assistance for home-owners. But they haven't put anything really substantial there. They did it just partially. They forgot that the interest rates today are 16, 17 per cent, and went up today maybe to 18 percent. So they give 1 per cent below. Will that really start a new housing project in Saskatchewan? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I really think that it's lacking there. I don't think we are going to start any new housing. No new industries are going to start because of that. Plumbers, electricians — all of those are not going to have an opportunity to start working unless there are housing starts.

In my area there are three mills. Two of them are down and one has laid off a considerable number of men. I'd just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the lumber industry is an essential part of our part of the province. It also relates to the rest of the province. If it is not selling its lumber, no houses are going up, small construction companies are not working, and the laborers are not working. That means fewer dollars, Mr. Speaker, for the province and for the working people — fewer dollars for all of us.

The government did bring forward a public utilities review commission, and also a public utility freeze, but only on power, and in the last two years they have almost doubled their power prices. Surely, they can freeze it for six months without really hurting anything. What about Sask Tel, what about SGI? SGI had a 200 per cent raise in the last two or three years. And Sask Tel, although maybe it hasn't the highest in the country, has been making a large profit. Is it not time, with the hard economic squeeze, to freeze this utility rate, too? But no, Mr. Speaker, these people don't want to do that. They want the money to buy more land, to buy more companies, to own and control it all.

Another example from the budget — they said they had actually reduced taxes, and Mr. Speaker, what they have done is increased them. They expect to get \$200 million more in personal income tax alone. Personal income tax increased, I think it's been mentioned here many times, from \$409 million to \$597 million. I noticed in the last two or three days the hospital workers in here asking for more money — asking so they can meet those costs of living. What have they done? They haven't even tried to bring them to the negotiating table. They have never made a really sincere try to do that. Mr. Speaker, it costs just as much for them for a loaf of bread or a pound of butter as it does for anybody else. These people have to have a living the same as the rest. And when you talk about increasing taxes, our own personal income tax alone, just think what these people must feel, how they must react to their costs. You are offering them 11 per cent, and then putting 20 per cent into health care. Are they not a part of our health care system? Do they not warrant a fair part of that budget?

Talking about renters, you know they did bring in more mortgage assistance for renters — \$2 a month or 7 cents a day — and for the home-owners — \$3 a month or 10 cents a day. Now what would that buy, Mr. Speaker? Not very much. And you know what they have also done? They put \$2 billion into the Crown corporations — \$2 billion. And I notice here that they are going to borrow from outside investments, \$859 million to make their budget balance, to put it in there for these Crown corporations. Is it not time now, Mr. Speaker, that we used a little bit of common sense and said, "Hey maybe for a year or two we have to curtail some of these major expansions"? Maybe we have, in fact to be a little more realistic and realize that the people of Saskatchewan only have so much money and that we can only afford to buy so much. Maybe that comes first, Mr. Speaker, maybe we should make people first, as the Minister of Finance said, and not just power. Instead of ownership, maybe we should make people first.

Another point I think I'd like to make is that in the estimates they've allowed \$42.3 million for the rural municipalities in this province. That's for bridges, administration, roads, the cost sharing of hospitals, recreation, ambulances, regional parks — the list could go on and on. That's \$42.3 million for all of rural Saskatchewan. Just to compare, last year, Mr. Speaker, they estimated \$91 million for DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) and then I notice there was an overexpenditure of an additional \$29 million. Do our rural people in Saskatchewan not need the same type of assistance? Do they not need the same type of consideration?

Do you realize also, Mr. Speaker, that many rural municipalities are faced with over a 100 mills municipal tax and over 80 mills school tax? And this year's is not yet announced, as far as the school tax goes. Also, Mr. Speaker, the rural people of Saskatchewan have to pay hospital tax. In my municipality we pay 15 mills hospital tax; that's \$200 tax that we pay to keep our hospital going in our town, above all the other taxes. And also if we want to expand our hospital or any hospitals, we have to pay 60 per cent of the structural costs of the renovations of those hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite claims that they care about our health. Has it not really forgotten to carry its share of the cost of health care in this province and, in fact, put more and more of that cost back on the rural taxpayer? In the urban centres, they're not quite as bad, Mr. Speaker. They don't have that mill rate tacked on their taxes for hospital costs. It's only the rural areas — our small towns, our small communities. I'm not too sure, Mr. Speaker, if they really care about our rural areas. I'm not too sure, Mr. Speaker, if they really have a deep concern for the rural people of Saskatchewan, because it seems that ever and ever our roads are being left behind.

Talking about roads, I looked in this project array of the highways. I looked all the way through it, and I noticed the minister, speaking here a day or so ago, said that it was fairly well distributed among all the constituencies. I look in here, Mr. Speaker, and I see nothing for the Kelsey-Tisdale constituency but a little bit of repair on one highway. I've heard the minister responsible for Sedco, the member for Melfort, say, "Melfort's in there." Yes, I see Melfort in there, and good for Melfort. But what about the rest of us? Don't you really care about the rest of us? Is it just the seats that you own? I heard one member here today say, "The rest are (inaudible) seats." Are we all not part of Saskatchewan? Do we not all deserve the same rights as each member of the government does?

I have roads in my area and roads north of Hudson Bay; No 9 I can think of specifically. It's called "suicide trail" in my area. There have been many accidents there and quite a few deaths there. That highway has to be one of the most used highways and the worst highway in this country. Just last year they had an official opening of that highway, and I couldn't get there. It took me four hours trying to get down the road to get to that highway, and I was late for the official opening. Now I don't call that a highway in our province, and that will never promote tourism in this area.

Just another thing, Mr. Speaker. The price of fuel here in Saskatchewan has to be a concern of everybody in this province, whether he drives a car, a tractor, a truck or a motorcycle. We have to pay on every gallon of gas that we buy here in the province of Saskatchewan about a 40-cent road tax. Also, Mr. Speaker, do you know that we pay 7 cents a gallon to SGI? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I heard somebody over there say just now, "At least we build roads." Roads, I would like to note, in the constituencies of members on the government side of the House, not in the foreign constituencies, as they are referred to.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that as a producing oil province, even if gas were free it would still cost us over \$1 per gallon for taxes alone — \$1 gallon per gallon for taxes alone, even if gas were free. I wonder if this government believes people should come first. I think they believe that people pay, government comes first, power and control comes next, and people come last.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Tell us about health premiums, Neil.

MR. HARDY: — The member mentions health premiums. You know, our health premiums in Saskatchewan are free. They are free in the urban centres but not in the rural areas. I just mentioned that we, in the rural centres, pay a hospital tax which is a direct mill tax, plus we pick up all the additional costs. To the average farmer, those costs amount to about \$200 per year. Hospitals are not free in this province — we have to pay; there is no alternative. But don't let anybody tell you they are completely free. In the rural areas, the taxpayer pays directly at least \$200 a year for hospital tax.

Let's talk about jobs. I haven't noticed any jobs; there are 400 or 4,000 work-year jobs or something. How, Mr. Speaker — by spending \$2 billion? I think there are many other alternatives. We live a resource rich province and we haven't really done anything to develop these resources. We have oil, gas, coal and limestone — you name it; we have it. And yet, Mr. Speaker, we are not really using our resources; we're not bringing any kind of industry in. Unless it's government owned and controlled it doesn't come in.

I would just like to mention the rape-crushing plant which was suggested for the Melfort area. I would like to know who lobbied against it. Who spoke out in the papers against it? Who said it wasn't needed? No other than the minister responsible for Sedco, the member for Melfort! I would like to know why he said that, Mr. Speaker. Doesn't he want our farmers to have another outlet for their product? Did he not want the 70 new jobs which would come to that area and the spinoff factor of 200 more new jobs? Why didn't he want that for our province? It might have employed 270 young people, all told. Those young people are our future; we need them and we can't afford to let them go. I think it's time we became an exporter of products and not an exporter of young people. People really should come first.

There is one other area I would like to mention — highways. It is the road which runs from Archerwill across to Highway No. 38 via Greenwater Provincial Park — one of the most used roads for tourism in this province. It's a grid road. We have asked to have it taken into the highway system over and over again, and I notice that this time it still hasn't been taken into the highway system. It would connect a major part of Saskatchewan directly to Greenwater through the highway system. I would think that the minister responsible for highways should seriously look at this.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that small business is suffering from the same problems which plagues us all — high interest rates. We in the Progressive Conservative Party would introduce a \$45 million loan program for inventory, upgrading of premises, and for equipment for these small business people — loans which would be made available for up to \$25,000 at an interest rate of nine and five-eighths per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HARDY: — If you wonder where we would get the \$45 million and where we get the nine and five-eighths per cent interest rate — the sum of \$45 million was given to the Cornwall Centre at nine and five-eighths per cent, locked in for 35 years. Do not our small business people deserve that same consideration? Are they not spending their money in Saskatchewan? Do they not deserve the same consideration that was given to some eastern developer for the Cornwall Centre? We need the small business people; they built this province and we will do everything we can to retain them.

Another thing we would like to have considered is freezing rates, at whatever time, to

ease the strain. The rate is 9.625 per cent, and if they need to freeze it for five years it can be done, or if it needs to be frozen for one year, it can be done. That is a very essential part of our small business development program.

I would just like to say that I was at a meeting in Carragana a little while ago. It was a wheat pool meeting, and that meeting was being held for a reason. It was held because the wheat pool was going to withdraw its services to that community. When I was there I spoke about what is needed in a community.

There are four essential things that make a community, Mr. Speaker; a school, a post office, an elevator and a small business section, and if we do not retain that small business section, we don't retain our small rural communities. Mr. Speaker, these retail businesses are a must for the survival of small communities. Anything we can do to assist these people, who have become the backbone of rural Saskatchewan, should be done. Let's put people first, Mr. Speaker.

Although there are many good things in this budget that came from our side of the House, there are many things that have only been half-addressed. So you can see, Mr. Speaker, that I won't be supporting the budget.

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating my colleagues on this side of the House for their participation in this debate and their contribution to this debate. I will even go so far as to extend a word of commendation to the members opposite in this Assembly for their valued efforts in trying to make some points in this debate. Even the member for Kelsey-Tisdale tried so hard that he ended up by re-announcing our program of assistance to small business people in the interest abatement program, and a new program that Sedco is going to provide because of this budget.

Mr. Speaker, never in my experience for all the years that I have been in this Assembly has an opposition wanted less to debate a budget than this one. This is a budget that has been well received by people across this province and by organizations such as SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), HUDAC (Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada) and others. But you know, having said that, I really have to say (and I regret to say it) that there are a few (about 17 of them) for whom this budget was a disappointment. I refer of course, to the members opposite, because they, alone, are unhappy, Mr. Speaker.

Why are they unhappy? They wanted a deficit budget like that of Alberta — a budget which they could condemn as irresponsible. Instead, Mr. Speaker, they got a balanced budget. They wanted an austerity budget with cutbacks in health, education and social services, because that is their policy; that is the Conservative approach. In spite of that, they wanted a budget that they could say was insensitive. Instead, they got a budget which responds to the needs of people today, a budget which provides \$700 million for health care service in Saskatchewan — a 22 per cent increase.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives wanted a retrenchment budget, a budget that would choke off the growth of our economy. The member for Regina South actually outlined that in his response. That's a budget that lets the recession creep in from Tory Ontario and take away Saskatchewan jobs. Instead, we have a stimulative budget, a budget that provides 18,000 construction jobs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — We have a budget that directs \$2 billion to productive investment in Saskatchewan, investment that benefits Saskatchewan people now and in the future as well. And do you know what the member for Regina South called that stimulative aspect of the budget? He said it is absolutely ridiculous. When he talked about the 18,000 jobs, he said that it is absolutely ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. So the opposition doesn't like this budget; they've done their best to criticize it and that really wasn't much of an effort. This debate showed something very important again. It showed the ineptness of that leaderless group of Tories over there when it came to trying to propose some alternatives.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — As a matter of fact they were so inept, Mr. Speaker, that they couldn't sustain the debate on their own amendment and had to vote on it on Tuesday evening.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — They show little respect for the facts and even less respect for the intelligence of Saskatchewan voters. For example, the member for Regina South says that per capita income in Saskatchewan is 10 per cent below the national average. Well he knows that is wrong. He knows that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. The real figure is 2 per cent, not 10 per cent. And more importantly, Saskatchewan's per capita income has grown faster since 1970 than any other province in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — And I know that that's an accomplishment that the members opposite would like to forget. The Tory finance critic goes on to say that Saskatchewan young people must leave this province in order to find jobs. Well, wrong again Mr. Speaker. Jobs are more widely available in Saskatchewan than in just about any other province in Canada. The proof is that Saskatchewan's unemployment rate is the lowest in this country.

The Tory finance critic said that this government will increase Saskatchewan's debt by \$2 billion in 1982 — once more wrong, Mr. Speaker. I refer the member to page 54 of the budget speech, and he should read it before he delivers a speech that somebody else writes. But that document clearly shows that the province's debt will increase not by \$2 billion but by \$912 million — a \$1 billion mistake on the part of the Tory opposition over there. Tory arithmetic, Mr. Speaker, fails again. And he fails to mention the crucial point that this money is being borrowed for productive investment in Saskatchewan, investments that demonstrate our confidence in Saskatchewan's future. The member opposite made it clear that if a Tory government was elected, it would not carry on the expansion of electrical generation at Nipawin or Coronach, because it wouldn't borrow any money. He made it clear that if they were the government there would not be an expansion of the potash mines because they wouldn't borrow the money. He made it clear they'd sell it off. He made it clear that they wouldn't build any housing because they wouldn't borrow the money, Mr. Speaker. We heard lots about Tory policies. Those are Tory policies and we will have no part of them

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, this is not money borrowed to pay for a budget deficit as happens in other provinces. This is money borrowed for productive investment in Saskatchewan. I couldn't help but be amused by the opposition's feeble attempts to claim copyright ownership over parts of our budget. I really couldn't help but become amused. For example, they want to take credit for the removal of the sales tax on children's clothing and footwear. Well, I want to invite them to come to a convention of the New Democratic Party with me some day as a guest. That item has been an annual resolution of NDP conventions for the past seven years, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — And now the Conservatives want to claim it for their own. The next time the House sits, I would not be surprised if the members opposite announced that they invented medicare and that they would have Dr. Barootes make the announcement.

What about rural gasification? We have greatly expanded the natural gas network in this province since the early 1960s, Mr. Speaker, and the program that we have announced is a responsible program, not an irresponsible program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — And we are providing assistance through Warm Up Saskatchewan to parts of the province that will not have natural gas. That's something the members opposite would never have thought of, Mr. Speaker.

There is one more criticism that must not be left unchallenged. The Tories have accused this government of poor management. The member for Regina South made two very revealing claims in his speech. He was stating Tory policy when he made them. First, he ridiculed public investment in non-renewable resources such as potash. As a matter of fact, he said, "It is like buying stock in a company that has just declared bankruptcy." Well, Mr. Speaker, that bankrupt corporation — the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan — has made over \$400 million in profits in the last five years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — If that's bankruptcy, Mr. Speaker, we need to have more of it. In 1981 alone, the potash corporation estimated \$141 million in profits. Some bankruptcy. But don't take my word for it and I tell the members they don't have to take my word for it because obviously I might be biased. Let's consult an objective, expert source as to whether this government is well-managed or whether the people are receiving good value for tax dollars. Let's look at what a prominent Canadian investment firm says about Saskatchewan as reported in the February 27 edition of the *Globe and Mail*, and I quote:

Saskatchewan is in excellent health — even better than Alberta in terms of future financial footing. Their resource sectors look very strong and 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.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — That's hardly an assessment that agrees with the members opposite. That says something about the quality of this government's management. It says something about the value of this government's economic and financial policies and it says something about the lack of responsible criticism from the Conservative opposition in this House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second revealing claim made by the member for Regina South states the Tory policy for resource management in the future. He said he fundamentally disagrees with government ownership of resources and that private corporate enterprise should solely operate these ventures. Let there be no doubt, Mr. Speaker, on anybody's mind in this House or in Saskatchewan that he has proposed a Tory government would sell off Saskatchewan's resource revenues and investments to private owners in the United States and overseas.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Now I find this point of view staggering, Mr. Speaker. Where has the Tory party been for the last 10 years? Doesn't he believe that Saskatchewan people have the ability to conduct their own affairs? Conservatives don't believe in Crown corporations. They don't believe that Saskatchewan people should build their own economy. They would sell off the Crowns for a quick buck and that means head offices in Toronto and in New York and in Atlanta and not in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That means profits and dividends for their corporate friends outside Saskatchewan, the same vested interests who have helped support the Conservative Party. That means a province with little control over its future, the same boom-and-bust economy that the people of Saskatchewan have worked so hard to overcome, and once the Conservatives had done that they'd strip the heritage fund of its assets. They'd plunder it, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt about that. Years of hard work down the drain. That is the Tory plan for the short term. That is their policy and we will not have any part of it. That's the way they would pay for their so-called plan of action but, as I have said in the budget, Mr. Speaker, there is more.

Mr. Speaker, the Tories have presented a shopping list of expensive new proposals that they have no idea how to implement or even less idea how to pay for. The cost of these proposals is hundreds of millions of dollars. In fact, almost \$1 billion for the rural gasification scheme alone, and you know, the member for Regina South makes more promises than a used-car salesman. Mr. Speaker, promise now, but who will pay later? That may be the privilege of opposition. Unfortunately, the people of Saskatchewan would have to pay a high price indeed if they ever made the mistake of driving that clunker off the lot, Mr. Speaker.

But, "Money is no problem," says the critic of finance. All he would do is spend less here so that he could spend more there. Hundreds of millions of dollars are involved. You know, he is going to readjust spending priorities. He's going to cut programs, and he won't say which ones. Of course not. Well, the only place that he's going to get hundreds of millions of dollars is by cutting back on the major programs, Mr. Speaker. That means health care services; that means health premiums like in Ontario, which are now \$550 a year for a family in that Conservative province. That means cuts to our senior citizens, and also in grants to schools and local governments, as is happening in other parts of this country and the continent. That's where the Devine axe would fall, Mr. Speaker, and every man, woman and child in this province would suffer for it. We can see it being done right now in the United States by the Tory's political idol who governs in that nation. Make no mistake — it would happen here.

And after, Mr. Speaker, they had slashed the services for people, like health care and nursing homes, they'd bring in their version of private enterprise. And the first priority would be a free ride for big corporations like Noranda and Canadian Pacific — tax breaks at the expense of Saskatchewan residents.

And then the Tories would set the provincial economy adrift. Let the winners win, and the losers fall by the wayside, controlled by a chosen few, Mr. Speaker. Conservative policies are very clear, and they are on the public record just as their Tory leader is on the record in his opposition to the crowrate. This government does not support that policy. We don't believe that people have to be punished by high interest rates and high unemployment. We believe that in these times of high inflation and national recession, governments must act, and this government is prepared to act, and this budget is one of action in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, Tory policies are clear and they are well-known. They are policies of cutback and tax cuts for the rich. It was tried in Manitoba, and in four years the people of that province booted that government out. It would be devastating in Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan people will not have any part of it, Mr. Speaker.

But they will ask where the evidence is about my explanation of their policy. Let me tell you the evidence. Let me give you a quote: "We are living in a time that needs strong action and determination, such as that exhibited by President Ronald Reagan."

AN HON. MEMBER: — Who said that?

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Graham Taylor, PC MLA for Indian Head-Wolseley.

Another quote, Mr. Speaker. "It is very clear that what is needed is to follow the lead set by U.S. President Reagan." Who said that? Colin Thatcher, PC finance critic.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — One more quote: "I would suggest to the finance minister that if wants guidance he should take a look at President Reagan's economic package." Who said that? James McGrath, PC federal finance critic, Mr. Speaker. What about their position on interest rates? Well, the finance critic of the Tory Party in Ottawa spoke in Montreal in February. Guess what he said? This is the headline, "PC's Financial Critic Opposed to Lowering Interest Rates Too." And he was agreeing with Allan MacEachen, Mr. Speaker. That's the Conservative policy.

Now the members opposite have called this budget cynical. And the press has picked that up, and I don't blame them, because that's all the members have said in this debate. I'm sorry that the members opposite believe that a senior citizens' shelter allowance is cynical. I'm sorry for them. It's hard to believe that the Tories would even admit that they consider assistance to home-owners and the provision for adequate housing for everyone cynical, Mr. Speaker. That's their view of these kinds of policies. And they would not be possible had it not been that the resource policies of this government which each and every one of them fought with everything he had to prevent from happening in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest losers if the Conservatives have their way would be

Saskatchewan's grain farmers. I've heard those gentlemen over there talk about the crow. I've heard the deathbed repentance of Mr. Devine, the same man who once said, "Scrap the crow." The Leader of the Conservatives now realizes that this attitude won't win him any votes and so he says, "I've changed my mind; keep the crow." That is, Mr. Speaker, keep it for now. Mr. Devine won't have to worry much about changing his mind again. He's gone down twice and soon, in Estevan, he's going to go down for a third and last time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, in closing my remarks I just want to say that it is time to consider the motion before this House. It is time for the opposition to search its conscience and decide how it can vote against this budget. The initial comments made by the member for Regina South gave me optimism. He suggested he would support the budget but now I understand that, like his leader who flip flopped on the crow, he has changed his mind.

I offer them a challenge, Mr. Speaker. I challenge the hon. member, as I challenged all the Conservative members in this House, to vote against this budget. I challenge them to vote against a budget that meets the needs of today and builds a secure and prosperous future. I look forward to placing this budget directly before the people of Saskatchewan. I look forward to the opportunity of comparing the record of this government with the irresponsible promises made by the Conservative Party. And I look forward to the outcome of that verdict, Mr. Speaker.

In Saskatchewan we have a government that believes in people. We have a New Democratic Party government and in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because of that, people come first.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

YEAS — 42

Blakeney	Pepper	Allen
Kaeding	Snyder	Romanow
Smishek	Bowerman	Tchorzewski
Baker	Feschuk	McArthur
Gross	Rolfes	MacMurchy
Mostoway	Banda	Vickar
Hammersmith	Kowalchuk	Dyck
Thompson	MacAuley	Engel
Byers	Long	Cowley
Cody	Koskie	Matsalla
Shillington	Skoberg	Poniatowski
Pebble	Johnson	Lingenfelter
White	Nelson	Lusney
Solomon	Chapman	Miner

NAYS — 13

Berntson	Garner	Birkbeck
Lane	Taylor	Andrew

Thatcher
Duncan
Hardy

Rousseau
McLeod

Pickering
Katzman

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 1

Item 1

MR. ANDREW: — We on this side are very concerned about the low budget allocated in this province to the Department of Agriculture. I would ask the Minister of Agriculture to rise and ask to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

QUESTIONS (continued)

Sask Power Rate Increases

MR. LANE: — A question to the minister in charge of Sask Power. I know that there was some semblance of a temporary freeze announced in the budget, but I note the annual report, showing the SPC loss, tabled in the Assembly today. I quote from the president's letter on page 6:

What does this mean to us? It means tighter controls on our own spending, still more borrowing at high interest rates, and continued rate increases.

I ask the minister responsible for Sask Power whether continued rate increases are in fact what is going to happen with SPC, and if, as the president says, continued rate increases are necessary to get some profitability into SPC?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, one would not have to be a genius to know that over the long term the costs of energy in this country are going to increase in general, and certainly if one simply looks at the Alberta-Canada agreement under the national energy program he will see that over the long term there are price and cost increases that are being provided for that will be applied against the consumers. It is obvious that over the long term there are going to be increases in costs of energy in this country and the Sask Power Corporation will not be separated from that general arrangement. Certainly, the rate review will take place under the commission that has been appointed, and during that time we have frozen rates for residential and farm customers so as to provide the opportunity for that review to take place in a full and complete atmosphere of confidence without the complication of any possible rate changes during that period of time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 46 — An Act to provide for the establishment of any Adult Dental Project in Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. minister, I move that a bill to provide for the establishment of any adult dental project in Saskatchewan, 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.

MOTION

House Sittings

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, before the orders, I ask leave to move a motion, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Vickar, the member for Melfort:

By leave of the Assembly, that on Friday, March 26, 1982, rule 3(3) be suspended, so that the sitting of the Assembly may be continued from 1 p.m. until 10 p.m. and there shall be a recess from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. and from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.;

And that notwithstanding rule 3(4), on Saturday, March 27, 1982, this Assembly shall meet at 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., and there shall be a recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2 p.m. and from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., and that the order of business shall be same as on Friday.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Call resumption of the debate, Bill No. 45. I note that it is 12:40. I leave it to the House whether you'd like to adjourn now and come back at 2 o'clock. In some ways that makes sense, I think, rather than going for 20 minutes, but if the House would like to continue, that's fine by me.

MR. SKOBERG: — There could be unanimous consent by leave of the House to consider at this time the private bills. There are three or four which will go into committee.

MR. SPEAKER: — I think we should deal with the suggestion of the Attorney General. Is that acceptable?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Just on that point, to try to manage the House — I am flexible. The hon. member for Moose Jaw North has suggested that the three or four private bills be done with. I don't think any of them are controversial. We could do them, and then adjourn for the break rather than penalize the private people, or we can do them on Tuesday. But it is entirely up to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! We're in a position where a suggestion has been made. In the absence of the acceptance of that suggestion, which was to adjourn now and come

back at 2 o'clock, we can follow one of two courses. We can continue until 1 p.m. or we can adjourn the House until 2 p.m.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I take it that the feeling is that we should proceed with Bill No. 45 now.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Romanow that Bill No. 45 — **An Act respecting Temporary Provisions for Labor-Management Disputes** be now read a second time.

MR. BERNTSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You will recall last night at adjournment time that we pointed out to the Attorney General, the Minister of Labor, the Minister of Health and the Premier, that, in fact, all parties to this dispute who are affected by this particular bill were in this building. We suggested, at that time, that they should be afforded the opportunity, overnight, to try to get to the bargaining table and come up with a negotiated settlement to the dispute.

Obviously, either through the lack of effort on the part of those ministers named or through lack of desire by the parties to the dispute, that didn't work. We have concerns, as does the Attorney General, I am sure (or he wouldn't have introduced the bill), that, in fact, public health and safety may well be jeopardized over the next few days. We think that it is important that at least section 1 of this bill does receive passage today. With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting the bill on second reading.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall try to be reasonably brief in my wrap-up remarks on second reading of this bill. I don't know if I will be able to conclude before 1 p.m., but we will be back at 2 p.m. and it will be shortly after 2 p.m. that I will be able to conclude. I feel I have to take this amount of time to rebut some of the comments with respect to this legislation, which were made over some three hours of debate yesterday, and to try to answer some of the other points which have been raised by the members.

Mr. Speaker, I think everybody agrees that this has been a fairly wide-ranging debate. It has been a wide-ranging debate because it has ranged all the way from a minimal discussion (on the part of some of the MLAs) about the contents of the legislation itself to a broader discussion about funding of health services and the funding and spending priorities of the government generally. I think that it is important that we set the record straight on a couple of the issues which the opposition, in my judgment, has falsely and deliberately tried to misrepresent during the course of last night's debate.

I want to try to answer, first of all, the question of whether there is underfunding with respect to the health system. This is the question which has been raised several times by some of the members opposite. In fact, almost all of them, in one way or another, got up to try and address that point. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the members of this Legislative Assembly that the opposition, in my judgment, mounted absolutely (if you'll check the transcript of the records) no statistical or financial indicators to buttress that wide-sweeping and, as I have already said, false allegation.

It is to be noted that hospital expenditures estimated for 1982-83 will be in a four

year period about 154 per cent by way of actual increase or, if you will, roughly more than twice the rate of inflation which is existing in the country.

Over 1,100 new positions have been funded in Saskatchewan hospitals in one year since 1979-80 and the cost implications of that are in the neighborhood of \$25 million. Services for enriched programs (I won't get into them because I don't think they are strictly germane to the debate) go all the way from regeneration of hospital facilities in Regina, increasing staff complements for smaller hospitals, the cardiac services program in Regina, 72 new positions for rural hospitals and level 4 and so forth (all of these have been announced in the budget) to the neonatal intensive care program. One could go and I think indicate quite clearly that the expenditures of this government with respect to health are very significant indeed.

The allegation that the health system is underfunded is spurious; it is false and is propagated by the members opposite, who would do so for purely partisan political reasons. I don't suspect that the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley, Mr. Taylor, would really stop to consider this, but I think he should think about the question of touring, for example, the new neonatal intensive care facilities in Saskatoon or Regina. Has he done this? Has he noticed the \$120 million regeneration program, which is under way at Pasqua and Regina General hospitals, or come to my city to Saskatoon University Hospital and seen what's going on with respect to that as well?

Mr. Speaker, I could go on but I think the point is made that the per capita figure for funding hospital costs in this province, by any yardstick that you use, is surely, to be modest and fair about it, at least equal to and in reality above those that are being carried out in other areas. In Saskatchewan, for example, it's \$310 per capita; in Ontario, \$292; and the Canadian average is \$308, so we're certainly keeping pace with respect to that aspect of it. I think that allegation, Mr. Speaker, is, as I described it, spurious and political and those who advocate that argument are doing so for purely political reasons and political objectives alone.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is another issue. The issue is: have negotiations been exhausted? We heard that argument, Mr. Speaker, given as what I would call the pretense of the Conservatives in stalling the passage of this legislation. That was the pretense last night. They said that they weren't satisfied that the negotiations were exhausted. Mr. Speaker, you can always find an excuse for stalling any piece of legislation. I suspect that when we reconvene at 2 o'clock this afternoon the next pretense in stalling this legislation will be aspects of part 2 of the bill. You can find a reason to hold back any piece of legislation, including this one. The one that they use is supposedly in the interests of public safety from their point of view; they find that concern this morning. But they stalled it last night, Mr. Speaker. We all saw that when they, after the adjournment was turned down, called it so very forcefully 10 o'clock and thereby forced the legislature and the people of the province of Saskatchewan to put this over for another 24 hours.

The Tories say that the government has not exhausted all avenues of negotiations, that we haven't done everything to bring the parties back to the table. Yet, Mr. Speaker, no one can deny that there have been six months of negotiations carried on, I think in good faith, with no agreement. There have been five days of conciliation — intensive conciliation proceedings last weekend. Without casting blame on either side, there was no agreement. Mr. Cliff Hagen, an experience conciliator with the Department of Labor, who was around before this government was here and probably will be here long

after this government is around (unless my friends emasculate the Department of Labor should they win office), is an experienced conciliator. He has called on both parties. He knows both parties. He knows what the positions of both parties are. As of today, there is no basic change in the position of the parties despite these efforts by the Minister of Labor and the conciliator with respect to both of the positions. How long would the Tories have us wait? Why don't the Tories accept and acknowledge the fact that that situation existed last night? They knew that existed last night. Why would they have said, last night, that the negotiations need to be given yet another chance, after 15 or 16 days of a strike? Again, not casting any aspersions or making any judgment calls as to who's at fault, those are facts.

You can shuffle the deck as much as you want, but after 16 days there is no settlement. There was no prospect of a settlement last night, and yet the Conservatives in this province, in my judgment, acted wildly irresponsibly by holding up this House and this legislation last night on the pretense that there were negotiations when they knew full well that there weren't. They knew that to be the case then, and they know that to be the case today.

Even if there were some avenue of negotiation, what would the Conservatives have the government do? Somebody said, "Well, you have to bring them to the legislature." And then do what with them? Do what with the parties then? Mr. Speaker, I say that it is either naiveté or maliciousness which advocates that proposition. It is either naiveté or pure political purpose which causes them to say to the people of Saskatchewan, to the hospital workers, to the SHA, "Do something. We're not going to tell you what to do. We're not going to tell you that you should increase the offers. We're not going to tell you unions that you should down on the offers. Just do something." I say, Mr. Speaker, that that is a kind of position which lacks credibility. More importantly, on a matter of this serious nature and this gravity, dealing as it is with hospital care and the quality of hospital services, not only is it naiveté, but also it is irresponsible and not befitting the conduct of any political party that would seek political office and government in this province.

Then, of course, a third issue arose. I think I will talk about their attitude toward labor relations and toward the unions sometime this morning or perhaps early this afternoon, but let me just touch very briefly on their attitude toward the other side of the dispute, the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association (the SHA). In the course of this debate last night, Mr. Speaker, as we heard outside of the House, these members opposite have made what I think are absolutely insulting (that's not too harsh a word to use) descriptions of the SHA.

What does the member for Thunder Creek, who unfortunately just had to leave, call the SHA? "Your front men." That's what he calls them to the government. What does the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley call the SHA? He says, "You can overrule them. Bring them in and tell them what to do."

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that you can take a look at who the SHA is or isn't. I don't happen to know too many of the people involved. But I know this: if you look down the board of directors of the SHA, you see people like Walter Pappenfus, Harvey Fox, Dave Hart, John Margerison, Sister Therese Roddy, and on it goes. These are people, for good or for bad, who are community people who have been chosen to run independent local hospitals, to do the best job they can in providing health services for the people of their community, to do the best job that they can in getting along with the workers in their hospitals, even in the strained times we have here. They're making their best efforts.

They owe their independence or dependence to no one. They do it as a public service. They negotiate in the way they see fit. The hon. member for Thunder Creek has the audacity to call them "your front men." He has the audacity to say, "You call them and overrule them."

I want to tell the hon. Conservatives opposite and the people of the province of Saskatchewan that, for their information, the SHA is a body composed of representatives from all over the province. Again, whether they did the right thing in putting this amount on the table whether they did the right thing in their negotiation, is not for the moment an issue. I'll talk about that later on. But the issue that is raised is the arrogance of the Conservative caucus in saying that any government should simply roll over these independent, locally autonomous people and impose upon them the wishes of the government. Now that may sound good to some trade unionist, if rolling over the SHA is imposing a good settlement in the minds of the unionists, but if that principle is established, it cuts two ways — and someday there is going to be a Conservative or a Liberal government here which will roll over the SHA the other way and cut back any offers that the SHA would put on the table — the moment you establish that principle.

But these people opposite don't care, and they have no respect for the people who volunteered their services. They have no respect for the hours of work that have been put in by decent men and women on both sides to get an agreement. They want this government to roll over. Translated another way: if they were the government and if that settlement were too high or if the offer were too high, they would roll over the other way. Mr. Speaker, that's a principle that I don't subscribe to and I cannot subscribe to it as a member of this administration.

I know how people feel about strikes and industrial disputes. Some in this House may not believe it, but I acted, when I practiced law, exclusively for trade unions, including CUPE. Yes, exclusively for CUPE. I have never acted for any employer organization, but I know one thing about labor disputes — notwithstanding the emotion that exists in them at the time, there are always other days and other relationships and other arguments and fundamental principles that are at stake. And the fundamental principle that is at stake here is the principle of a government imposing upon the SHA or if you will, by corollary, on a union, its view of the settlement. The moment anybody falls into that trap, even if it should be momentarily acceptable in any one given dispute, I tell you that in the future, down the road, the concept of free collective bargaining and independence (because it cuts both ways) is seriously impaired and damaged. And I can only express my concern at the Conservatives for suggesting that kind of authoritarian approach. That was the third matter which I wanted to speak about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I'll come to that in a minute — about 1966 and 1971.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a fourth matter which needs some rebuttal. One of the most incredible statements that I think I've heard during the course of the dispute, and there have been many from the opposite side, is the statement made by the hon. member for Regina South who said that 1 per cent separates the parties in this dispute, that 1 per cent can solve the strike. That's what the member for Regina South said last night. He said, "if the government" — not the SHA, because we'd blow out the SHA, roll right over them, according to their view — "would simply blow out the SHA and go 1 per cent, this strike would be solved." That's what he said. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm interested in knowing the source of that member's information. I can speculate, of course, but I simply invite the members of the House to consider how credible that position is. Mr. Speaker, I invite you to do this: take the last advertisement of the SHA on wages, and the

proposal they laid out on the table, add 1 per cent to it, and ask if CUPE will buy that as a settlement. That's what the member for Regina South said they would do. That's what he said the 1 per cent would be. And I say, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Regina South either knows that is an absolutely false position to take — he knows that to be the case and he's using it accordingly to try to make mischief in this area — or in the alternative, he is doing it again deliberately, as we saw last night, to thwart the public will and the public need with respect to this legislation. Surely, Mr. Speaker, if it were 1 per cent on the positions — at least the one position which is published . . . I've not seen any position published from CUPE yet on this matter. There may be some published; I don't know. But take the one that is published — 1 per cent — from that point of view, to solve the strike. Mr. Speaker, is that a credible posture for any government, any SHA, any union, any member of this House to take as a basis for destroying the possibility of a free collective bargaining agreement? Of course, it wouldn't be; of course there is a wider gulf than that. However one computes the various factors that are in there, whether it is the 5-5-4 or the vacation or the dental plans or the salary rates, whatever it is, ultimately the two parties are apart by an amount which is more than 1 per cent.

You don't have to take my word for it — that clearly is the situation because of this kind of dispute. That member gets up and makes mischief and says that 1 per cent is the basis for holding it back. Mr. Speaker, I say that kind of toying, that kind of playing with emotions, with a factual situation, is again of the highest order of irresponsibility and is not deserving of any member of this Legislative Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I notice it is 1 o'clock. I will have another 15 or 20 minutes to go, and I can continue if the members want me to continue . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . So, we will continue straight through then?

The Assembly recessed until 2 p.m.