

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 7, 1983

EVENING SESSION

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Andrew that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Shillington.

Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, because of some events which have been previously scheduled for 7 o'clock this evening, I would move that the debate be adjourned and by leave resumed later this day.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Boutin: — Mr. Speaker, could I have permission to have leave to introduce special guests to this House?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you here today and through you, the Governor of the Lions Club, who is sitting in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Joe Saxinger.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Boutin: — Beside him is Mr. John Coid from Unity and behind him is Mike Kotelko from Cudworth, also.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Boutin: — Mr. Speaker, these individuals have walked from Saskatoon to Regina. The reason they have done this is for the Lions Eye Bank that Mr. Saxinger has been the spark plug actually to start this program going. And the reason for them walking all this way was to raise money for special equipment needed — and that is highly needed — in University Hospital, I believe, the equipment will be placed.

However, I would like again, to welcome each and every one of you, and I know that we in s take lots of pleasure and pride in the honour of having Mr. Saxinger as our Governor of the Lions. Please join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to join with my hon. colleague, the member from Kinistino, to congratulate the Lions Club of Saskatchewan for their superb effort, and especially Mr. Saxinger, who crusaded to get the eye, Lions Eye Bank of Saskatchewan established. And I think it will serve many people in the years to come. And, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Lions Club and you, Joe

Saxinger.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Communication

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, earlier this day the, the fourth report of the standing committee on communications was brought forward, and was scheduled to be moved later this day. And, at that time . . . I am going to be, I am going to be moving the motion to concur with the fourth report of the standing committee on communications.

Let me suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the fourth report contains one normal area, which is the area concerning the archive act, The Archives Act, and the scheduling and disposal of documents. The committee met this morning and went through all the documents, making additional changes and recommendations for a long-range policy that was started years ago, and slowly we're starting to see the effects of it.

The second part of the committee's meeting was on the allowance of photographers from the media, the accredited media, to continue taking the photos that they have been allowed to, during the throne and budget speech, from the press gallery — which was an experiment that just about concludes tomorrow. And the committee is recommending they be given that privilege to continue that as long as they follow the rules as were outlined in the committee and later.

The third portion of our report is the report re the television cameras in the committees of the House — basically, the crown corporation committee and the public accounts committee. This particular proposal was suggested that it be held for a short while, so that the caucuses could have a look at the documentation presented by the research staff, presented to make sure that whatever decision we make is a decision that we can all live with down the road, and is credible, and covers all the concerns. There is lengthy debate history on this particular issue in the House and in crown corporations that has happened.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first year public accounts committee has now been opened to the press. That has never happened before, and now we are now asking for the last thing basically that is not opened to the press: the television cameras in those two areas. During . . . Since the committee meeting, I have taken some time to check what happens in other parts of Canada.

In our report we provided with, it is indicated that certain provinces do allow the TV cameras into the committee, and they are Manitoba which allows the networks in, Ontario allows the networks in, Quebec which has an in-house system, and Newfoundland which allows the committee in. In doing some checking with Newfoundland today it seems that basically they cover the committee with, really with full sound film. The Ontario committee, they only come and cover the key issues. And in another area they only come in and take pictures and don't bother with sound.

So the whole data . . . What happens it seems . . . Now the history it seems is what really happens is this. Even though they have approval, if they don't come too often. They don't come too often, Mr. Speaker. And that was proven out in public accounts this year. As you will check in the records, we used to welcome the press when they

came an hour and a half after we'd started for the last half-hour and yet they put up quite a yelling that they thought they should have the privilege. We gave them the privilege.

And it was interesting to talk to the other provinces. They said it was a problem and they did have some problems, but they sort of got them ironed out as things moved down the road. And what was suggested this morning at our committee meeting was let's have all the caucuses look at it to make sure that we're moving properly and doing everything right. And that's basically all that was said.

And I can go back and quote April 10, 1980, April 21, 1981, newspaper columns and Mr. Romanow's speeches that I could have a great length of time repeating those. And some of my own speeches would be interesting to repeat to the House. And I checked all that document before I rose this evening because I assume I may hear some of my own words thrown back across the House to me. But the interesting this is, Mr. Member, and I'll quote just from a note that was made:

A member who knows that he's going to speak with something that may be interesting to the media will let them know just before he goes to speak in the committee. And the media will come in, take a couple clips of, a shot of what he says and leaves.

Now that's what's happening. The long and short of it in Ontario and in Manitoba as well; it seems like that the right to film the committee is used only as background and in most cases simply because it's too expensive and too boring for the cameras to hang around waiting for something good to happen. That's the actual practice is what's developed over the years. So they've had some history there. So let's make sure whatever we do is right and sound.

And the committee's recommendation, Mr. Speaker, is very simple. Let it go back to the caucuses and be brought forward again for the committee to handle and make a recommendation by the House. So basically, my . . . The motion I wish to move, and seconded by the member from The Battlefords, Mr. Miles Morin:

That the fourth report of the standing committee on communications now be incurred in.

I so move, seconded by the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I, I, I wish to make a few comments on, on this motion. I was interested in our meeting of the communications committee this morning to . . . I hear words from the member for Rosthern where he was expressing the need to go slowly with TV and committees in this legislature, and I find that interesting, knowing the history of this debate, as I am well sure that, that Mr. Speaker is aware of the debate that has gone on over the past number of years.

Only a few short months ago, in fact in December, in the crown corporations committee as recently as December 14, 1982, we had a debate and a discussion about whether TV should be allowed in the committee at that time, and the motion was brought forward even as recently as December 14 by the Minister of Highways, who was being very insistent that TV be allowed into the crown corporations committee at that time. And in part he said and I quote:

We have said we have an open-door administration. I believe the people of

Saskatchewan have the right to know exactly how their affairs are being administered.

End of quote. And he went on to make the motion which read that the standing committee on crown corporations allow television of its proceedings by commercial television media and that we refer this matter to the House immediately. I think in all the statements that have been made up to today by the former opposition, and now government, have been that we should be moving quickly to have TV included in crown corporations, in public accounts, and other committees of the legislature. And I think it came today as a complete surprise, with a, and as a bit of a shock to us, when the member from Rosthern began the debate on quite a different side of the story, where he is now telling us how we need to go slow on this matter of getting television into committees.

And I would just like to say that our position has been one of consistency, where we have said all along that we believe that TV should be allowed in crown corporations and other committees once it was established by the Assembly. I think we have reached that point in the history of this Assembly, and I think now is the time to move quickly in setting up an in-camera system in committees, and prior to that, as an interim measure, allowing commercial TV in the proceedings of our committees. And we will be voting in favour of this motion because I believe the motion basically says that this will allow the caucus of the government, as well as the opposition, a short period of time to review the matter and to get on with, and to get on with making a decision whether TV is allowed in committees or not.

But I would just like to make the point that I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan and the press, and in particular, the opposition, will be surprised and a little bit amazed if the government members carry on with this debate of attempting to delay television in the committees of the Saskatchewan legislature. And so with that, I would just like to conclude by saying that we are in favour of open government, as we have always been in committees, once it was established in this House. We are the people who, who began the process, who made the decision, even while in government, to proceed along the lines of getting TV involved in the House, and I'm sure that all members will agree with that. I'm proud of that record of the past government, and I hope that this government does not stand in the way of completing the opening up of government which will include the committees of this legislature.

Mr. Shillington: — . . . very much. I didn't come prepared to speak on this matter, Mr. Speaker, and that, and that may well make my remarks three times as long as they should be.

I want to, I just want to express a note of interest in the apparent hesitation in government caucus to allow the televising of the proceedings of the committees. The, the, the hesitation . . . I want to correct the member from Rosthern when he said the, the various caucuses were hesitant. There is no hesitation in the opposition caucus about having television in the, in the accounts committee. The hesitation is all in the, all in the government caucuses.

I can only assume, Mr. Speaker, that it has, it bears some relation to the kind of publicity they think that they've got out of those committees, and some of it has not been all that favourable, and I can understand why they wouldn't want their performance — some of them pretty dismal — being telecast around the province.

So, so while I can understand your concern about not enlarging the stage, I want to say that I think there is absolutely no logic to your hesitation. Surely if we're going to have television in the Assembly, then surely it makes sense to have the committees telecast as well, and it isn't . . . I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, the hesitation cannot be for lack of interest.

A year ago I might have believed that it might have been a waste of money to televise the committees, 'cause I frankly wasn't sure how much interest there would be in a committee which was open to the public, and I say of the public accounts committee — it's where I've spent all my time . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are you back-peddalling now, Ned, are you back-peddalling or what?

Mr. Shillington: — No, if you will just be patient I'm trying, I'm trying to, trying to fathom the reason for your back-peddalling.

The public accounts, the public accounts committee, I frankly wondered how much interest there would be in it. What I discovered is that there is a fair amount of interest in what goes on in public accounts, a degree of interest that surprised me. I've also been surprised, I've also been surprised in the amount of interest shown in the televising of this Assembly. I have very frankly been surprised at the audience that this Assembly enjoys. The audience, the audience enjoyed, the audience enjoyed by the national, by the national, by the national parliament is, I think, at times pretty minimal, but I have been surprised at the number of people who watch the proceedings and who, on the week-end, or whenever they catch up to you, say, 'Say, I saw that exchange or whatever it is, and I' . . . and they'll tell you how they felt about it. I'm surprised at the number of people who watch, watch the proceedings, and take enough of an interest to tell you about it later on. So, you people certainly aren't back-peddalling because of lack of interest unless your experience is very different than mine.

The, I just want to relate why I, one of the reason why I'm so surprised, Mr. Speaker. The member from Rosthern will recall, on December 1, an incident that occurred in the public accounts committee. Television . . . One, television media wanted into public accounts and wanted to televise the proceedings. My response to them was, outside the door, 'I see no fault with it; I'm prepared to agree to it, but I just want to check it with the committee.' Checked it with various members, including the member from Rosthern. We agreed, sure, no problem.

He and I walked . . . the . . . We were then informed, Mr. Speaker, by the Clerk, that, that, that, that, that was premature, and that we could not . . . I see the member from Rosthern nodding his head, so I'm accurately relating the events . . . It was not . . . We then discovered we were premature, that we could not allow television into the public accounts committee until after the television was in the Assembly, and we therefore informed the, the television people that we did not have it within our power to allow them in. But it was agreed by all concerned, it was agreed by all concerned in public accounts that we were going to allow television in last fall, only a, something of a technical ruling prevented us from doing it.

So I've heard from the, heard from the member from Rosthern who admits a degree of inconsistency in his approach, and it's an interesting degree of inconsistency. I'd love to know the reason for it. I don't think the member from Rosthern . . . He is so timorous

he's afraid that he's going to be, going to come out badly in the, in the public accounts.

I'd be interested as well in hearing from the vice-chairman of the public accounts committee, who also agreed to allow television before public accounts on December 1, and who similarly agreed that, that . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Yes . . . well, I . . . Okay, I'm very interested in hearing from the vice-chairman of the public accounts committee, because we had agreed to let them come before the committee, and we had told them that. We had then, we then discovered, we then discovered that the, we then discovered that we couldn't, and a technical rule prevented us from doing it, but we had agreed to allow them to come before the committee. And I just don't understand what it is you know today that you didn't know last December 1, and why it is your judgement on this matter is so different than it used to be.

There's . . . the . . . and I, I say that . . . I relate the proceedings before the public accounts committee. I think it's fair to say the members of the public accounts committee are going to be disappointed if we, if we, if we don't allow television in. So I hope you people, I hope you people find the courage of your convictions. I hope you allow television before the public accounts. We're going to be voting in favour of the report, because this report does in fact decide the issue. But there is going to be a nasty rumble, I tell the members of the House, there's going to be a nasty rumble, if we, if the government uses its overwhelming majority to prevent television from coming before the committees.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to first comment with regard to the, the . . . I understand the members of the opposition are asking for an in-house system, and I think it's, it's fundamental that when, that we . . . We've had the television cameras now since this session started, and I think it is, has proven out very successful. I think it's very important that we stay with the in-house system, as opposed to going to a, the private sector cameras, and I assume that's what the members opposite are saying, Mr. Speaker. And, and I think it is proven that way, and I think that throughout the system I can agree with them that we should have the in-house system expanded down the road as we go with it, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think that the government has to apologize, Mr. Speaker, for opening up the government of the province of Saskatchewan. Number one, with regard to the now chairman of the public accounts committee, I can assure those members in the House that were not here in the previous legislature that there wasn't television cameras in the public accounts committee. There wasn't any kind of media in the public accounts committee.

We in the, on the opposition, suggested that surely we should be starting to open up the system a little bit to the media, but, oh, what kind of howls we heard from the members opposite: 'It would destroy the whole concept of public accounts — absolutely destroy the concept.' That was the, that was all the words echoed from the 44 that used to sit over here. 'Stay away from that, stay away from that type of system,' they always said, Mr. Speaker. That's what we had.

Now, in our term of 11 months, Mr. Speaker, what have we seen? We've seen the public accounts open to the media. We have seen television for the first time, Mr. Speaker, brought into the Assembly — brought into the Assembly by this government, Mr. Speaker. Brought into this Assembly by this government. So I am encouraged at least by the members opposite saying that we should have an in-house system.

But now they're talking, now they're talking, 'Well, you know, you guy's deficit's too high; you're spending too much money here, there, and the next place.' So all of a sudden — zip! You know, they're going to say, 'Well, we can just go ahead and spent another \$200,000 to get another system over there.' The concept that we set up, Mr. Speaker, the concept that we set up in the entire legislature is a board of internal economy, and they were the people that budgeted for the expenditures of the Legislative Assembly and this particular Legislative Assembly Office. That was the function of it.

Now what they're saying is, 'Let's not use that any more; let's just go ahead and spend \$200,000.' Well, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear any, any proposals by the members of the opposition who have two of the six members on the board of internal economy. I never heard any proposals by them, Mr. Speaker, that we should budget \$200,000 for some television. I'm sure if we go through and peruse the board of internal economy we'll find nothing of the sort, because it didn't happen, Mr. Speaker. All of a sudden now, the brainwave from the minister, from the member from Regina Centre is somehow, 'Well, just another \$200,000.' And that explains the way they try to run things, Mr. Speaker. Just 200,000 here, a million there, another million here, another million there, and then they've got the audacity to come up and say, 'Hey, we shouldn't have a deficit.' Mr. Speaker, I think this government stands on its record for the last 11 months to show what we've done in opening up this government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — We've, we've opened up the public accounts, Mr. Speaker; we have brought television into the Assembly, Mr. Speaker; and we've taken government that goes across the province listening to the people. And I don't think we have to apologize to those folks over there for open government, and a wide open government that listens to the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Speaker, when I, when I moved my motion, the motion earlier, I was very careful not to get into some of the arguments that have gone on in the long past. I referred to them slightly, but didn't really want to quote Mr. Romanow, of April 21st, which indicated . . .

An Hon. Member: — Who's he?

Mr. Katzman: — The former member from Riversdale . . . I think he used to sit right there . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please! Order, please! The hon. member is trying to make a few comments, and I would like to hear them, and I would ask for order so we can hear them.

Mr. Katzman: — You know, he said that the whole structure of the committee had to be changed before we could have the media in. He said that instead of having the deputy ministers there to answer the questions, they had to have the politicians there. Now you noticed when this new government opened that committee, and the, that we didn't bother changing to bringing in the politicians. We thought that the deputy ministers were quite capable of answering the questions, and the committee would not turn political, as you suggested when you were government, and your chief spokesman on

all needs.

I'm glad that the member from Shaunavon indicates that following the former minister, the attorney-general, Mr. Romanow, is, is a bad example to follow. I know that he's looking for leadership over there, and that's why he doesn't want that man referred to . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please! We're on a fairly narrow subject, and the debate is on the report of the committee, and I would ask the member to stay on the subject.

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Speaker, I heed your words, and I apologize for being led astray by answering comments across the floor.

But as I indicated earlier, and the most surprising comment came from the member from, from across the floor, when he made the comment: in-camera system. I didn't hear him when he addressed us earlier, make any comment about using the existing media. His comment was the in-house system: the \$200,000 we should find like that. That's what he was saying, that as they say they cry about our deficit. They say, 'Oh yes, but we want this for us. Therefore we should spend the \$200,000.' As the Minister of Finance indicated, I also sit on the board of internal economy and I heard no mention from their members during internal economy about additional funds for an in-house system. Mr. Speaker, that alone shows the flipping they're doing. You know, I could spend, I think, a good hour referring to the May 21st, 1980 debates as well as the April 21st debates and the reports in the *Leader-Post* and *Star-Phoenix* that all indicate the long debate that we've had on this issue.

But I will tell you one thing, Mr., members of the House: this government, when it was in opposition, made certain recommendations. In 11 months we've acted on them re this committee. We have opened public accounts for the press to come to. There is now TV operating in the House and if the members are all . . . I think are all aware, the . . . where we deliver the signal to is paid for by the Assembly and is an expense and is going to be reviewed by that committee on what we should do after the session is over.

So with all those in mind, I'm quite surprised that the members over on the other side who were . . . in 1980 and '81 didn't want anything to happen, put the brakes on it, used their big majority to take the opposition and say, 'No way.' You used your majority of 44 members against 15 to say, 'No way. You can't have it.' Now, now all of a sudden they're concerned 'cause the tables are turned. But I tell you, since we've been in government, we have brought in some of the things we asked for in opposition where it is concerning the openness of the media. We suggested, even, if I remember correctly (and I'm going back), that the, the photographs should be allowed. Part of this motion tonight is allowing those pictures to be taken. And so they will continue next week and for, for on, following the rules during the trial period. All these things are happening under this government, with this big majority if you want to call it that, because we're doing it step by step and honestly and fairly.

And therefore, I support this motion in total for the reason that it's being sensible and responsible, not just saying, 'We want, we want.' We're putting a set . . . We're going to worry about budgeting and everything else and take it step by step. Therefore I'm pleased to have moved this motion.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Andrew that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Shillington.

Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and in response to the spirited pleas from the member from Weyburn, I'm happy to get up again and resume the debate and pick up with the remarks where I left off earlier this afternoon when I was interrupted by supper time.

At that point, Mr. Speaker, you may recall I was complimenting the Minister of Health on the fine job he is doing, and the imagination that he is bringing to his position.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Maxwell: — I was also saying that it was a measure of the man that the chiropody services program is being initiated and going ahead. I say, 'a measure of the man,' Mr. Speaker, because he listened and responded to the needs and the concerns and the requests of many residents of the province, particular senior citizens who had contacted him. One other thing I may say about the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, and for the benefit of the members to my right: they have the Minister of Health to thank for my participation in politics at the provincial level because he was the man who talked me into running provincially.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Maxwell: — Surveys by Saskatchewan Health, Mr. Speaker, have indicated that 48 per cent of the general population and 80 per cent of the adult population have foot problems. Consequently the government will be initiating the development of a provincial chiropody program during the fiscal year 1983-84 — real help to those people who really require it. Mr. Speaker, the measures I mentioned are but a few that will be implemented by the government, and the people of this province can look forward to excellent comprehensive health care in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, turning now to another matter. In the debate on the throne speech, I spoke on the needs for increased technical education, the need for more spaces at our technical institutes and the need for high-technology programs because high technology is the future of the province. I'm pleased to see that these needs are indeed being addressed as a result of the new budget that was brought in. Let's take a brief look at the present technical institute situation and this will become more clear.

The present institute training capacity is 5,500 training places, roughly 4,000 short of the projected annual labour requirements for this province by the year 1990. The range of training programs is narrow, with major employment sectors seriously underrepresented. For example, mining, forestry, petroleum, manufacturing and agriculture. The present institute populations are drawn primarily from the institute's city and its surrounding communities. For example, Kelsey drew 66 per cent, 66 per cent of its 1981 population within a 200 kilometre radius of Saskatoon. Distant rural

residents are seriously underrepresented in the institute system. To counter the imbalanced participation from around the institute cities, the government is proposing to provide training in major population cities around the province, including the North, through the Saskatchewan Skills Extension Program.

Further to this, the province's inadequate training capacity is highlighted when compared to other provinces. The percentage of young people aged between 18 and 24 years of age pursuing full time training in Saskatchewan is below 50 per cent of the average in the other three western provinces. In fact, Mr. Speaker and New Brunswick have the lowest training ratio in the country. To counter this we will be adding 1,200 new training places this year, and new programs will be initiated.

You know, Mr. Speaker, until recently the mark of an educated person was the ability to speak two languages; *en cole j'ai etudie la langue francais*. Well now, that second language is being replaced. And the second language of today, the language that is the mark of the educated person, is a language of computer technology. It will become increasingly important in the years ahead that our students become comfortable with and knowledgeable about computers. So new computer-related programs are being introduced in Kelsey, Wascana Institute, and STI in Moose Jaw.

I won't list them all, but it is an impressive array of programs that will be in place this year and next. Some programs that were available only in other provinces will be added — for example, graphic arts, drywall construction — and many programs will be expanded. These are just a few of the exciting thrusts being initiated by this government. And they reflect our confidence in the future and in the youth of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to take just a couple of moments to show how the budget contains beneficial measures for my constituency, the Turtleford constituency. Approximately \$6.5 million of capital construction will be injected into the Turtleford constituency this year. Included in that figure is over \$2 million for highway construction. And a couple of long awaited projects will finally get off the ground, for example, Highway 378, south of Spiritwood and the Blatz-Nolan access. We've been trying for years to get action on these particular roads, but to no avail. This government has delivered to the people of the Turtleford constituency.

This will definitely be an exciting year for the town of Spiritwood, my home town. In addition to the \$850,000 worth of construction allotted to the Spiritwood Separate School, plans are being made for the construction of an extended care home in Spiritwood with a value well in excess of \$2.25 million. I remember when I was mayor of Spiritwood and also a member of the hospital board, working hard with my colleagues and with other concerned citizens to convince the former government of the absolute need in that area for Level 3 and 4 care. I made this project my number one priority as the elected representative of that area and I want to tell the folks of Spiritwood back home, I did not let you down!

Mr. Speaker, the people of Turtleford will be well served by our government and this is reflected in the excellent budget presented by the Minister of Finance. It is y pleasure to support the main motion and vote against the hastily conceived and poorly contrived amendment. And Mr. Speaker, if I ay say so, if we need any further clincher that this indeed was a first class budget, I'd like to point out that this government has not imposed any import tax on haggis. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise tonight to speak on the, on the budget, a budget that . . . I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I most certainly can't concur with the member from Turtleford. His constituency was, was awarded with a lot of money out of that budget, and I can only say that northern Saskatchewan was totally left out.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — I, I want to, I want to start off by making a few remarks, Mr. Speaker, on what the Minister of Highways had to say in here last evening. I wish that he was here right now so that he could hear my comments, because I think, Mr. Speaker, the programs that he was talking about were programs that were started by the former NDP government and stalled for well over a year, and now he's reannouncing these programs.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make just a couple of comments about the wild exaggerations and misleading information contained in the remarks yesterday by the member for Wilkie, the Minister of Highways. But I wish to, to concentrate particularly on the abandonment of northern transportation needs by this Conservative government. I would also like to set the record straight for some of the minister's wild, contorted figures.

First, he proudly and quite improperly boasts of a 12 per cent increase in the Highways budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, in a budget with an overall increase of less than 7 per cent, a Highways increase of 12 per cent is pretty difficult to believe, particularly with such, such a weak minister involved. Twelve per cent, he boasts. But let's look at the facts. Let's look at the figures in the estimates themselves.

When we take the 1983-84 Department of Highways budget which now includes all moneys for the North and for transportation agency and for the highway traffic board, we get a total of 221.1 million. That's on page 9 of the estimates. Now when we take from the same page 9 and from page 63 all of the funds budgeted for the same Highways and Transportation activities from their first budget last November, we get a total of 213.5 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we clearly see that instead of a 12 per cent increase that he boasts, instead of the 7 per cent that most of his colleagues got, this minister managed to get an increase of only 3.6 per cent for all Highways and Transportation activities — about half of the overall average budgetary increase this year — not 12 per cent, but less than 4 per cent.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the minister boasts so proudly of his \$110 million capital budget. He was ashamed to compare it, however, to the total capital budget of the Conservatives' first budget last year, which was not 110 million, but 112.8 million when northern highways capital is included. So on, so on his capital budget he has not even maintained his overall 3.6 per cent increase, but has had a natural decrease of \$2.8 million. Now the results of this cutback in the overall capital program can be clearly seen by simply adding to the figures in the 1983-84 project array tabled by the minister on Wednesday.

We see a total value network for 1983-84 of 858 kilometres. When we compare that to the total volume achieved in 1981-82 by the NDP administration two years ago, we see that is not 858 kilometres, but 1,148 kilometres, a 25 per cent cut in volume of improvements to our provincial highway system, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the issue of northern highways in particular. And the minister was talking about the completion of Highway 155 to La Loche. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the completion of Highway 155 to La Loche was budgeted for in the last NDP budget, and would have been completed but as soon as this government took over they completely cancelled that project and they never moved one inch on Highway 155 north of Buffalo Narrows to complete the length to La Loche. Not one inch of road was opened up, Mr. Speaker, totally left it out . . . just forgot about it.

Then he, then he boasts about the road from, from Beauval to Dillon — that they are going to complete the road to, from Beauval to Dillon. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the road from Beauval to Dillon just had about 12 kilometres to be finished, and that was completely stopped by the Department of Highways and the Department of Northern Saskatchewan — only a small portion of that road was worked on last summer. They talk about the Dillon road to Michel village. The same thing applies there.

And what happened to all this money, Mr. Speaker? The money that they, that was allotted for northern highways, six point some million dollars was taken out of the northern highway projects, was totally cancelled last year and transferred to southern Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, they transferred six-point-some-million from the South, from the North to the South, but they did put some back. Because they had a highway program this winter where they put 1.6 million back into northern Saskatchewan.

And I think it's pretty clear, I think it's pretty clear just where the priorities of the Minister of Highways lie. And I want to, and I want to, and I want to say to this legislature, Mr. Speaker, that only a few days after this government took power the Minister of Highways cancelled a scheduled bus route from Meadow Lake to La Loche, a very important route for the people of northern Saskatchewan. Within, within days after this government took power, they cancelled that bus route to La Loche. Who did that? It was done by the Minister of Highways. He cancelled it. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, as I said before in this House, as soon as the election . . . As soon as the Conservative government took power I knew that the citizens of northern Saskatchewan were in trouble. Highways programs were cut off. Housing projects were cut off. It only took them a couple days to cut the bus line off.

Then I want to, I want to refer, Mr. Speaker, to another request that was made by myself to the Minister of Highways. I requested, in writing, on July 6, 1982, that a committee be set up of members of the legislature to tour northern Saskatchewan — on July 6, 1982. As of today the minister has not answered or acknowledged this letter. Has not even answered the letter. I asked that the committee be set up to go into northern Saskatchewan, to take some Conservative members and some New Democratic members and just see what the situation is in there, before they pulled out all the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and moved them to . . . (inaudible) . . . departments.

He didn't have the courtesy to answer that letter, Mr. Speaker. That, that, I tell you, indicates just where the priorities of this Conservative government is. Most certainly, it's not with people, and it's not with people of northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, since April 26th we have seen nothing but a deterioration in northern Saskatchewan. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan has been pulled out, and nothing has been put back in to replace it. Highway programs have been cancelled, and studied, and slowed down. The bus route was . . . The bus route was cancelled within days. Unemployment is running from 75 per cent to 95 per cent in northern Saskatchewan in pretty well every town. And the minister and, and, and the hon. member for Moosomin . . . When I, when I bring out these kinds of figures, he sits there and laughs, and he makes jokes in this. He makes jokes in this. And he used to be the critic for northern Saskatchewan. And he was a pretty . . . (inaudible) . . . critic of northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But now he smirks and he laughs when I talk about the high unemployment rate. And the member from Weyburn . . . He's not in his seat neither, Mr. Speaker. When he sits over there, he smirks when we talk about the problems in the province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that what we see happening in Saskatchewan today is a good indication of what is really going on. And, and I, and I hear the members. They're all laughing and joking. They figure it's pretty good. The member for Weyburn referred to us as hypocrites. That's fine. He can laugh, and he can joke about that. But I don't think it's, it's anything to be joked at. And I think it's very unparliamentary . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh. And he says he wasn't joking, Mr. Speaker. That's, that's the kind of arrogance that we have in the Conservative Party that sits across in the government benches. And I tell you, you guys are all going to come to your senses one of these days because, as the member from Moosomin said in this House, 'History will repeat itself,' and I want to warn you that it will repeat your, itself. And just think back, 50 years back, if you want to look back and think about the history of this province, think back 50 years ago, when you guys were in power. You were in power from 1925 . . . 1929 to '34, and history will repeat itself. And I tell you, and or those who don't know what happened in 1934, the Conservative government was thrown out with not one seat.

So I say, with all the unemployment that's going on in this province and you guys you say that things are good, I tell you they are not good. There is a serious problem out there and you're going to have to answer to that. And you can smirk, and you can sit there and smirk, and you can laugh when we talk about the high unemployment rate, and the high welfare rolls that we have in this province. But I tell you, you're going to have to answer to that. You're going to have to answer for all that. But I say, and I say to the member from Moosomin who was the critic for northern Saskatchewan, and he knows of the problems; he was up there and had a look at them. And I think he, he is, he is an individual that should be, he should be, he should be supporting this government.

Mr. Speaker, I, I was very disappointed when I see a budget and I see that northern Saskatchewan is just about totally left out. I see where they, they're going to put, they're going to put in a new municipal act. That's fine. Things aren't going to get started until the northern municipal act is in there. And I say things have to get started very fast because they have deteriorated now for about a year, and when you take a look at the situation that we have, and the feeling amongst the people of northern Saskatchewan, it's very, very serious.

And it has serious effects, not just in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. One just has to drive down to Meadow Lake and go into the business community of Meadow Lake, and the first thing they tell you: 'What is going on in northern Saskatchewan? We just don't see anybody down here any more buying any commodities.' They're not selling any cars and it's, and it's becoming very serious, and it's and it's . . . And to show you

just how important northern Saskatchewan was, and when it was booming for, for 10, 11 years under the NDP government, you can go into Prince Albert and talk to business people, and you can go into North Battleford and they'll tell you the same thing. Something has gone wrong in northern Saskatchewan. We just don't see the folks up there any more, and the reason for that is what I have just indicated in the House. Nothing in the budget to solve the problems that we have.

Another, they talked about training, training our unskilled labour force in the province. And the first thing they did, they cut \$300,000 off of the community college budget - \$300,000 cut, and that's where their priorities are.

I was disappointed when I . . . In the budget when, for Health, and I didn't see a new hospital announced . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . I, I really, I really expected that new hospital.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say that I'm very, very disappointed in this budget. The citizens of Saskatchewan are very disappointed, and I think that time will bear that out, that this group of Conservatives across the floor are going to have to answer for the way they're treating the citizens of this province, for the money that they're giving to the oil companies, the removal of the gas tax. And who does that benefit? CP truckers who drive through this, through this . . . (inaudible) . . . And as a result of taking that \$140 million on gas tax off . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . We now, we now see an increase in our premiums with SGI, where, where they were . . . Twenty per cent of that gas tax went to SGI to underwrite the losses. Now what do we have? We have increases in everything — increases in telephone, increases insurance, lack of opportunities for the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I, I see my time is up, and I think it's quite apparent that I will not be supporting the budget, but I will be supporting the amendment to the budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mrs. Caswell: — Gee, too bad . . . (inaudible) . . . write a good speech. Thank you, thank you, Mr. . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . You guys have to be kind to me. I have a cold, so be quiet, Weiman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back.

It is with some confusion and amusement that I've been listening to the hon. members in the opposition decry the deficit in the budget. I could not quite understand why they are objecting to a deficit. Could it be that they are really closet Conservatives? Could it be the reason I couldn't find conservative economic books in the library was they were all in the NDP caucus? Could it be they have now embraced supply side economics and will soon demand a constitutional amendment that there must be a balanced budget? They probably have secret pictures of Ronald Reagan.

But no, no, that's can't be. That explanation is too unbelievable and not feasible, because the opposition also objects to any cuts in government size and government spending. The opposition wants no changes from their big government, big-spending practices, Mr. Speaker, but the opposition also objects to a deficit. Therefore, the opposition must be objecting because the taxes have not been increased sufficiently, or at all, except for trivia like cigarettes.

There can no, be no other way to put consistency in the NDP criticism except to assume

the NDP want to increase taxes. Now, of course, an increase in taxes would be disastrous. To continue the NDP course of big government, big-government spending and high taxes was, and would be, disastrous and the people of Saskatchewan knew it and know it.

As government takes more and more of a person's or business's wealth, several things happen. This is very simplistic. Anyone can understand it, but, but the province has been running for several years as if people, as if some people don't. So I will spell it out.

Number one, when taxes increase, people leave to other provinces, or to the United States. That is why, in Saskatchewan, we have lost a million people, and many of those people who left Saskatchewan are those with, people with initiative and drive, who could have made Saskatchewan great or greater.

Barbara Amiel, in her book *Confessions*, states,

I began to understand that one simple way to measure the desirability of a society is whether people can leave it when they want to, and whether more people want to get into it than want to get out.

One can't parallel the NDP's Saskatchewan and the communist eastern European countries completely without making too light the suffering of eastern Europeans. However, it does seem in Saskatchewan, for the last 40 years, more people were leaving Saskatchewan than coming to Saskatchewan. As one person told me, 'It took me 10 years to make enough money so I could leave.'

Number two. What happens when there's high taxes? High taxes create a situation where more and more government services are required and expected. When people do not have enough money to look after themselves and their family, more tax supported medical services, dental services, nursing homes, etc. are required. When people do not have money to give to charities, recreations, and cultural events, more taxpayer money is needed in those areas. Now you people better listen, because I'm doing it for your benefit.

When people do not have money to invest to build and expand their businesses, they cannot maintain and establish jobs for other people. Unemployment is increased, more taxpayer money must go to financing financial assistance programs.

An Hon. Member: — See, they're not listening.

Mrs. Caswell: — Oh well, somebody . . . That's all right. We'll continue.

Number three . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Great. Now listen carefully.

Number three: when taxes are increased, people's productivity and pride in their work is decreased. For some reason, people are willing to work harder and longer. They enjoy the work more when more financial rewards go into their pockets than go into the government's pocket. For some reason, people like working for themselves and seeing benefit from their work.

Number four. What happens when taxes are increased? The government has the resources to intervene more and more into the private lives of individuals. Perhaps the NDP know this. The individual has less resources to fight this constant erosion of

personal freedom and privacy.

Number five. What happens when taxes are increased? There's a point when taxes are increased that there is less and less money in governmental coffers. When people cannot make a profit, they do not pay taxes. Sometimes governments get so greedy, they demand so much from the taxpayer, they cause a decrease in the number of taxes and in the amount of taxes collected.

When taxes were cut in California, it was found that no essential services had to be cut, because the tax decrease stimulated the economy and thus increased the tax base.

Not only has this province and country suffered through the statist mentality of the Liberal-NDP coalition governments, it has suffered through a pop ideology that is anti-growth and anti-business. Profit is seen, and has been seen, as a dirty word. Any businessman that dared to make a profit deserved to have the government regulate him and tax him out of business. Of course, when a business does not make a profit, there are no taxes paid, no jobs maintained or created. But this didn't seem to bother people. By the popular myth went: it was bad to be a businessman, and worse to be a successful one. What is good, goes the myth, is a centrist, government-planned economy. Lorne Nystrom, NDP MP from Yorkton-Melville, had a very interesting article about that in a March issue of *Globe and Mail*. If one ever questions that Trudeau and the NDP have the same philosophy, it is worth while to read that article.

An Hon. Member: — They always vote the same, anyhow.

Mrs. Caswell: — Right on.

There are many fine points in our finance minister's budget. There's an honest and successful attempt to streamline government. Some of those measures deserve to be quoted for those who may have missed the finance minister's speech, or forgot it. Quote:

Through careful management of the expenditures proposed in our November budget, we estimate departments and agencies of government will be able to turn back to the treasury a further 30 million in 1982-83.

We have a finance minister and cabinet that sets goals, plans how to reach those goals, and then accomplishes those goals. I quote the finance minister again:

In my budget address in November I announced that planned government spending would be cut by 170 million in the 1982-83 fiscal year, without affecting essential services. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that we have in fact exceeded that target.

This is a very, a fine accomplishment for a government that has inherited an NDP chaos and mess.

I am especially pleased that in many instances the government machinery and taxpayer dollars are going to be used not to compete with or destroy the private sector, but are being used to return to the private sector capital and programs that will strengthen an economy more independent of government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mrs. Caswell: — Examples are: the agriculture division of the heritage fund will be initially used to fund the farm purchase program. It is much better to have government help farmers own land, rather than help government grab land, grab land from the taxpayer with the taxpayers' money.

Number two example: our government will assist Saskatchewan business to compete for contracts from large firms, crown corporations and the government.

Number three, our government will open a new trade office in the United States and promote Saskatchewan businesses outside the province.

Number four, our government will give a 20 million tax reduction for small businesses. This program allows small businesses a rebate of 5,000 for every employee hired. The cabinet ministers and government communications will outline in detail to the satisfaction of the business community these plans. But I was impressed as I was working through Saskatoon-Westmount papers, and I realized how many small businesses I have in my area. It is traditionally called the union seat, and indeed there are many workers who will be very pleased to have a budget that helps them find jobs, helps their children find jobs, but also helps them in their small businesses. And this is indeed a very good budget for my area, Saskatoon-Westmount.

We have, we have a government that is helping to re-establish in Saskatchewan confidence in the individual ability to control his own destiny.

Thomas Jefferson said, 'The best government is the one that governs the least.' After years of nanny statism, that sounds a very strange notion. However, in Saskatchewan I believe people have confidence in this government because its members recognize the limitations of government. They recognize sometimes government creates problems by trying to solve all human problems. To quote an old-time CCF-NDP supporter, who is now an ex-NDPer in my constituency, 'I didn't mind when the NDP thought they were next to God, but when they started acting like God, then I had enough.' I believe people will continue to have confidence in this government, because we're not prepared to play at omnipotence. A vigorous and thriving economic community ultimately depends on the people who are willing to work and the people who are willing to take risks. I trust and I believe we are moving towards a government that allows initiative to be rewarded, and I congratulate the Minister in Finance in taking this very important step, and I support his budget. I do not support the amendment.

Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of the fine people of the Weyburn constituency, and join in the debate on the recent budget, and first and foremost, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance for an absolutely excellent budget. It is a budget that acknowledges the times we live in; it acknowledges the time of recession with understanding, responsibility and compassion.

It is a budget that understands the number one problem facing people in Saskatchewan today — unemployment. And, it deals with it in a responsible and compassionate manner, for no one likes the humiliation and indignity of unemployment. Understanding, responsibility and compassion — that is the commitment of the Minister of Finance, his cabinet colleagues and the very successful leadership of Premier Grant Devine, that Premier Grant Devine brings to government.

It has been said, Mr. Speaker, that the measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with — and no one will disagree that unemployment is a tough problem to deal with — it has been, it has been said that the measures of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether you have the same problem that you had last year. Well, what were the problems facing the people of Saskatchewan last year? Number one, health care was not receiving the attention it deserves; number two, we had high interest rates; number three, we had burdensome gas taxes; number four, we had inflation; number five, the family farm was under siege, due to high interest rates; number six, we had unbridled utility rates complicated by massive losses at SGI, and so on, and so on, Mr. Speaker. And, I ask the Assembly: are we facing the same problems this year? And, the answer in a word, Mr. Speaker, is no.

Granted, inflation is still lurking out there, but it has been relegated to the corner of the door, soon to be pushed right out the door in Saskatchewan. But, you only have to look at the success the Devine government has had in dealing with these tough problems. And you only have to look at the commitment that was so well put in the commitment brochure delivered to many thousands of homes in this province one year ago today, the commitment the Devine Tories made to the people of Saskatchewan, and it reads, page after page, outlining the problems and how they would be remedied. This is the commitment they gave to the people of Saskatchewan, and this is what, in fact, has been carried out, Mr. Speaker.

The high interest rates were and are being acknowledged by programs like the mortgage interest rebate program and the farm purchase program, and, you know, Mr. Speaker, the other night in budget debate, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition was in fine theatrical style, a side of him previously not seen before the advent of television in the Chambers.

At any rate, at any rate, the Leader of the Opposition in spectacular fashion, brought in a wad of money, and I believe it was 50 ten dollar bills, and with it, he was going to put the budget in perspective. He was busy conjuring up pictures of laying bills end to end from here to Vancouver or wherever it was. In fact I think if one checks the, the record, Mr. Speaker, he was actually . . .

They say imitation is a serious form of flattery. And he was using a Reagan technique. And he pointed out how one of his favourite ploys is to illustrate just how large a deficit is, by bringing it down to terms which he hopes other people can understand. And to do that, the Leader of the Opposition got a pack of 50 ten dollar bills and conjured up these pictures of laying bills end to end from here to Vancouver or wherever it was. And he wanted to bring the budget down to terms people could understand. Well I'd like to take that same stack of bills, Mr. Speaker, and put it in perspective as well.

Now it took me a considerable longer time to be able to put together \$500 that it did the Leader of the Opposition. But I was able to scrap, put it together. And to put things in perspective a little bit, Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition did, and it's a, it's a . . . It's a good method to use, because when you speak in the hundreds of millions of dollars so often in this House and in budget debate and in millions of dollars, people in Saskatchewan do have trouble comprehending exactly what those numbers mean.

For example if you looked at page 93 on the estimates, '83-84 estimates, and I just picked this page out because it happens to be open, Supply and Services, vote 13, item 22, central survey and mapping, \$1,716,870. That sounds like a lot of money and the

average person on the street and, and even maybe then not-so-average person wouldn't particularly relate to what central survey and mapping and \$1.7 billion budget would do.

But one thing we found out from the people of Saskatchewan last year and this time was they might not understand that kind of number and those kinds of contexts, but tell them that a government is wasting thousands of dollars on a bathtub in government offices and they understand that very well. Because people know what bathtubs should cost and they know they shouldn't cost thousands of dollars.

But it's hard for people to understand whether their 1.7 million expenditures for central survey and mapping is a good expenditure or not. So using a technique such as the Leader of the Opposition used with a packet of money does have its uses, and I would like to expand on those a little further. If you did take these bills which he was wanting to lay end to end from here to the Pacific Ocean, I think it was, I would have to tell him that he would have to take this pack — he was going to lay it down once. Well he would have to lay it down twice to equal the Minister of Health's budget. But he didn't use that analogy. You wouldn't lay it down once. You would have to lay it down twice and you still wouldn't equal the, equal the Minister of Health's budget for the up-coming year. It's nearly \$1 billion.

You know, there used to be a television program on a program about a superhuman individual performing superhuman feats. And this program was called, 'The Six Million Dollar Man.' Well in Saskatchewan we have our own version in the person of the Hon. Graham Taylor, the Minister of Health. But he's not just a six-million dollar man; he's the billion dollar man. No user fees in this province, Mr. Speaker. No shirking of the honest responsibility of health care in this province. A billion dollar budget shows the kind of commitment the Devine government is prepared to make for health care. It is this kind of commitment, Mr. Speaker, that will take Saskatchewan from number eight to number one in health care. Medicare will be returned to its rightful place — a billion dollar budget.

And yet it was the NDP that perpetrated untruths and myths upon the public just one year ago, once again trying to suggest that if the Tories were elected medicare would be gone. Scare tactics designed to frighten people for pure political reasons; scare tactics designed to frighten the elderly people. However, the people of Saskatchewan were to be duped no longer. The game of deficit and distortion, or deceit and distortion rather, was over on April 26, 1982. Medicare under Devine Tories is alive and well in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker. The myth, the deceit, the distortion, the scare tactics being used on people will not work again by the NDP.

What we have seen is increased spending on health care, rationalization of ambulance services, rationalization of nursing home care, new hospitals, cancer treatment facilities, and so on, and so on, Mr. Speaker. I, along with all the people of Saskatchewan should and in fact do applaud the efforts of the Minister of Health and his team dedicated to making Saskatchewan's health care number one in the country.

Well secondly, Mr. Speaker, if you took this stack of money you would find that you need several stacks to equal that being put into the bank accounts of the many people in my constituency enjoying the benefits of the mortgage interest rebate program. One stack wouldn't do it for what the average person receives out there in benefits — 39,000 individuals receiving rebates currently at a value something in the order of \$23 million, and it is estimated by the end of the second year of the program some \$57.5

million, Mr. Speaker. Individuals in my area every month, just like clockwork, receiving this kind of help, help. And in fact, if you even took the average payment that's being made, it would take two stacks of money like that to make up for what's going into their bank accounts on a yearly basis.

This is help for real families. It's security for the homeowner; it's security for the home. Rebate assistance amounting to several thousand dollars over the life of the program — stacks of this kind of money, Mr. Speaker.

Another question: how many stacks of this money pack and how many miles of bills if they were laid end to end would it take to equal the assistance provided to those young farmers out there receiving rebates under the farm purchase program? What an absolutely phenomenal success that program has been. And even this week, Mr. Speaker, farm credit corporation announced their rates have moved down again. And this means that with the same amount of dollars we'll be able to help even more young farmers. More people like young Steven Bekker, the fourth generation farmer who like, likes the way the farm purchase program assisted in the intergenerational transfer in his farm. A program helping more farmers become owners in one week than land bank did in 10 years.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I almost have to revise that last statement. I almost have to revise the statement that said: helping more farmers become owners in one week than land bank did in 10 years. I keep having to revise it, because when I first started out I said we'd helped more people in one month than land bank did in 10 years. I was wrong, and I apologize to the House for that, because I was more correct if I'd have said we helped more in one week than land bank did in 10 years.

But now I have to revise it again because I may once again be distorting the truth. And the reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is: I happened to be talking to a lawyer, a lawyer acquaintance of mine the other day, and he indicated to me that they had on one day handled 29 farm credit corporation farm purchase program client files — 29 in one day. So I might really be more correct if I said: the farm purchase program has helped more young farmers in one day than land bank did in the whole year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hepworth: — And you compare this 29 in one day with the results of land bank in any given year, and I think the numbers tell it all, and I just refer once again to the annual report of land bank — the 1981 land bank report. And it shows things in there of the purchases by lessees: in '78 we had 31; and in '81 we had 25; and '79, 42; and in '80, 34. So it's running between 25 and 42 in any given year, and here in one day we've got 29 young farmers becoming owners of their own land, and in fact in control of their own destiny.

And I could continue on, in fact, Mr. Speaker, and I could continue on with some of the problems and perhaps I will, that we were facing in Saskatchewan a year ago, that were, are no longer here because of a Conservative government.

And another one that comes to mind is the gas tax — the infamous sliding gas tax. The measure of the success of the Devine government is very evident on that one. It was a problem a year ago, and 18 minutes, or 18 seconds after the Devine government was put in power, it was gone.

The infamous sliding gas tax was a case study in picking people's pockets every time they filled up for gas going to or from work. There is \$130 million or so in the pockets of Saskatchewan people today because this scurrilous tax was removed, cut, chopped - \$130 million that will buy clothes, or fridges, or can be used to take holidays, or put in the bank, or to make the care payments, or whatever - \$130 million.

How many stacks would that take, Mr. Speaker? How many stacks? How many stacks, Mr. Leader of the Opposition? I see he's not in the House tonight. How many stacks does it take to get a \$130 million? I don't know whether we'd get to Calgary or Revelstoke or to Weyburn.

But I can tell you this. There's a constituent of mine, who lives in my riding, who said that she gets stack of money as a result of that gas tax being cut out every year, because she drives to work a goodly number of miles. And that's the kind of money she saves every year with that gas tax having gone. Every year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hepworth: — Well, enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. I think you can see that, by whatever the measurement, the tough problems the people of Saskatchewan were facing one year ago today are gone. And that is the best measure of success. They have been eliminated, or at the very least, cut down to a size much like the manner in which the NDP went from 44 to 8.

It is amazing, Mr. Speaker, but every time I get up to take part in a budget debate, there's one less NDP in the opposition. It's a good, it's a good thing these sessions can't last eight years, or there wouldn't be any of them left.

But back to the subject at hand. Just as the Devine government has tackled tough problems last year, they are prepared to tackle tough problems again this year. And I think of that number one problem of unemployment. And the growth of unemployment was arrested with such initiatives as the \$3,000 Build-A-Home grant program; the changes in the oil royalty structure put the oil industry back on track, and put people back to work in my constituency for sure, Mr. Speaker.

And now these same ministers continue to tackle unemployment with the continuation of these programs and new ones. New ones like the student employment program and the very inventive nine-point creation program that could see several thousands of person-years of employment created.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I took the time to, to peruse a document entitled, 'NDP: Saskatchewan Keeping the Promise'. And it, and it discusses the promises kept and part of it, and I'll quote from it; it says:

In the 1978 provincial general election your NDP government made 27 specific promises.

And it went on to outline these. And under it, Mr. Speaker, just to compare what the Conservatives are going to do to create unemployment by getting small business going again, you only have to compare that to the kind of, kind of credence the NDP placed in small business back in 1978. It ranks two lines, two lines in this. And one of them was to improve freight and parts service with aid for local freight depots, which was another

way of saying that the STC service would be expanded. I don't know if that was the shuttle bus or not. That was a very moot offering to the small business community of this province, Mr. Speaker, and one of the reasons, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that unemployment did become a number one problem. The stove had been left unattended.

What do we have in Saskatchewan today is a province, the only province in the country to show an increase in our, in our employment. It shows programs like the Build-A-Home program and changes in the oil royalty structure can and do work. And they have worked in the toughest months of the year, Mr. Speaker, January and February. And I know employment will be beat. It will be beat by this government — its innovative programs. It will be beat and we'll have it cowering in the corner like a cur dog licking its wounds.

And the interest in these new programs — these small business job creation programs — has been intense. I've had numerous phone calls — numerous phone calls and inquiries in the, in the few short days since they were announced in the budget. And by the looks of it, Mr. Speaker, unemployment, unemployment in Saskatchewan will be broken down and under control by this time next year. We will not be facing that kind of problem at this time next year.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few specific comments, a few specific comments about some measures that are getting constituents in Weyburn very happy and excited about what's in this budget. Specific things that relate to the Weyburn constituency . . . and one of them was the increased emphasis on technical education, and I'll put it simply, Mr. Speaker, by saying that there's been more than one person, many more than one person has been in my office to see me over the past year about the lack of space in technical schools and the difficulty of gaining entrance in them. And my thanks and congratulations to that fine gentleman, the Hon. Gordon Currie for his foresight and understanding of the situation and for his ability to determine and set priorities as he did so eloquently explain in this House in question period the other day.

Number two, Mr. Speaker. The numerous highway projects in my constituency — projects to be undertaken by the very forthright and frank Minister of Highways, the Hon. Jim Garner or as he is better known 'honest Jim', a man of his word. And I think of things like the intersection work at that very dangerous junction of Highways 13 and 39 just outside of Weyburn. The minister drove that highway. That's an important point to not, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Highways drove the highways. He was down on a road tour in my constituency, drove that highway, saw how bad that intersection was and said, 'It's got to be fixed because my thrust and my first priority is in having safe roads.' He drove that highway, saw it was unsafe at that intersection, and gave the people a commitment to move on it, and we see it in this budget, Mr. Speaker. Other projects have been outlined in the budget as well; road upgrading in and around Stoughton is another example.

Number three, Mr. Speaker, we have a budget provision for a water and sewer line reconstruction at north Weyburn. North Weyburn is the site of the Western Christian College, and, although final project details are still being hammered out, the people out there are very encouraged to see this kind of commitment. This was a must that goes hand in hand with their very ambitious expansion program out at the Western Christian College. And I had a chance to be out to their annual dinner the other evening, and a dinner that was attended very much by the business folk in Weyburn, because they appreciate this institution, not only from what it offers from an educational standpoint,

but for the spin-off in business in the local city of Weyburn. It's a very fine institution, and it's much more secure now knowing an assured dependable water supply is on the way.

This is a college that's very much in tune with what the Premier's been saying over the last month. It's a college with world-class, class credentials, and the people of my constituency are very proud of this very fine institution, its faculty, staff and students. So this is very welcome news, in this budget, for the people in the hamlet of north Weyburn and those at the Western Christian College particularly.

And, now I turn to agriculture for a few moments, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture — the backbone of the economy, not only in Saskatchewan, but in large measure, Canada as well — the most important industry in the province. Now, you'll probably remember, Mr. Speaker, that there have been individuals up in debate, from the opposition, who have suggested, and I might say, have suggested wrongly, that the Agriculture budget has been decreased. In fact, I think one of their number was up, Mr. Speaker, indicating that, or suggesting, that it was cut 19 or 20 per cent. I forget the exact number he used — an example of not doing their homework. Another example, Mr. Speaker, of the opposition engaging their mouths before their mind was in gear.

And, I'm not going to get into the details of the budget, Mr. Speaker. More of that will come in estimates, but to set the record straight — and as well, I think, the member for Rosthern made a number of points key to setting the record straight yesterday in this budget debate. But to set the record straight and to reiterate for the members in opposition, I will point out the following, and it's a simple statement. The Agriculture budget, when all is considered, is up in fact, up substantially over last year; not down, but up. And this is consistent with the emphasis the Devine government placed on agriculture.

The opposition, in their usual superficial analysis of the budget, in their usual flippant approach to the serious business of government, the NDP have tried to distort the Agriculture budget, and they failed to acknowledge that no longer is there a funny-money approach between the heritage fund, the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation, and the Department of Agriculture. The \$9.1 million transaction between these three jurisdictions was not unlike a dog chasing its tail — no padding now of the Agriculture Department's budget or grandstanding to make this physical arrangement seem more than it really was.

Also, the opposition carefully overlooked the six-and-a-half million dollars budgeted from the agriculture division of the heritage fund for the farm purchase program, and, I can see, Mr. Speaker, why they would want to ignore the farm purchase program, this absolute gem. Its unequivocal success is very much the opposition's embarrassment. Absolutely everyone in the farming community is excited about this program.

Long-term land bank lessees, now, given the opportunities and resources, are purchasing their land in unprecedented numbers. And just to emphasize to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, how the long-term lessees out there appreciate this farm purchase program, I'd like to review with you long-term lessees. This is the first chance I've had to review, in the legislature, land sales to long-term lessees, and since January 1 of '83, we've already had 14 long-term lessees have purchased some or all of their leased land.

We're looking at something over \$1.1 million in purchases, but better than that, Mr.

Speaker, over 300 have asked for prices on that land because they're considering buying it; they want to own it. And that's impressive, Mr. Speaker, when you consider that we have 14 already having purchased, and in a whole year, in the whole last final year, which I reported on in the 1981 land bank annual report, only 25 people in the whole year purchased. So, here we have already exceeded that and — or not exceeded it, but in three short months we've already reached 50 per cent of what they did in the whole year. So, the land bank lessees like this opportunity to purchase their farmland.

In three short months, many, or some of them, have . . . Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. In three short months, many have purchased some of their leased land holdings, and as you can see, these figures compare very favourably with purchases when the land bank scheme was in place in prior years.

The response by the farming community at large has been well-documented in this House by myself and by many other members. And in keeping with the tradition of keeping the House informed and letting the people of Saskatchewan know what's happening in government, I'm happy to bring an update on the farm purchase program. And this is dated April 6 and it covers the period to March 31, '83, and it shows that now the farm purchase program interviews have climbed to over 6,000, Mr. Speaker; 6,107 folks have been in the doors at farm credit corporation inquiring about the farm purchase program. They're just doing an excellent job at continuing to handle this continual onslaught of people.

The other key points here, Mr. Speaker, are that 2,681 look like potential rebate clients out of that 6,100, and now we have altogether, with all the i's dotted and the t's crossed, 600 approvals worth \$73.3 million worth of land transactions.

I think it was only last week, Mr. Speaker, when I was up in this House on behalf of the people of Weyburn constituency in throne speech debate, when I said at that point in time we had 2,488 eligible rebate clients. And so you can see, in a mere week, we've almost gone up 200 — another week where more people, in one week, are being put on their way to farm ownership than in 10 years with the land bank program, just another week in the many chapters of success in the farm purchase program.

And while I'm on the subject of agriculture, I would like to welcome Saskatchewan's hard-working Minister of Agriculture back to the House from his recent trip to Bulgaria where he was on a trade mission. And I can, certainly, I know I can speak for the farmers of Saskatchewan when I welcome him back to the House. I understand it was a very successful trip, and I congratulate him and his officials on that very successful trade mission.

It is very reassuring, Mr. Speaker, to the farmers of Saskatchewan, to see that kind of dedicated effort, and that kind of, of devotion on behalf of the farmers of Saskatchewan. One day he's fighting for the Crow in Moncton; the next day on an airplane, selling livestock in Bulgaria. A very busy Minister of Agriculture, and the farmers of Saskatchewan do applaud him for his efforts.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, to turn to another facet of the budget . . . Perhaps one of the most exciting initiatives to ever be in this budget — in any budget of the province of Saskatchewan — has got to be the creation of an agricultural division of the heritage fund. Agriculture is, is our heritage in this province. Land is our heritage. And it would only be right that a responsible government do what this one has done: number one, let the farmers own their own land again, and not see state ownership to continue to be the

order of the day; and number two, to use the proceeds from the government land sales to develop and expand our agriculture heritage of which we are all so very proud. The agriculture division within the heritage fund will be the vehicle that will, will reverse the wheels of declining numbers of farms and farmers, and reverse the decline of rural communities.

I can think of nothing that would be more rewarding, rewarding, Mr. Speaker, than to, 10 years from now, be able to stand in this House and say that the number of census farms in Saskatchewan has grown because of initiatives taken by the Devine government in this province over the last 10 years. I hope in 1993 (and I'm sure all members that are here today will be here then), we can stand in this House and say that census farms have increased. Because it's a sorry day for Saskatchewan when you review what went on between '71 and '81 under the NDP administration. Nearly 10,000 census farms in Saskatchewan . . . 10,000, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that 10 years from now, when we're standing in this House, and have had 10 years to develop agriculture for the farmers of Saskatchewan, we're seeing the family farm, the rural communities, and the towns and small cities surrounding those farms and communities prospering — the revitalization of rural Saskatchewan.

And, I know, as well, Mr. Speaker, that the new thrusts and the new initiatives that will be undertaken by the Minister of rural Development will contribute greatly, along with agriculture, to his revitalization. This agriculture division of the heritage fund will be the mechanism that will see these family farms, with all the traditions that are wanting to be observed from one generation to another, preserved intact. This is the tool that will lead the charge of agriculture into the 21st century. It is a tool, Mr. Speaker, I must say, that our pioneer ancestors would heartily have approved of. The heritage fund, and agriculture division therein, will be the springboard of agriculture in the next century. New initiatives, as broad as any mind can comprehend, will flourish from this fund. It will not be restricted to, just to irrigation or to research, but any idea with merit will be considered. It will be the vehicle that tears down the barriers to production and puts bridges in their place.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say once again, congratulations to the Premier and his ministers for this balanced approach to managing the peoples' money in these somewhat difficult times. There is no doubt there will always be tough problems like these, and like the problems we've experienced in the last year; problems they have addressed and have solved, and I know this budget will be more of the same. It is a budget that turns sour grapes into wine.

My thanks on behalf of the people from the Weyburn constituency to the Minister of Finance, and it is with pleasure that I will support the motion. And I cannot support the amendment, but I do urge all members of this House to support the motion, including those in opposition, Mr. Speaker.

It is a good budget. It's worthy of support, just as the mortgage interest rebate program was worthy of support, and did get support from the hon. members, and just as the farm purchase program was worthy of support, and the NDP opposition did support it. So I, I find some problem — I believe they must be talking out of both sides of their mouth, Mr. Speaker, when they tell us they can't support this budget.

They supported other sensible initiatives in this House, and I only have to refer you to the *Votes and Proceedings* of the Legislative Assembly, Thursday, December the 9th,

and if you look at the vote on Bill 45, the, the bill to, An Act to establish a Program to Facilitate Financing the Purchase of Farm Land, those amongst the years included Blakeney, Thompson, Engel, Lingenfelter, Koskie, Lusney, Shillington, and Yew. They have the common sense, Mr. Speaker, to support that kind of progressive legislation. This budget is similar, it's common sense, it's worthy of their support, and just as they have supported us unanimously in this House in the past, I'm sure they will come to their senses and realize they should vote with us on this budget.

They have demonstrated, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, good sense in supporting the Devine government over the past year, and I encourage them to do likewise in this fruitful budget. Why? Because indeed it does turn sour grapes into a very fine vintage wine. It is no sense continuing to curse problems; it is better to do something about them — the kind of, of things that the Devine government has done over the past 11 months. And admittedly there are dark spots like unemployment, but rather than curse the darkness, better to light a candle. That's this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Domotor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak on the budget, and I would like at this time to congratulate the Minister of Finance on his budget and the allocation of funds. It is also a pleasure to commend the dynamic leadership of our Premier, Grant Devine, and his capable ministers in allocation of funds to the different departments, and the resulting increasing efficiency we have in government. It is indeed a pleasure to be able to speak on behalf of the constituency of Humboldt in this budget debate.

I listen with quite a bit of interest with respect to the opposition members criticizing the budget. The other day the member from Quill Lakes referred to some of the parts of the budget, and he was referring to dental care for four-year-olds again, on page 596. I don't know, they must have a hang-up on this. The other part they are talking about on page 599 and 600 was the farm fuel rebate. Well, if they're so concerned about the fuel rebate, I would like to know where they were when they were in government. They'd put it on once in a while, and they'd take it off. If they're really consistent about helping the farmer, they would have kept it on forever, for, for the whole length of their term.

They also mentioned with respect to the fact that jobs were being lost and that there was no job creation. Well, we just had, in the budget speech, the Opportunities '83 for the youth. We have also had mention of the opportunities for business men in which there'll be a tax rebate. These are opportunities that employees will be able to get jobs and business men will be able to operate and finance.

The member from Regina Centre refers, refers to his riding, refers to people living in poverty in his riding. 'What should there be any poverty?' he says. If the 11-year government that they were in were so concerned about the poverty, then really they should have been out of poverty a long time ago and we shouldn't have to worry about it today.

The member opposite also referred to people on this side being born with spoons in their mouths. Well I would like to suggest to him that if he looks around at every member in this side of the House, that everyone had to work for a living. The difference between the opposition and the government on this side is that we believe in the work ethic. The opposition believes that those who work should pay to help those who do not want to work. There is a difference, Mr. Speaker. We believe in helping the unfortunate, the

handicapped, the senior citizens, but we also believe that those who are able to work should be able to work.

The member from Cumberland was speaking about SGI premiums going up because we had reduced the gas tax. Well the gas tax was on before and yet the SGI premiums went up underneath their administration. Why didn't they keep them down then?

I notice the member from Pelly isn't here but he was talking about the Sask Tel rates. If the previous administration had such a profitable arm of Sask Tel that he says we got rid of, then how come they had to increase their rates when they were in power?

I hear the word 'multinationals' from the member. The multinationals are going to benefit. Well what about the multinational unions that he represents. Are they not going to also benefit?

The member mentions the Executive Council and the salaries. What did the previous government do when they were in power? They did the same thing. They had members in the Executive Council and they'd second different members from crown corporations. They played that kind of a game . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And from department of estimates, my friend, the member from Rosthern, mentions. Our change in our government is that we've streamlined part of the departments. We're making the more efficient.

There has been misleading statements by the member from Pelly saying that we're going to let the Crow go. Also the member from Quill Lakes mentions about letting the Crow go. This, Mr. Speaker, is malicious gossip, totally irresponsible statements, same when they said we were going to do away with medicare. And what have we done to medicare? We've increased funding to medicare. The member from Last Mountain-Touchwood the other day mentioned about the medicare system, the way they tried to do the campaigning. And I totally agree with him.

We have had much to-do about cutting. And I would suggest that the hon. . . . The biggest cutting that was done was when the hon. members opposite were reduced to eight. The next biggest cut was the gas tax cut. After the gas tax cut, we also brought in the mortgage reduction and that was a cut. The cut in the interest rates would help many more home-owners in the province of Saskatchewan.

And you know . . . I don't now if these members opposite are able to read, but if they would look at their estimates and they would take a look at Health and the total for Health, ordinary expenditure to be voted, there's an increase from the 1982-83 year estimates — 728 million is increased up to 977,814,160.

What about Highways and Transportation? They say there's less there. Well let's look at Highways and Transportation. And if you look at the subvote, it's an increase, an increase from 197 million to 222 million.

An Hon. Member: — That's 12.4 per cent.

Mr. Domotor: — That's 12.4 per cent. That's an increase, Mr. Speaker, not a decrease, an increase.

What about Education? They refer to Education. Well let's take a look at Education. Did you take a look at education in the subvotes? The total for Education, ordinary expenditure, 1982-83, it says 387 million. This year, '83-84, it says 429,788,000. Is that a decrease? That to me represents an increase, an increase by a government that is interested in the welfare of its citizens, and a government that is going to continue to look after its citizens.

I would like to commend the Minister of Education on the new thrust that he is giving his department. The opposition referred to cuts. Well, in the operating grant budget of the Department of Education, there will be an increase of 333.9 million in '83-84. That represents an increase of 7 per cent in the funds available to school divisions in this budget year. That is an increase of 7 per cent.

Besides this, the teachers settled with the government in record time, not like it did in the previous administration when they had to haggle for a long period of time.

What about special education? The opposition has asserted that funding for special education in the Department of Education budget has been reduced by 5 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned this. In fact, direct grant support for special education has been increased by about 15 per cent — not a decrease, but an increase. Additional school board expenditures in special education of over \$2 million will be recognized in '83-84. The recognized rates for all categories of low- and high-cost rate will increase from \$3,285 to \$3,515, level 2 from 4,425 to 4,735, and level 3 from 5,000 to 5,350. These are not decreases, Mr. Speaker, these are increases.

The rate for low-cost handicapped students will increase from 1,120 to 1,198. There will also be a significant increase in the number of students recognized at these rates. For example, the number of level 1 high-cost handicapped recognized an expected increase from 2,228 to 2,473. The combined effect of these increases in numbers and in rates is that high-cost funding will increase 18.6 per cent, from \$9.2 million to \$10.9 million. Overall, the grants for special education will increase by 15 per cent from 13.9 million to 15.9 million. Are these decreases, Mr. Speaker? No, they are increases.

In addition, funding for a demonstration project in which preschool handicapped children are integrated into day care program will be provided as a grant rather than a contractual payment from the special education subvote. Funding for special education will remain a high priority of this government. An increase in grants amounting to \$2 million should indicate the sincerity of the government's commitment.

Those in specialty education need help, and the opportunity must be made available so that those in our society who are less fortunate than we are can have an opportunity to develop their talents to the best of their ability. Particularly, needs in that area to assist the handicapped are always welcome.

In my constituency we have educational programs geared to assist some of these people. After they have completed some of the programs they are able to work at Futuristic Industries. It gives them a sense of pride to work, Mr. Speaker. They contracted highway stakes. Now they do lawn furniture, bin bottoms for granaries, flower decorations, car decorations for weddings, buttons and wooden toys, toy boxes and toy chests. These are a tribute to the handicapped who work in these areas, and I

might add a tribute should be given at this time to all the teachers and personnel in all the communities of Saskatchewan who have taken the time and effort to help the handicapped and disadvantaged. The patience and hard work, sacrifice exemplified by these people, I believe, should be given special recognition.

Further, it is indeed good news to see the emphasis being placed on technical training. When you consider that studies over the past few years . . . Roughly 9,000 skilled entrants will be needed in the labour force by 1990. The need for more technical training will be all the more required. The percentage of young people pursuing full-time training in Saskatchewan is below 50 per cent of the average in the other three western provinces. This points to the lack of consideration in this area by the previous administration because of its main drive to purchase and own farmland and businesses. Saskatchewan's training system in the past has offered too few training places and as a result, graduates had to leave the province and get extra training elsewhere. And, as a result, they start employment elsewhere. This is going to change, Mr. Speaker. We are going to provide them those opportunities in Saskatchewan, and they're going to stay in Saskatchewan. We'll keep our youth here, and not export them as the previous administration was wont to do.

By the implementation of an effective manpower planning system in a close relationship with the private sector, business, industry, labour and public, opportunities should be provided for our youth to remain in the province. The Opportunities '83 program, which I mentioned before, will have been initiated and given benefit to Saskatchewan residents. The program will stimulate new summer job opportunities for Saskatchewan residents and will assist students throughout temporary unemployment to finance their continuing education. This will give high school or post-secondary students in '82-83, who are enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions for the fall of '83, an opportunity that didn't exist before.

This, Mr. Speaker, is progressive legislation. This will give employment between May 1 and September 30, and it must be full-time. The \$350 per month for each full-time job created will help the business or farms, as well as the students. This will give students an opportunity to develop new skills and experience to help in the transition from school to employment. The \$2.8 million to create an estimated 3,000 new summer jobs will certainly help the unemployment situation.

This is a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker. Many of us would like to have training in new fields, and being busy working are unable to attend institutes. Upgrading is a requirement at all times, an opportunity to assist rural areas in technical training will certainly benefit not only the people taking the training, but the rural talents will also flourish again.

It is important that this is done, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned once before, we have many times where we have people that come over from Europe who have technical training and are able to go ahead and take any kind of a job because of their skills. It is time that we in Saskatchewan, or in Canada as a whole, ended up doing similar programs so that we can have this skill training ere.

The opposition should also note the emphasis this government has to rural areas. The Minister of Education has also announced that funds allocated to small schools will amount to \$8 million — this is an increase of 47 per cent. Is that like the opposition referred to as a decrease? No, it is an increase. The opposition like to talk about

unemployment figures — Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment ratio compared to other provinces, along with the lowest rate of inflation.

I don't know, maybe we shouldn't be so hard on the opposition members, after all, each one of them is doing the work of two men — Laurel and Hardy.

The economic analysis publication of the Royal Bank, in its February '83 issue, stated that the Saskatchewan economy contains the basic ingredients for strong growth in the 1980s. One of the points that is stressed is that the provincial government is intent upon attracting private sector investment as a stimulus to economic development.

The three essential services, health, education and social services, will receive increases. These departments have a budget representing two-thirds of the funding. For health, nearly \$1,000 for every man, woman and child in this province - \$17 million over five years including \$10 million for the construction of a new cancer clinic was announced by the Minister of Health. Does this represent a cut? No, this is an increase, an increase because we're concerned about the medical health in the province and because we're concerned about the citizens.

The Build-A-Home program; culture and recreation facilities grant of \$32 million over a five-year period: does this show a concern for the rural area? Yes, I submit it does. It shows us that this government is not only concerned about central areas, but also will give out assistance to rural development, by the fact that we're going to have small businesses in communities given opportunities in the province. To show this, the government's concern for new . . . The tourism and small business is certainly a step in the right direction. These are the types of programs and initiatives this provincial government is undertaking. It is certainly encouraging to see new ideas developing from the grass roots and bringing in the ideas to the government.

Finally, I would like to commend the Premier, the finance minister and the cabinet in general for bringing in an excellent budget in the midst of the economic confusion that exists in our country today. They are to be commended, and I will be supporting the budget but not supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Rybchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the budget speech, by tradition, states the fiscal and economic plans of a government and I'm really pleased to be able to join in this debate and support one of the most excellent budgets ever introduced in this Assembly.

The people of the constituency of Regina Victoria tell me that economic and social concerns are on their mind and they are counting on the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Devine to respond to their concerns. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that Regina Victoria has much to be pleased with the budget introduced by the able Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance and his government have put together realistic measures to make Saskatchewan a province that all Canadians will look to with respect and admiration. Mr. Speaker, Regina Victoria is a multicultural and cosmopolitan riding. My constituency has a good healthy representation of a wide cross-section of Saskatchewan population — senior citizens to working couples — are people of the various ethnic heritages that make Saskatchewan such a truly unique province. All the people in Regina Victoria have one thing in common. That's pocket-book concerns.

They know what the government of Pierre Trudeau has done to help ruin Canada's economy. Inflation eats at their pay-cheques and savings.

The Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan is doing everything possible to protect our people from their economic problems. I can honestly say that this . . . in this Assembly that Regina Victoria will benefit by the positive programs of this government.

Let me outline some of the positive initiatives. In general, initiatives ranged from streamlining government structures and changes in taxation to new or expanded programs and policies dealing with adult education, municipal government, health, agriculture, business, mineral and industrial development, labour, co-ops and the justice system. Then, Mr. Speaker, in order to streamline and update the municipal practices, changes to The Planning and Development Act and The Urban Municipality Act will be introduced in this session. Modernization of these acts will be preserved . . . will preserve and strengthen local autonomy.

Mr. Speaker, this government has helped to develop one of the strongest housing industries in Canada and will continue to work to maintain it. Housing starts in Saskatchewan rose 14 per cent in 1982 from . . . over 1981, while falling 29 per cent nation-wide. Programs like the mortgage interest reduction plan, family home purchase plan — and I'm glad to say that's been extended — and the Build-A-Home Saskatchewan have provided adequate and affordable housing for the people of Saskatchewan. Over the past year our government has begun to make changes in the priorities and directions of Saskatchewan . . . of Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Our objective is to make Saskatchewan Housing Corporation a partner with the private sector rather than a competitor. I'm proud to belong to a government that has made home ownership a reality and not a dream. That, Mr. Speaker, is the kind of government that the people of Regina Victoria voted on April 26, 1982, and I believe we have lived up to their expectations.

There are many families of school-age children in Regina Victoria and also university students. This government recognizes the importance of education and will therefore introduce changes to The Education Act in this session. We will bring our technical and vocational training up to par to measure such as the completion of the expanded version of the Prince Albert technical institute and an addition of new training programs at the three other institutes. We are also dedicated to the improvement and expansion of our ability to train highly skilled manpower for complex fields.

Health care means a great deal to the constituents of Regina Victoria. We continue in our commitment of providing the best health care in the world for Saskatchewan citizens. Our aim is to maintain and stabilize our health care system. The cancer program will continue to be expanded and improved. Our health minister, Graham Taylor, has just released the details of major new funding projects for the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation that were announced in last week's budget.

And because cancer treatment is important to my citizens, my constituents, I would like to list a few of the announcements. The government is committed to fund construction of a new Saskatoon cancer clinic. In 1983-84 a quarter-million dollars will be made available for the planning and design work of the new facility. In addition a total of \$5 million has been made available for major equipment costs, and this will be allotted on a rate of \$1 million per year over the next five years, any equipment funds not spent in one year will be carried over to the next. This will give the cancer foundation the

flexibility to spend the money in a way it considers most practical and beneficial. A five-year commitment of added funds will be made available to hire additional cancer staff, foundation staff, beginning with \$175,000 in 1983-84 fiscal year. This resource commitment will increase by \$150,000 per year ending with the funding year . . . ending with a funding level of three-quarter-million dollars plus annual inflation adjustments in the years 1987-88. This will dramatically improve the quality of care available to the Saskatchewan people requiring cancer treatment.

Mr. Speaker, it has been announced and, that as of April 1st, and we have transferred the ambulance program to the Department of Health where it belongs. A new funding approach will reduce the inequities regarding cost to rural residents. In the area of social programming we will continue in our determination to improve the quality of life for all citizens in Saskatchewan, better home care being a key example. This means a lot to the senior citizens in Regina Victoria.

Mr. Speaker, programs such as the \$15 million federal-provincial job creation program and the provincial JOBS program have enabled Saskatchewan residents to work. Our unemployment rate is currently 8.9 per cent and the lowest in Canada. Six thousand more persons were employed in Saskatchewan in February of '83 than in the previous month. And as you can see, our programs are working.

Government initiatives have allowed for a dramatic increase in oil industry activity in Saskatchewan. In an unstable world market we are prepared to act to protect our oil industry in order to retain our traditional position as owner of the resource. All of us are excited about the ten-year program which will extend natural gas to farms and rural communities, to approximately 25,000 farm and 10,000 residential customers. It will create jobs and provide a less expensive heating fuel for our consumers.

Our government will soon be announcing details of a major high technology development strategy in order to develop and broaden our economic base.

Further amendments will be made to The Workers' Compensation Act. A new co-operatives act will be introduced to provide a strong supportive base for the future development in this area. Also forthcoming will be a new vehicles act; it will focus on the dangers of drinking and driving thus making our streets and highways a safer place to drive on. There will be an introduction of legislation to establish a licensing authority for cable service in Saskatchewan. We will explore addition steps to decrease the tax burdens of Saskatchewan residents. To help small business operate in Saskatchewan, a review of the requirements for the bonding on small projects will be undertaken.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would for a few moments like to talk about the proposed SGI increase in deductible. First I want to point out that the increase in the deductible does not come into effect until July 1, 1983. At the present time, the public review, utility review commission has asked the crown, the court of appeal, to rule on whether or not the, the increase in the deductible can be implemented by order in council, or must be reviewed by the commission.

There were two choices available to SGI when they were deciding on rate increases necessary to try to achieve a break-even point in the operation of The Automobile Accident Insurance Act. We would . . . We could implement an average 6.7 per cent rate increase, coupled with an increase in the deductible of, to \$500. Or they could implement an average 14 per cent increase.

The rationale behind the decision to increase the rate by the 6.7 per cent, and increase the deductible to \$500, was that any rate increase would impact all of Saskatchewan motorists. And that would be . . . It would be fairer to increase the rate by the lesser percentage in keeping course with the government restraint guide-lines, and increase the deductible, which only affects the drivers who are found at fault in a collision.

Since approximately 15 per cent of Saskatchewan motorists are found at fault, the majority of Saskatchewan motorists will not be affected by the increase in the deductible. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point is, and I want to emphasize it, the majority of Saskatchewan motorists are safe drivers who will not be affected by the increase in the deductible. The old government used to penalize safe drivers; we do not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget introduced by this government is a clear example of economic common sense. It deals with the economic realities facing the people of Saskatchewan. We realize that a job is essential to maintain human dignity. To prove our commitment to an individual, we have not introduced socialistic give-away plans. Those are the disastrous and heartless ways of the past. No, Mr. Deputy, Deputy Speaker, the Progressive Conservative government opted for a nine-point job creation plan.

This budget, budget, budget is realistic. We know there are no quick fixes or instant solutions. The discredited members in the opposition change their tune so often that nobody knows what they stand for. They called for a job creation plan, and when this government brought forth one of the best creations in Canada, they said we were spending too much money.

Now I want to make it very clear that this government did not establish a job creation plan just because of the half-hearted call from the gang in the opposition. We made it very clear in the Speech from the Throne that this was coming. And so the shallow NDP members jumped on the bandwagon. As usual, they play politics with people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, in the days of Premier Blakeney, the order of the day was to have hidden taxation through such measures as a 20 per cent sliding gasoline tax, which was removed by this government. The order of the day was to tax people through the back door. Those days are over. This government believes that to maintain stability and confidence in our economy, we have to avoid significant, significant tax increases, and support social protection programs. I'm proud to say that is exactly what the budget has done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Regina Victoria will, is well represented in this Progressive Conservative government because of all these measures. For all too long, Regina Victoria was represented by a member who was more interested in his own affairs than those of Regina Victoria. That, Mr. Speaker, is history. Through my constituency office on Victoria Avenue, and my person work as their MLA, I honestly believe Regina Victoria is served well by our government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, like my fellow members in the government side of this legislature, I am pleased to support the budget introduced by the Minister of Finance, and accordingly I will vote against the amendment of the opposition and support the main motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to rise in this House today to resume debate on the budget speech. I agree with the remarks made by my fellow colleagues on the responsible budget our government has put forward to the people of Saskatchewan. Allow me now to comment on a few of the different policies and the positive moves included in that budget.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Canadian economy has suffered greatly in the last few years and now only is our country beginning to emerge from that economic downturn which saw interest rates soar, and unemployment figures, predominantly throughout Canada and in other western industrialized nations. Mr. Speaker, our government believes stability and confidence in the economy must be maintained, and that is why our budget avoids significant tax increases and supports the social protection program. Our government is committed to controlling spending and increasing productivity.

We have introduced a nine-point program to expand job opportunities and a plan to achieve a 60 per cent increase in skill-training spaces. Our budget also includes a new five-year, \$32 million program for construction and renovation of cultural and recreational facilities and a \$30 million fund to help finance public sector funds.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are taking a positive and a realistic approach towards this nation's economic difficulties.

The people of Saskatchewan have been known to bite the bullet and hang in there. We know that together with the people of Saskatchewan this province will be on the upswing again. Even though through the roughest times, Saskatchewan has been able to hold its own, with the current level of unemployment as high, the Saskatchewan economy has performed better than any other province in Canada, and inflation has come down dramatically in February.

Saskatchewan had the lowest inflation rate in Canada. The great decline in our inflation rate is largely due to the positive measures we have taken since forming government. By eliminating the gasoline road tax, we reduced the pressure on the cost of living for the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, our mortgage interest reduction plan served to protect home-owners and reversed the decline in housing starts and sales that occurred when the former government was in power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the time of economic hardship in Canada is not over, but we are making steps, and big steps, and we are taking a responsible stand, as outlined in the budget speech of the Hon. Bob Andrew, whom I would like to congratulate at this time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: — The people of the Redberry constituency are very pleased that this newly elected government has taken such a responsible and a positive stand, and they are rather amazed by the speed at which this government has been able to act on its promises. They were all too aware of the previous government's empty promises — an empty barrel left by an incompetent administration.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, and the people of my constituency,

I would like to bring to your attention the matter of the Borden Bridge. The way in which the previous government handled, or rather did not handle, this issue is the proof of its incompetency. Over the last two elections, the people of Redberry were led to believe action would be taken regarding the Borden Bridge just outside the village of Borden. For years this bridge, which was built in 1934, has been a major threat to the safety and the lives of all those who cross it. This bridge is too narrow to accommodate smooth two-way traffic, and the accesses to the bridges are two dangerous curves which create a blind spot so that you cannot see what's coming at you.

Mr. Speaker, the Borden Bridge has been the cause of many traffic accidents and fatalities. Since 1978, 20 people have been killed crossing that bridge. The bridge as it now stands threatens many lives every single day. IN 1978, 2,500 vehicles utilized the two-lane Highway 16, where the bridge is situated, every day. That number jumped to 3,000 in 1982. In comparison, 3,000 vehicles travelled the four-lane Trans-Canada Highway each day in 1978, and 3,365 in 1982.

Mr. Speaker, surely the great number of people using the Borden Bridge in itself demands that something be done to eliminate this danger. But what? What action was taken prior to our election? None. Lots of talk, but no action. But our government is acting.

My colleague, the Hon. Jim Garner, has announced the building of a new approaches for the bridge to commence this summer.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: — I would like to commend the hon. member for not only listening to the people of Redberry, but for acting in their best interests so quickly. On behalf of the citizens of Redberry, I'd like to thank the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: — Mr. Speaker, I would now like to relate to the House a brief from the village of Borden that was presented to me concerning the Borden Bridge, and I quote:

June 24th, 1982

Mr. John Gerich

Dear Sir: Enclosed is a brief on the Borden Bridge as you requested. Thank you for your interest in this matter. Mark Dubkowski, Secretary-Treasurer for the Village of Borden, Borden, Saskatchewan.

Construction of another Borden Bridge

Introduction

For years the present Borden Bridge has been a major threat to the safety and lives of the residents of Borden and its community, as well as any other motorist who utilizes this facility. Nearly every person in Borden has seen a major accident on this bridge, and knows someone who has been injured or

killed upon it. The residents of Borden feel justified in their claim that a new bridge should be built, after witnessing some of the tragedies that have occurred on the bridge.

Listed below are just a few of the reasons why a new bridge should be built, as well as some of the benefits the village of Borden would derive from this undertaking.

Reasons and benefits

Safety factor. This in itself is a major reason why a new bridge at Borden should be built. The number of deaths, injuries, traffic accidents that have occurred on this bridge in the past few years alone should convince the provincial government that something should be done in order . . . in the very near future before another human tragedy occurs.

The present bridge is just too narrow to accommodate smooth two-way traffic, especially two semi-trucks meeting on the bridge.

In the last few years there has been an increase in the number of accidents involving semi-trucks. There is probably no other place in the province where such a high ratio of semi-trucks are involved in traffic mishaps. Accidents involving semi-units are more severe, if not fatal, to those involved.

One other major safety hazard found on the present Borden Bridge is the access to the bridge. The accesses to the bridge on both the east and west end are curves which create a blind spot as to what may be approaching on the bridge. One does not see what is approaching until one is actually on the bridge. Often this leaves insufficient time to react and results in another traffic fatality.

Smoother traffic. Construction of another Borden bridge would provide the Yellowhead with a smoother flow of traffic. Because of the reputation of the Borden Bridge, many drivers become overcautious when approaching the bridge, causing a major slow-down of any traffic that may be following behind. Even if one is not overcautious, the flow of traffic is reduced in order to allow safe passage across the bridge. Also, accidents that have occurred on the bridge usually cause traffic jams for hours on end, or else lengthy detours to other bridges crossing the river.

A four-lane highway. A new bridge would encourage the development of a four-lane highway between Saskatoon and North Battleford. This section of highway is one of the busiest in Saskatchewan, yet it only boasts of a two-lane highway. This often causes bumper-to-bumper traffic and dangerous passing situations, especially in the summer with the number of tourists that travel on the Yellowhead Route.

Presently, one of the main reasons that this section of highway has not been expanded is due to the indecision by the previous government on how to solve the problem at the Borden Bridge.

Village development. Settlement and development within the village of

Borden has been hampered by the reputation of Borden . . . commuting to Saskatoon to work, shop, etc., because of having to constantly take the risk of crossing the bridge. The village of Borden has suffered because of its feeling of uneasiness about crossing the bridge on a daily basis. It has meant a reduction in the number of would-be residents within the village as well as revenue lost in the form of taxes, business and general investment from otherwise prospective residents.

A new bridge would eliminate some of the qualms these people would have of living in Borden and commuting to the city on a daily basis.

Reputation. Though maybe not as important a reason as the rest, the name Borden, when mentioned to people outside this community, is immediately associated with the bridge and the unpopular history of accidents that have occurred on it. People in other parts of Canada, as far west as the West Coast, associate the name Borden with that of a bridge and the number of fatalities.

The village has become associated with this bad reputation created by the bridge and fear of having to cross the highly publicized bridge becomes prominent when even Borden is mentioned. Hopefully, with a new bridge built and the danger eliminated, the reputation associated with the name Borden will eventually dissipate.

Recommendations

As a majority of the accidents that have occurred on the Borden Bridge have been a result of opposite-moving vehicles meeting on the bridge, and also the fact that the present bridge is still structurally sound, it would be best to use the old bridge to accommodate one directional flow of traffic and have another bridge built nearby to accommodate the opposite flow. The accesses to the present bridge will have to be straightened out and eliminate the blind spot as well as provide for a smoother flow of traffic. Also, the railway overpass just west of the bridge should be changed as to allow semi-trucks with large or high loads to use these highways rather than detouring around Strong, Arelee or the Maymont bridge.

It is just a matter of common sense that a new bridge at Borden crossing the North Saskatchewan River is the only solution to rectify the problems that have occurred there in passing. Still, the provincial government must be wary of how and where the new bridge is to be built without creating some unacceptable situation that the old bridge is guilty of.

I might add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we received other briefs from the rural municipalities of Great Bend, the town of Radisson, and the town of Maymont, expressing similar concerns.

The concerned citizens of Borden and district expressed great hope in our administration to me on the night of the Borden School addition opening, Tuesday, March the 29. I was honoured to be able to represent the Minister of Education at that event. Those at the opening were extremely pleased to hear that not more than one week later, the Borden Bridge plans are in action, and will be realized shortly.

With the previous administration, such prayers fell on deaf ears and were never to be answered. But this positive-doing government does more than just feign listening, as with the case with the previous government. We listen, and we really hear what the people are saying, and we then act quickly. The Borden Bridge was one of the main concerns expressed during the election of April, 1982. At that time, I told the people of Redberry constituency I would do my utmost to see that they got action on something so important to them.

I, I'm proud to be able to see the realization of the plans on the bridge, Borden Bridge moving forward, moving forward within one year of the Progressive Conservative administration in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, through this budget we, the people of Redberry, have the new Borden Bridge in the makings. Therefore, I disagree with the amendment, and fully support the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meagher: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to rise in this Assembly on behalf of the people of the Prince Albert constituency to make a few comments on this, the first budget presented in this Assembly, and to the people of Saskatchewan, by the newly elected government of Premier Grant Devine.

The finance minister of the new Progressive Conservative administration felt obligated last fall to present to the legislature and to the people of Saskatchewan a mid-term correction of that disgraceful document of deceit the previous NDP administration had presented to the last legislature, and by way of an election, tried to sell to the voters of Saskatchewan last April 26. That document was so flagrant in its untrue and unrealistic projections of revenues and expenditures as to make the whole process of presenting a budget to the legislature a complete farce.

However, by means of amid-term correction, the finance minister was able to present a much more honest picture of the real financial state of affairs in this province.

After more than a decade of socialist policies, this province, one of the richest politically divided areas in the world, was faced with a bare cupboard. And the people (those that hadn't already left Saskatchewan, that is) were chained down by an oppressive government bureaucracy that was busy thinking of new ways to rob the people and feed its fat family of state corporations, that land-grab they called the land bank, and scheming new ways to bribe voters with their own money.

I commend the Minister of Finance, for both the mid-term correction and this budget, for this government's honesty. He has restored some credibility to the budget process in the province of Saskatchewan. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the other ministers of the crown who were able to trim some of the excessive fat from their departments. And as the Minister of Highways pointed out, and the member for Redberry's announcement tonight demonstrated clearly their projected expenditures are real and don't constitute a financial sleight of hand or exercise in deceit that so characterized the past administration.

I'm greatly amused by the political and economic gymnastics of the members opposite in their various comments on this budget. On the one hand, they are screaming like banshees each time a bureaucrat is fired or laid off or even transferred, and in the next breath they're condemning the government for running up a deficit. And as the

member for Saskatoon — I can't recall just which constituency, but it doesn't matter — they're all PC anyway in Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meagher: — They seem to be attempting to be, they seem to be attempting to be closet Conservatives over there, their economics.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't have to be a graduate of the London School of Economics to know that you can't have it both ways. You can't spend the people's money faster than they can provide it without running a deficit.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP know that. They are just continuing in their socialist tradition that has earned them the reputation of being masters of deceit, purveyors of doom and gloom.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meagher: — There's almost no limit to their effort to present half-truths and outright falsehood as arguments in favour of their policies. It is because of their policies that this provincial government is faced with the difficult economic decisions they have to make. Their protestations remind me of the child who murdered his parents, then threw himself at the mercy of the court because he was an orphan.

The efforts of this government to cut back on waste in government are to be applauded and are supported by the people of Saskatchewan. The majority of the people feel that government is wasteful and we have too much of it. And after 11 years of socialism this province has become one of the most over-governed, over-regulated communities in the world, either side of the Iron Curtain. What the socialists are demonstrating in this legislature and on the steps of the Manitoba legislature with the disgraceful burning of the American flag is the fact that their sick philosophy is becoming more radical and more pro-Communist.

The member for Cumberland seemed very concerned about the testing of the cruise missile in northern Saskatchewan. Typical of these pro-Soviet pronouncements, he neglected entirely to deal with any fact that doesn't support the current Soviet propaganda line.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, socialists have about as much respect for the truth as a tom-cat has for a marriage licence. I recently issued a challenge to any high-profile socialist including our Prince Albert federal NDP member of parliament to a public debate on the cruise testing issue. He indicated to the press in Prince Albert today that he declined the offer and to date I have not received any takers. There was a, a meeting last night of a group called the Prince Albert Coalition for Peace and Disarmament. I understand they debated the question, decided to decline as well. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the members opposite as well, they want to control the debate with only the activists and the knee-jerk press making a contribution.

It's an amazing propaganda blitz and we have an obligation to expose it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our freedom, our lives are at stake. I can assure the member for Cumberland that if we do not succeed, his comrades will solve the 98 per cent unemployment rate he seems so concerned about. His constituents will be given an opportunity to take up

the mining business — salt mines — and of course they won't be getting any wages.

Fortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have rejected that sick philosophy that seems to prefer a Soviet jack-boot on their throat ahead of co-operation with our American allies. It is our responsibilities, as legislators and as a government, to speak out and defend our freedom. I would like to read into the record, as a matter of fact, an editorial from that apostle . . . epistle of NDP research, in fact the basis of all their research, the Regina *Leader-Post*. 'No Stars for Showing their Stripe,' it's headlined:

Some of Manitoba Premier Howard Pawley's pink-cheeked cabinet cohorts turned out for a gala American flag-burning ceremony in Winnipeg. They looked so pleased with themselves that they practically glowed in the darkness of their deeds. The flag-flaming was a Friendly Manitoba nose-thumbing over U.S. involvement in Nicaraguan affairs. No one seems to have minded this being a Manitoba meddling in what is legitimately a U.S. (and Canadian) concern. The very presence of provincial cabinet ministers at such an unholy display can be regarded as an expression of Manitoba's policy.

This comes, Mr., Mr. Deputy Speaker, this comes right from the NDP bible. So if it was, it was seen, at least by the United States, Pawley has grown coy about showing the Winnipeg copy of Washington's official protest note to Ottawa, and has resorted to the usual simpering of the simple — that the opposition has magnified the incident out of proportion, and that the media have distorted the affair. But he cannot deny the facts that the flag of a friendly government was mutilated and some of his ministers were grinning witnesses to the humiliation.

Manitoba is supposed to enjoy the same system of responsible cabinet government as the rest of Canada (continues this editorial). If this is Pawley's kind of responsibility, responsibility, Manitoba is in grave trouble. He should banish his cabinet malefactors to the back benches and resign himself and take those burn-outs with him.

That's how the *Leader-Post* concluded its article.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the people of Manitoba will in fact join with the people of Saskatchewan last April 26, and give a clear message to that socialist government there. They often refer across the way to a one-term government in Saskatchewan. Well, I can assure the House that I . . . that the one-term government is to the east of us.

Tommy Douglas was fond of saying, 'Socialism is an idea whose time has come.' Well, the people are saying that socialism is an idea whose time is past, not just here in Saskatchewan, but all over the world.

The member for Cumberland, the member for Cumberland in his speech Tuesday referred to a meeting in Prince Albert a week or so ago, and he said the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan had come to the meeting not in a spirit of co-operation, but in a spirit of confrontation. Well, Mr. Speaker, I was at that meeting, and just the opposite is true. The minister pointed out to all assembled, including the press, the member for Cumberland, an assortment of Northerners, including some radical activists who depend on confrontation tactics as blocking roads and bridges to attract more government money and press attention . . . He told them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that

confrontation tactics no longer work with this government, that this government won't throw taxpayers' money on every radical group that makes the most noise.

And I support the minister, and so do the people of Saskatchewan, including the vast majority of the people of northern Saskatchewan. They want an opportunity to get out from under all that government help they've received under the past NDP years and be given a chance to rejoin the rest of this province and control their own destiny. And that's the message from the people. Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the message of this government in their new budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this, this budget has given, not just the people of northern Saskatchewan, but all of the people of this province, an opportunity to carry on their own and do the things that they wish to do without heavy-handed government interfering in their everyday affairs. It is an honest effort to cut back the burden of government, free the people from government and allow this province to meet the destiny that I know is, is ahead for us. We could be the brightest spot in North America and all the western world and I've every confidence that that is the direction we're moving. And this government has taken some major steps in that direction. And for that reason I support the motion and reject the frivolous amendment presented by the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I begin tonight I just want to say that I'm very pleased to live in Saskatchewan now. I was one of those people who had to leave the province years ago to go find employment. And it is true, people are coming back here today and they are kissing the runways and the ground just as my friend the member for Regina North West said. You don't have to go to Bulgaria to realize that.

I have to, I have to compliment the Minister of Finance on this budget. It is a good, honest, straightforward budget. For the first time, for the first time in this province we see a Minister of Finance who goes out and consults with the business community, who consults with the people who are being taxed, who consults with the people whom we are providing the programs for. There's some tough decisions to be made. It's tough economic times. We wanted the taxpayers' input. We got the taxpayers' input. It's a first in Saskatchewan.

Now Saskatchewan is doing better than any other province and that's probably due to some of the measures that we as a government have implemented. Our removal of the road tax on gas — that has saved thousands of dollars for school districts out there. You take a look at one of the largest costs of running a school district, especially in the rural areas, is the price of gasoline that drives the buses. Thousands of dollars every month are being saved by the taxpayers of those school districts because of the initiative of this government. R.M.s, for example, save money too. One of the biggest costs they've got is the fuel that goes into the road maintenance equipment. Before the removal of that road tax they were paying up to 20 per cent, an indirect way of taxing those people out there.

The people benefit too, indirectly. It's been said that we've given the trucking companies a real break — cut the gas tax, they don't have to pay for the roads they use. All they did was they passed those costs along to the consumer. The consumer in the end footed the bill. What a despicable, low way of indirect taxation — despicable.

We introduced a mortgage interest reduction plan when it was needed — a comprehensive plan that everyone could use, and people took advantage of it, people have used it; people are happy with it; and we have people who still have their homes.

Our farm purchase programs. If you take a look at the number of young farmers that are coming back on stream, if you would, now. They've got a chance to own their own land. They don't have to be vassals and serfs as they were under the former administration.

An Hon. Member: — Feudalism of the worst order.

Mr. Petersen: — Absolutely. Feudalism of the worst order. Terrible, terrible. I am proud of the people of Saskatchewan. I'm proud of Saskatchewan people and I'm proud to be part of this government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen: — We are a government who believe in private enterprise, and I'm not ashamed to say it. Individual initiative instead of big government. Big Brother, the helping hand. Real families versus families of crown corporations — that's what we believe in; that's what we stand for.

And are those types of programs that we implemented working? Of course they are. Investor confidence in our economy remains strong. Our credit rating internationally remains high. It's better than can be said for our neighbouring province of Manitoba. Private sector investment is coming back. After an 11-year drought they can finally see a chance to make a dollar. They're coming back in. Job creation programs are taking place. Jobs are being created out there, and that's something that's been long overdue. More jobs. Maybe my sons and daughters won't have to leave and go to B.C. or Ontario or Alberta to get a job, like I had to when I got out of high school.

Our budget outlines the nine-point program to expand job opportunities, skilled training facilities expansions, redirection of the heritage fund to emphasize agriculture, the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy. We have an improved and strengthened health care program being implemented. Research and development initiatives are taking place, and we're streamlining our government — streamlining the government. We put an extension on our Build-A-Home program. We have a \$32 million recreation and cultural facilities system in place. Those types of programs are good programs. The people need them. They supply the needs of the people.

Now world conditions have been hard on us in Saskatchewan, as they have elsewhere. Oil pricing agreements have weakened our revenue position. Our potash sales have been down. But we've still done better than any other province in Canada — still better. We have the lowest unemployment. There's a net increase in jobs. No other province in Canada can say that.

Now the Leader of the Opposition in his reply to the budget speech neglected to mention a few things. He spoke loud and long and gave us a great harangue. It wasn't very eloquent, but he kept on anyhow, and he gave us a real shot in the head (or so he felt) about promises that his government had not kept. But he didn't mention those that

were. A little tax on our diesel fuel, on our farm diesel fuel, who were put there with the help of his NDP federal cohorts, and he's complaining about the rising cost in fuel. The fuel hasn't gone up; the tax sure has.

An Hon. Member: — Pierre's little red rump.

Mr. Petersen: — Pierre's little red rump . . . Yes, absolutely. He went on about a farm fuel rebate in Alberta. Well, it's funded by a heritage fund in Alberta. We don't have much of a heritage fund here. How can we fund a farm fuel rebate program when the former administration used all the cash that they could . . . they said they were getting, building empires, literally empires for their family of crown corporations? It's just not possible. Mr. Speaker, I could go on for hours and hours trying to explain all of the concrete, sound, innovative programs that this budget contains, but judging by the silence over in the opposition I really don't think they are listening. Maybe they don't want to listen. Maybe they can't take the trust.

However, I do want to dwell for a moment on one part of the budget which I find most interesting. And that part is the increase in tax on the diesel fuel used in railway locomotives and the aviation fuel used in their planes. It goes from 1.9 cents per litre to 5.6 cents per litre. This increase, this increase will bring in an additional \$7.6 million in 1983-84. Now I was surprised. I was really surprised to find that the tax on the diesel fuel that was, that has been used by the dreaded multinational, the CPR and their federally owned and operated cohort, that monument of wonderful nationalization, the CNR, had been previously so low under the government that professed to be all for the little workingman and all out against the big corporate giants. Isn't that interesting?

Well, my curiosity was aroused so I did a little research (that's something that the opposition should try to do once in a while — they might get their facts straight) and, Mr. Speaker, what I found just appalled me. I was shocked. I thought I got over being shocked after the first couple of months being in here after we opened the books and found what we found that the previous administration had left us. I was shocked.

The 1982 January issue of *Business Life*, Leader of the Opposition is quoted as saying:

It is clear that the railroads should get additional compensation for the grain they carry.

He was apparently talking about the Crow rate and changes to it. February 8, '82 in the *Globe and Mail*, the Leader of the Opposition, and I quote, said:

We think that under certain circumstances and at some future time, the case might be made for increasing the level of the Crow, provided that it was given the same statutory protection. Now I don't want to be quoted as saying I'm happy to see the Crow increase. That's not so, but I'm realistic enough to know that times goes on and costs go on, and I think the farmers are realistic enough to say that at some time they should look at increasing the Crow.

An Hon. Member: — Who said that?

Mr. Petersen: — That was said by the Leader of the Opposition, that motley little crew in the corner over there. That person who has over the years come out and said that he hated those big multinational railroads with a passion, and here he is saying that the poor farmer in Saskatchewan should help to pay for their costs. Mr. Speaker, that's

despicable.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'm going to give a little lesson in economics here to the opposition. I'd like to give you the total of all rail domestic commodities originating, terminating and passing through Saskatchewan. I'll give you the 1980 figures. Originating in Saskatchewan and going to the Maritimes, we're looking at 140,000 tons; going to Quebec, 267,000 tons; going to Ontario, 13,503,000 tons; to Manitoba, 1,118,000 tons; to Alberta, 316,000 tons; to B.C., 8,809,000 tons; and originating in Saskatchewan and terminating in Saskatchewan 613,000 tons — for a total of 24,766,000 tons. Now, terminating in Saskatchewan from the Maritimes to Saskatchewan, 8,000 tons; from Quebec terminating in Saskatchewan, 120,000 — pardon me, 121,000 tons; from Ontario, 493,000 tons; from Manitoba, 826,000 tons; from Alberta, 512,000 tons; from B.C., 257,000 tons; and as well, that same figure originating and terminating in Saskatchewan, 613,000 tons — for a total of 2,830,000 tons terminating in Saskatchewan.

Now passing through Saskatchewan from the east to the west: from the Maritimes to Alberta we have 106,000 tons; from Quebec to Alberta, 636,000 tons; from Ontario to Alberta, 2,086,000 tons; from Manitoba, pardon me, from Manitoba to Alberta, 708,000 tons. Now, from the Maritimes to B.C. we have 21,000 tons; from Quebec to B.C. we have 352,000 tons; from Ontario to B.C. we have 1,030,000 tons; from Manitoba to B.C. we have 536,000 tons. If you add that all up the total comes to 5,475,000 tons. That's for traffic passing through the province.

So as you can see, we have, we have quite a large amount of traffic coming through and travelling across the province. By the way, those tons were not metric tons, those were tons as I understand them.

Now, when we calculate a gas tax against the tonnage that's moved across the province, it's done in two different ways: CN as one formula and CP as another formula. The calculation of the gas tax liability by the railway companies is as follows: CN developed consumption factors for each type of grain, freight . . . pardon me, for each type of train — freight or yard or what-have-you — in miles per gallon. Miles travelled in each province for each type of activity is multiplied by the consumption factor for each type to arrive at total consumption in each province. This is multiplied by the tax rate to yield the tax liability in each province. Makes some sense.

CP developed a computer simulation of train conditions in each province using road-bed conditions, number of engine units in each type of train, usage of various types of trains, etc. to allocate consumption among provinces. Taxes are paid to each province based on the travel within that province of each type of train — again freight, yard, what-have-you; of each type of composition — the number of cars, engines, etc., under each type of condition — curved, straight track, hills, urban, rural, and so on and so forth.

Now what I find most interesting, Mr. Speaker, is to see that we have had that, that amount of tonnage being transported, travelling across Saskatchewan — from Saskatchewan to Saskatchewan, across Saskatchewan. My first thought was: my God but isn't that a great place to raise some revenue? Isn't that a good place to raise some revenue? And I expected full well that the previous administration had milked that particular source heavily, as they seemed to have been able to do with all their other types of taxes. But, Mr. Speaker, I found to my horror and my shock, that in 1972-73, when the people of Saskatchewan were paying \$53.3 million in gas tax, the railroads,

(remember the railroads — those dreaded multinationals), were only paying \$1.7 million - \$1.7 million.

Well, I thought, well that might be the case, you know, but I'm sure, I'm sure that they mended the, you know, the error of their ways. I'm sure they saw the error, and I'm sure they fixed it. So, I went on a little further. And, I thought, well, 1978-79 should be a good year to look at. Well, in 1978-79, Mr. Speaker, 1978-79, the people of Saskatchewan paid \$79.2 million in gas tax, and that dreaded multinational, that dreaded multinational paid \$3 million. Just think of the tonnage that's going there, just think of the amount of, of product that was being moved.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought, you know, surely, surely (you remember surely), as time progressed they would see the error of their ways, and being good socialists, they would figure out a way to tax that big, nasty multinational and that big, nasty national. So I went to 1981-82, Mr. Speaker. And in 1981-82 I found that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan paid \$117 million in gas tax, Mr. Speaker, \$117 million out of their pocket. The school districts had to pay that. The R.M.s paid that. Indirect taxation to the tune of \$117 million. Despicable. And I figured, well, if they do that to the people of Saskatchewan, they would really sock it to those big, nasty railroads, and they did. Oh, they sure did. They charged them \$3.7 million, Mr. Speaker. A measly \$3.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, I was appalled. I almost lost the three hairs that I still had. Then, Mr. Speaker, I thought, well, let's just compare what the new budget, the budget of a Conservative government, a Conservative government would do. So, Mr. Speaker, I took a look at it. And in 1983-84 (the budget we're talking about), you know what? The people of Saskatchewan don't pay any gas tax! But you know those railroads, those big, nasty railroads were paying \$12.1 million in tax.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen: — Now I hope the members in the opposition have been listening to this. And if they haven't been listening to it, I'd be happy to mail each of them a copy of *Hansard* with the appropriate passages marked out. I'm sure it would make appropriate reading for them.

An Hon. Member: — Gone over their heads.

Mr. Petersen: — Well that's perhaps true. It may have gone over their head, but I think if we give it to them two or three times, they'll figure it out . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Should I run it by them again? I think the point's been well made.

Mr. Speaker, we have opposite from us a government that said one thing and did another. They taxed the people of Saskatchewan, and they taxed the people of Saskatchewan, and they taxed the people of Saskatchewan, and they let the railroads off practically scot-free. Whose friend are they? Whose friend are they?

Mr. Speaker, it's for reasons like those that I've just outlined that, as I said earlier, I'm proud to be part of this government. I'm proud to be a Canadian under a . . . in a free country. And you're right; maybe each and every one of us should get down and kiss the ground and be thankful that we're here, and we're here in Saskatchewan under a Progressive Conservative government, not under an NDP socialist one.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. This is only one example, only one example of the many things that my research has come up with. However, I think I will conclude now. I think the, I think the opposition has had their lesson for the day. And I'll conclude by saying that I do not support the amendment. I do support the main motion. Thank you.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Appointments to Public Accounts Committee

Mr. Glauser: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave of this Assembly, seconded by the member for Prince Albert, I would ask that I be allowed to present a motion changing two members of the public accounts committee. The motion that I am presenting is:

That the name of Mr. Dutchak be substituted for that of Mr. Sutor and the name of Mr. Young be substituted for that of Mr. McLaren on the list of members comprising the standing committee on public accounts.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.