

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan  
Third Session — Eleventh Legislature  
33rd Day**

**Monday, March 19, 1951**

The House met at three o'clock p.m.

**ON ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**STATEMENT ON HOUSING**

**Hon. J.H. Sturdy (Minister of Social Welfare):** — The housing policy of the Federal Government, I think, can best be expressed in the words of the Prime Minister in a public statement, a recorded statement, to the people of New Brunswick, in May, 1949, in which he stated as follows:

“It is up to the provincial and municipal authorities to decide what public housing projects are desirable. Any provincial government that really means business will find no difficulty in securing co-operation from the Government at Ottawa. Our Government will not be satisfied until there is a decent home for every Canadian family.”

Now in order to give legislative commitment to that policy, section 35 of the National Housing Act was amended in 1949, at Ottawa, as follows:

“SECTION 35, Clause (a): The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation may, pursuant to agreements made between the Government of Canada and the Government of any Province, undertake jointly with the government of the province, or an agency thereof, projects for the acquisition and development of land for housing purposes, and for the construction of houses for sale or for rent.

Clause 2 of that section stated as follows (in part):

“An agreement referred to in sub-section 1 shall provide that the capital cost of the project and the profits and losses thereof shall be shared 75 per centum by the Corporation, and 25 per centum by the government of the province of any agency thereof.”

As a result of this legislation, the Provincial Government here entered into negotiations with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Ottawa, which is the agency of the Federal Government for the carrying out of their housing policy, and, at the legislative Session of 1950, we brought in enabling legislation. You will recall the terms of that legislation — 75 per cent of the cost of any housing project provided by the Federal Government, 12½ per cent by the Provincial Government, and 12½ per cent by

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the municipal government, and we set aside \$2,000,000 for the Province's share of any housing project.

Now, when that was done the Provincial Government immediately negotiated with the municipalities of the province, and 14 of these municipalities are now in various stages of development with respect to their housing surveys and their land assembly surveys and their negotiations, in order to proceed with the housing projects in 1951. These municipalities are Estevan, Weyburn, Assiniboia, Shaunavon, Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Regina, Indian Head, Melville, Yorkton, Sturgis, Melfort, Prince Albert, Saskatoon.

Now, in the case of three of these, they have completed their housing surveys; they have submitted their proposals for land assembly for the housing projects which they wish, and everything is completed so far as they are concerned to enter into the final agreement.

Well, our negotiations proceeded until February 5th of this year, when I received a letter from the Hon. Robert Winters, the responsible Minister of Resources and Development at Ottawa. He was good enough to send me an advance copy of his statement in the House, and I am just reading one or two items from this. Here is one:

“By the end of 1950 there were about 66,000 houses completed in the Dominion of Canada. Building supply materials, and particularly products of steel are in short supply, with the result that many builders and owners are unable to complete housing. One of the main problems is to complete houses now under construction, and what the Government wishes most to avoid is the starting of a large number of houses which could not be completed.”

He goes on to state:

“That the down payment of the prospective home owner who is building a house under the National Housing Act has been increased by 1/6th, making it somewhat more difficult for him to secure a house under the National Housing Act.

To finish another sentence:

“The Government will continue to attach a high order of importance to housing and emphasize it to a degree second only to the direct defence programme itself.”

Now that was an indication to me, Mr. Speaker, that there might be a curtailment of our proposed housing programme in the province of Saskatchewan. I went to Ottawa at the first opportunity, on February 24th and I interviewed David Manser, the president of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the vice-president. Unfortunately, I was unable to see the Minister, Mr. Winters, but I was assured that the full text of our discussion would be placed before Mr. Winters, and that I might expect to receive a letter from him in a very short time setting forth the situation.

I did receive a letter, under date of March 9, from the Hon. Robert Winters, which reads as follows:

“Dear Mr. Sturdy:- Following your conversation with the president of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation on February 24, I have been giving consideration to the practicability of proceeding with housing units in partnership with the province, under Section 35 of the National Housing Act.

“Defence demands in the construction field are very great, and have priority over everything else. Already there are indications that building materials for residential construction, particularly those that are components of steel, are in short supply; nor is there any immediate prospect of an improvement in this situation.

“Therefore I believe that the Provincial and Federal Governments should at this time postpone housing developments under Section 35, except in those areas where there is an immediate need for housing for defence workers. I appreciate that your negotiations with the municipalities have now reached a point where a review of the physical conditions and type of housing needs might be the next step. I think you will agree that unless we are confident that houses could be completed within a reasonable time, it is to the interests not only of the two senior governments, but also the municipalities themselves, that no projects be undertaken where such doubt exists.

“It is my feeling that the preliminary work which has been done up to the present time has been very useful and will avoid delay when the material supply situation is such that there is a reasonable hope of projects proceeding expeditiously. I would therefore suggest that you tell the municipalities that, in light of present circumstances, and until the material supply position improves, plans for development under Section 35 should be held in abeyance. I do feel that the subject should be kept under continuous review, and when it becomes feasible to proceed with housing in those areas, we should then proceed to discuss with the municipalities, location, types of units, and other physical factors.

Yours very truly,  
‘Robert Winters’”

Immediately on receipt of that communication which I received last week, I wanted to determine what the situation was in regard to availability of building supplies, and I had contacted on my behalf manufacturers and local building supply houses, and I have the reports of about a dozen of these:

(1) Gypsum, Lime and Alabastine Company is an example, and their report states this:

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“Our increased manufacturing facilities have put us in full supply to take care of any large demands of gyprock wool, gyprock glass and plaster this year.”

(2) Woods Limited state that they have heating equipment and furnaces for 2,000 homes.

(3) Marshall Wells state as follows:

“Heating units: we could deliver within 60 to 90 days at least 200 heating units complete with the necessary metal for the duct work. During the year we would be able to supply four or five hundred units.”

They go on to state that rough hardware — that is such things as nails, stucco wire, and so on — can be supplied for these houses within a 30-day period. Shingles can be supplied within a 30-day period.

(4) I have similar communications from Ashdowns. This is a statement from Ashdowns:

“Under present conditions we feel confident that over a period of 18 months we could supply heating units for 1,500 to 2,000 homes, or more.”

(5) There is also a statement from Johns Manville Company relative to the supplies which they have on hand.

(6) From Crane Limited: “Plumbing fixtures and roughing in materials for from 300 to 400 homes.”

(7) The Peerless Air Condition Company states as follows: “We are prepared to guarantee delivery and installation of warm air furnaces — coal or oil.”

Now, in view of the fact that it was apparent that there were supplies insofar as manufacturers and local supply houses were concerned, I wired Mr. Winters as follows:

“Widespread dissatisfaction over change in housing policy submitted in your letter of March 9.”

Now I have evidence of that widespread dissatisfaction and I wished to inform him of that. I went on to state:

“Would urge reconsideration at least in respect to municipalities where housing situation is desperate. On basis of priority could Saskatchewan be considered for 2,000 housing units, construction commencing in 1951? Local suppliers and certain manufacturers contacted report availability of considerable building supplies.”

That, Mr. Speaker, completes my statement. I might add that I have kept the municipalities informed as the information became available

to me. I would point out that the Provincial Government and the municipalities had proceeded in good faith and were on the point of completing agreement and proceeding with housing, in 1951, and so the decision of Ottawa to indefinitely postpone housing is, of course, a severe blow to many people in this province.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### Estimates of Department of Highways

**Hon. J.T. Douglas (Minister of Highways):** — I thought if I made a short statement as to Government policy and the programme of work it would help members to understand just the amount of work that has been done in their respective districts. In order that members might have a better grasp of how these projects fit into the construction programme of former years, I have had prepared a map of the highway system of the province and superimposed on that map shows the work that has been done since 1944. That is, the heavy black lines indicate the bituminous surfacing that has been done, the heavy red lines the gravelling, and the heavy green lines the grade construction. The dotted red lines and the dotted green lines represent regravelling and regrading.

Now, the total amount of that work represents 659 miles of bituminous surfacing and 3,000 miles of grading and regrading and 7,000 miles of gravelling or regravelling; and, contrary to statements that have been very often made, this work, you will notice, is scattered over the entire province. It is not confined to any one constituency or a few constituencies, but is well distributed over the whole of Saskatchewan.

Unfortunately this system in 1944 was entirely worn out and in need of rebuilding and it was utterly impossible, both from a financial and from a physical point of view, to reconstruct that entire system in the short period of six years. In the year that has just closed, we constructed 289.33 miles of grading, 476 miles of gravelling and 124.3 miles of bituminous surfacing. I mention that because, last fall, you may recall that we saw completed in the prairie provinces here, a pipe line from Edmonton to Regina and, at that time, it was pointed out that this might be termed as a modern miracle. I note that in building that pipe line they moved some 2¼ million yards of earth. Now, I do not want to detract in any way from the credit that is coming to the people who built that line. As a matter of fact I would like to add my congratulations; but I should like to point out to this Committee that last year's work in grading alone represents more than four times the number of cubic yards of earth handled in the building of these 389 miles of road. In addition to handling that four times the amount of earth, it meant that it had to be placed in proper condition in the grade, and quite a high percentage of these grades called for earth compaction of 95 per cent.

Another thing I would like to point out in passing is that, last year, we made approximately 55 per cent of the grading and the bituminous surfacing with our own crews. In the present year's programme — which I shall present to you in a moment — we will not be able to do as large a percentage because of the greatly increased volume of work, but we will handle a considerable amount of this with our own crews.

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In passing, I should also pay a compliment to our crews for the type of work which they performed last year. In my opinion, they set the pattern for the others to follow, and I think all members, whether on this side of the House or the other, will agree that the work that was done was exceptionally good and is a credit not only to the men who did the work in the field but also to those who had the work of designing and planning this construction programme.

Now this year, we will again continue the extension of our three main North-South arteries in the province. We will also continue the construction of the two main East-West arteries in the province. We will continue to link up the main centres of population in the province; and we will also continue, as in the past, to give consideration to those outlying areas which are in need of highway and road construction. In presenting this programme of work, I would like to remind the Committee, however, that it is based on the assumption that the supply of equipment and repairs will not be too greatly impaired. Already we have noticed the effect of the shortage of steel in certain lines of work. We are quite confident, however, that, as far as our own crews are concerned, unless things become very drastic, we will have no difficulty in carrying on — I should not say no difficulty; but we will be able to carry on throughout the present year. I have not had the opportunity of discussing with the contractors their position in this respect. It is also based on the assumption that costs will not spiral too much above the estimates which we have made, and, thirdly, also on the assumption that the Federal Government will continue to contribute toward the cost of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Up to the present moment we have had no direct indication that they have any intention of not proceeding with this project. As a matter of fact, all the correspondence I have had with Mr. Winters would indicate that they do intend to proceed with it. But I should also point out to this Committee that, up to the present moment, none of the projects which we have submitted to Ottawa for approval have been accepted by them, and a number of those have been before them for some considerable time. I can hardly anticipate, however, Ottawa not proceeding with this very important project, because I believe I mentioned in this House, when I spoke a short time ago, that in the event of war our highway system is becoming more and more imperative in order to meet not only the needs of the province but of the country; and over the entire North American Continent the economy of the whole area now largely depends on highway transportation. In the event of war, when they would almost certainly strike at our railway lines and our lines of communication, we would feel the need of a vastly extended highway system, rather than have it restricted. I notice here, in the last copy of "Roads and Engineering Construction", there are three articles by very eminent military men who point out that, in the event of another war, we cannot afford to have our highway systems neglected, as was done during the last two wars. So I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is no likelihood of the Federal Government not proceeding with the Trans-Canada Highway, at least during the present year.

First I am going to give you a short break-down of the work on the basis of the Trans-Canada and the Provincial highway system. Under the Trans-Canada, we propose the grading of 131.08 miles, the gravelling of 108.08 miles, base course on 87.606 and bituminous surfacing of 87.06. On the Provincial highway system we propose the gravelling of 572.15 miles, the

gravelling of 619.19 miles, base course 22.74, and bituminous surfacing of 135.64; on secondary highways, 46 and 98.3 — making a total of grading of 749.23 miles, of gravelling 826.29 miles, of base course 109.80 miles and of bituminous surfacing 222.71 miles.

Now, as to location: on the Trans-Canada Highway we propose the black-topping of that section from the Manitoba border to Moosomin, and then we will complete the grading from that point to the city of Regina this year. That will mean that at the end of this construction season we will have the grade completed from the Manitoba border to the city of Regina. We will also, in addition to black-topping the section from the Manitoba border to Moosomin, black-top the section from McLean to Wolseley. Then, when we go West from Regina, we will complete the grading of those sections that are now black-topped between the city of Regina and the city of Swift Current. We will also black-top the section from east of Parkbeg to Valjean and from Morse to Herbert and from Herbert to west of Rush Lake, making a total on the Trans-Canada Highway of 131.8 miles of grading, 108.8 of gravelling and 87.06 of bituminous surfacing.

On the Provincial highway system, commencing with No. 2 Highway, we will complete that section from Pickthall to Assiniboia. That will give a good graded road all the way from Rock Glen to Moose Jaw and north to Tuxford. Now, from Tuxford north, of course, has been the missing link in the No. 2 Highway for some years, and we have been unable to do any work on that because of the uncertainty of what will happen to Buffalo Pound Lake. However, we have now the assurance from the P.F.R.A., I think it is complete enough to know that it is going to be impossible to change the route of No. 2 Highway north from Moose Jaw. That will mean that in the coming summer we hope to do at least some location work on that route. It has also been established that the responsibility for any damage to the grade across that lake will be borne by the P.F.R.A. At least we have the verbal admission of that by the Federal Minister in charge, and I also understand, Mr. Chairman, that that goes whether the lake is filled with mountain water or with sewage from Moose Jaw City. Farther north on No. 2 Highway, we will complete the section from Watrous to the junction of No. 14. We will then complete the work of grading from Wakaw to St. Louis, and we will complete that section of black-topping of almost 10 miles between St. Louis and Prince Albert. With the completion of that piece of black-topping, we will have black-top from the bridge at St. Louis right through to Prince Albert National Park.

On No. 3 Highway, we will complete the work from Crooked River to Mistatim and from St. Louis to Hagen's Corner.

On No. 4 Highway, we will complete the south approach to Saskatchewan Landing bridge; that is a small job, just half a miles of the approach from the old grade up to the bridge. We will complete the gravelling of No. 4 from Saskatchewan Landing to Kyle; grade from Elrose to Rosetown, and grade from a point 7 miles south of Biggar to the town of Biggar. I should point out here that on that section we hope to do some experimental work with the use of crude oil, and I am quite sure that all members will be interested in the outcome of that experiment. Then we will also complete that section of No. 4 which, up to the moment, has never been completed, from Red Pheasant to Ibstone, and when this is completed we will have a completely gravelled road from the International Border to a point, I believe, about ten miles north of Meadow Lake.

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On No. 5 Highway there is a slight relocation at the town of Togo. We will regrade from Rama to Margo and from Humboldt west, a distance of 18 miles. And farther west, on No. 5, we will black-top the section of No. 5 from Lloydminster to Lashburn and continue the grading to the east. I might say that that section of No. 5 forms part of the second main East-West highway through the province of Saskatchewan.

On No. 6 Highway, the highway which from Regina north carries more heavy truck traffic than any other road in the province of Saskatchewan, and on that section I find that we will grade from the junction with No. 13 to Corinne. We will complete the black-topping from the Qu'Appelle Valley to Southey; part of that, of course, will be on Highway No. 22. We will continue on the work from Southey north, and then we will continue grading on No. 6 from Melfort south during the present year.

On No. 7 Highway, there may be a little repair work on the black-top placed there last fall between Zealandia and Rosetown, as some of that work was laid while it was quite wet; but the season had got too far advanced to attempt to dry it out. It is a good thing we did not take the chance, because we had an exceptionally bad fall. Now that may give trouble and we may have to do a little repair work on that piece of road.

On No. 9 Highway, we will complete the grading and the gravelling between Endeavour and Reserve, and also black-top from Yorkton to Canora.

I might point out, Mr. Chairman, that with that work completed, you will then have a gravelled or black-topped road from the town of Hudson Bay through to the city of Regina.

On No. 10 Highway, we will complete the construction from Duff to Balcarres. On No. 11, we will complete the construction from Aylesbury to Davidson, and carry on blacktop work from Dundurn to Bladworth. I might point out, Mr. Chairman, that with the completion of this grading we will have shortened the distance between the city limits of Regina and the city limits of Saskatoon to less than 165 miles. At the present time the distance between the city limits is about 166, and I believe we will shorten it, during this summer's operations, by another mile and a half.

**Mr. Loptson:** — What did it used to be?

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — It used to be 201, if I remember correctly.

On No. 12 Highway — and I know the hon. member from Rosthern will be interested in this — we will complete the construction from the junction with No. 5 north to the town of Waldheim. I know that the member from Shellbrook (Mr. Larsen) will be interested to know that this is necessary in order to give that connection which those people have been asking for so long between Highways Nos. 40 and 12, and one of the reasons that I could not recommend it was because I wanted to see this work completed before we could start the work between these two highways.

On No. 13 Highway, we will carry on construction east and west of Carlyle during the present year; and again on No. 13 highway, from the junction of No. 6 west.



On No. 14 Highway, we will complete the work started last year between Wynyard and Dafoe, and from Dafoe north. On No. 14 highway, from Perdue to Biggar.

No. 17 Highway, we will complete the work from the terminus of No. 17 Highway north of Lloydminster to the North Saskatchewan river.

On No. 18 Highway, we will carry on the work from Glen Ewen to the junction of No. 9; and also on No. 18, from Lake Alma to Radville, there will be the gravelling of that piece of road completed this year.

On No. 19 Highway from Kincaid to Mankota corner, and from the junction of 43 north — a distance of 21 miles.

On No. 20 Highway, from Bulyea to Duval; from Middle Lake to St. Benedict, we will complete the gravelling of that piece of road. The contract was let last year, but due to the weather, last fall, they were unable to complete the work.

On No. 23 Highway, we will complete the gravelling from Bertwell to Somme.

On No. 35 Highway, we will grade that section from Colgate to a point some two miles north of Weyburn; and again, on No. 35 Highway, from Qu'Appelle to Fort Qu'Appelle, we will blacktop, during the present year. And on No. 35 Highway, we will construct that section from Lipton to Leross, and from Tisdale to Nipawin we will complete the re-gravelling which was let last fall, but was not finished on account of the wet weather.

On No. 37 Highway, from Climax north and south. No. 37 highway, Shaunavon north.

No. 42 Highway, Dinsmore south, will be the completion of gravelling which was started, last fall, but was not completed.

No. 44 Highway, Mantario west. No. 46 highway, from Climax to Claydon — the gravelling of that section which was built last summer, and no. 51 Highway from Major to the Alberta boundary.

No. 55 Highway, Mont Nebo to Mildred, and the completion of contract and the completion of gravelling of the work done.

On the secondary highways, we will gravel the work done between Hart and Willow Bunch during last year, and carry on the work from Carrot River north-west.

We will also do some work on the road from Loon Lake to Makwa, and from the junction of No. 26 Highway towards Pierceland; and from No. 26 Highway towards Paradise Hill; and from No. 26 Highway between Goodsoil and Meadow Lake. We will complete the gravelling of what is known as the "44" trail between Meskanaw and Crystal Springs, and will complete the gravelling started, last fall, on the road from Good River to Carrot River.

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We will complete the gravelling of that short section of road between the Prince Albert National Park boundary and the little town of Cookson. That contract was let last year, but was not finished.

We will also do some work from Gronlid east, during the present year, making a total of 46 miles of secondary highway construction and 98 miles of gravelling.

That, Mr. Speaker, is an outline of work which we have planned for the present year, and I should tell this Committee it is by far the largest programme of work that was ever outlined for the province of Saskatchewan in any one season.

**Mr. Loptson:** — The Minister of Highways apparently does not know that there is a Saltcoats constituency in this province. I did not happen to hear him mention a yard or a mile of road in that constituency in his programme for this year, and there was not any last year. I was just wondering if he had forgotten that part of the province altogether.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — I did not hear the hon. member when he started to speak. I think he was referring to Saltcoats constituency, and I should point out to him that there has been a great deal of work carried on in Saltcoats constituency. I should also point out to him that when we undertake to map out the programme of work for any year, we forget about constituency boundaries. Now, I know it is hard for him to understand that; but we do, and all he has to do is to look at that map over there and he will realize that that is the case. He will also realize that on that map it shows the complete reconstruction of No. 14 Highway from the Manitoba border right through to Yorkton, with one small section which was a credit to the Liberal Government that was building it; it was one of the few that was a credit. But Saltcoats, in the past, has not been unfairly treated. Then, too, that section of No. 5 Highway running from Kamsack south — part of that lies in Saltcoats constituency, so they have not been neglected or forgotten, I can assure you.

**Mr. L.M. Marion (Athabaska):** — You spoke in regard to the highway up into Meadow Lake. So far it is 10 miles north. I hope in the new constituency that you have drafted there, that you do not stop there.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — That is quite true . . .

**Mr. Marion:** — I hope I will be able to see the Minister when the time comes, privately.

**Mr. Benson:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity of congratulating the Minister of Highways for having adopted this method, before he asked us to vote on his estimates. That is the method which I always thought should have been put into effect in this Legislature, and I, perhaps, have been one of the most severe critics of the Minister of Highways, because of the fact that we did not know, before we voted the money, where he was going to do this work. So I think it is up to me, at the earliest opportunity, to tell him that I appreciate what he has done this afternoon, and I also want to tell him, on behalf of the constituents of Last Mountain, whom I have the privilege of representing, that I am quite sure that they will appreciate very much his intention to continue to build No. 6 this year, and also to do that piece from Bulyea to Duval which is so badly needed. I want to thank you, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Tucker:** — Mr. Chairman, I think that, so far as I am concerned, the statement of the Minister, indicating what he intends to do with the money voted by this Legislature, is really a new departure. I think he will recall . . .

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — It is not a new policy.

**Mr. Tucker:** — Well, it may be — but at any rate since I have been in the Legislature, something like this has not been done, and he will recall that, like many other members, I protested against giving a ‘blank cheque’ to the Minister, as we had to do in the last two Sessions. I am very glad that he has seen fit now, when he comes and asks for a vote for several millions of dollars in this Legislature, to lay before the Legislature a detailed indication or programme of what he intends to do with the money. I think that that is very much in order, and it is the only way, as I pointed out last year and the year before, it is the only proper way to treat a Legislative Assembly like this. In other words, it was very much out of order, I felt, to ask for a vote of several millions of dollars on the statement that, “We will spend the money, and you will find out after you have gone home from the Legislature where we are going to spend it”. Now, this year, for the first time, as I have said, since I have been in the Legislature, the Minister has indicated to the members where he is going to spend the money that he is asking the Legislature for, and I, quite frankly, am very happy to be able to find something that I can commend the Minister for, and I do it quite frankly. I am glad to see that he is mending his ways and that he is beginning to meet some of the suggestions made by the Opposition.

I am also very happy to think that he has finally found out that the great seat of Rosthern is on the highway map of Saskatchewan, and I want to thank him for that too.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — I want to thank the hon. member for his remarks, also the hon. member for Last Mountain. I should also inform this Assembly, this is the first time in the history of this Legislature that a highway programme has been outlined before the members.

**Mr. V.P. Deshaye (Melville):** — The Minister of Highways has given us a very thorough report on the Highways, which I, too, appreciate. I was wondering if he would do as much as to bridges — if he would give us a report on his proposed programme for bridges in this province.

**Mr. A.C. Cameron (Maple Creek):** — I was very interested in what the Minister said in outlining his programme for 1951. I followed it very carefully with a pencil in my hand, but I do not recall him having mentioned Highway No. 21. They fixed Maple Creek up with a new seat in the redistribution, and we have a portion of Highway No. 32 and a portion of Highway No. 21. Am I correct in my assumption that Highway No. 21 is not on your programme at all, for this year?

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — That is quite right. The hon. member knows that has been carried north to Fox Valley, and of course, we

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have also carried on the construction of the east-west road to Leader. There is a small section there that is not on this year's programme. I know it is not a good type of road. On the other hand, you have a section there with a lot of light land and fairly sparsely populated, and that is not really as important a road as many others in the province. Now, there are more miles of road to be constructed in Saskatchewan than it is physically or financially possible to complete in a given two years, and we felt that that is not one of the more important roads in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Cameron:** — Are you not even considering the gravelling of two miles where you graded from Maple Creek to Fox Valley? I think it is 1½ or 2 miles that is left yet to be gravelled. I might point out that we had a delegation but the Minister was unable to see them due to the rush, when the municipal men were here; but I think I still have a petition to present, with some 400 names on one, and some 300 on the other, regarding the portion of No. 21 Highway further north from Fox Valley. I must say it is a keen disappointment to us in Maple Creek to learn that No. 21 is not to have any money spent on it this year whatever, and I had hoped that the Minister could at least give us some consideration on gravelling those two miles on the portion of No. 21 and pushing it at least a few miles further north, because I think he is well aware of the fact that all those people in there must either go to Maple Creek or to Leader for medical services, and if you have any amount of rain whatever, or any amount of snow, it is impossible for that whole southwest area to get out for medical services. They cannot get to Leader and they cannot get to Maple Creek; and I think some of those considerations should be borne in mind, and should have been borne in mind when you were allotting this programme of work for 1951.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — In regard to your suggestion to gravel those few miles north of Fox Valley, I question if that grade is built to a standard that would warrant gravelling until such time as it has been built to the standard which we are now building. I do not think it would be money well spent to do so.

**Mr. Cameron:** — I meant the two miles south, Mr. Minister, from Fox Valley — to complete it up to the gravelling. I think the gravelling is within two miles of the village on No. 21, which you did some years back, which is a very excellent job on No. 21, from Maple Creek to Fox Valley; but I think we should, at least, have those two miles gravelled into the town of Fox Valley, because that two miles is quickly deteriorating. It was a difficult problem to construct it, because you had to haul earth for some distance to put on there in order to hold it in the first place. The lack of gravelling is certainly deteriorating that highway at a rapid rate, and I think we should receive at least some consideration for those two miles to finish the gravelling from Maple Creek into the town of Fox Valley.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — I would be quite prepared, Mr. Chairman, to take a look at those two miles — that is two miles of road is something that we might gravel out of the maintenance vote; and I am quite prepared to take a look at those two miles to see what can be done during the present year. It would not be on the programme here, but we might be able to do it out of the maintenance vote.

**Mr. Lopton:** — I would like to correct the Minister when he said that he was doing something in the Saltcoats constituency when he proposed to do some work on No. 5. Under the new redistribution, when you are going to do this work next year, I do not think No. 5 will be in the Saltcoats constituency at all. Furthermore, I want to say that it is quite all right for the member from Last Mountain to compliment the Minister, because he is getting a good share of this programme, both in grading and black-topping, but it is not so with the Saltcoats constituency.

**Mr. Brown:** — I think we all agree that the programme outlined by the Minister, is a mighty big programme and a mighty ambitious programme and one which reflects credit not only on the Minister, but on the Government as well, that they are prepared to undertake a programme of that scope at this particular time. But I think it should be pointed out that with the weather which we have been having and the accumulation of snow that we have had in the past two or three weeks, it is entirely possible that large sections of our highways may be destroyed to a degree this spring, and I know that is particularly true in the south country. Never in my memory, and I think in the memory of a lot of the people in that country, have we had as much snow as we have had this year; and due to the fact that it is almost certain that we are going to have a fast run-off, a lot of the highways in that area are going to be partially destroyed at least, and it may mean, Mr. Minister, that your programme will necessarily have to be delayed somewhat, to cope with this emergency situation which I feel satisfied is going to arise, particularly in the southern part of this Province.

**Mr. R.A. McCarthy (Cannington):** — We are on sub-vote 2 now, are we?

**Chairman:** — Sub-vote 2.

**Mr. McCarthy:** — In that sub-vote, is there money to complete this part of No. 13 Highway down here near Ogema? Is that in that sub-vote?

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — What was your question?

**Mr. McCarthy:** — You have a portion of no. 13 Highway down here — a contract down there that was not completed; I suppose it will be completed this year. Is that in this vote?

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — I announced that when I was giving the programme. There will be a section of No. 13 Highway east and west of Carlyle in this vote.

**Mr. McCarthy:** — No, I am talking about No. 13 Highway down here at Ogema.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — Oh yes, that is in this vote. I announced that when I was giving the programme.

**Mr. McCarthy:** — Well, I didn't catch it. I want to ask some questions about that, but just before I do that I would like to compliment the Minister on having given us a detailed outline of what he is going to do. He left some of it pretty open — he said east and west of Carlyle; but I will discuss that with him afterwards and see how far east and west he is going to go.

**March 19, 1951**

I would like to ask — we put in some questions about this contract down here on No. 13, near Ogema, last week, and they said that the work was not completed, and I would like to ask if that contract with Mr. McGill is still in force.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — I think, Mr. Chairman, I may as well make a statement regarding that, in view of the press reports that have gone out regarding that contract.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, we have, in this province, a press that, in my opinion, has very little concern for the truth. I think they are more interested in trying to defeat this Government than they are in giving the public true information.

I might as well go into the history of this because it keeps coming up, and I am very glad it came up at the moment, when I am on the air, because I want the people of Saskatchewan to know the truth regarding this, which they have not got so far; but also to clear the name of the contractor who did that work, because I say it is a disgrace that a newspaper, in order to try to blacken a Government will, at the same time, give no consideration to the feelings or to the character of a man who happens to have a misfortune, as the contractor did, in this particular case.

Now, in this case, the contractor was not a fully experienced contractor, and he bid too low — we knew he bid too low. Secondly, he had foisted on him, as I understand, equipment that was second-hand and in very poor condition. He did engage a first-class foreman, and after he had been working for some time, he found he simply could not make it go. It was a nuisance to us — we were keeping an engineer there on the job part of the time, and the contractor was making no progress. At last he came in, and all the consideration this man asked was that he be given the opportunity to go out and clear up the debt which he had incurred in that piece of work. Now we had several options before us. We could have seized his equipment but we did not want to, or we could have gone out and called on the bondholder to immediately complete the work. We knew at that particular time there was not a contractor in the province who could handle that work. We took the third course, of later on, calling for tenders when contractors were available, and we got a very fair price on the job.

Now the newspapers got wind of this, and they thought there was something wrong. Instead of coming to me about it, this particular reporter hounded my staff week in and week out trying to get a dirty story regarding the Department, and he could not get it. At last he came to me — of course I had heard about it — and I told him then, “If you think there is something wrong about this, you can forget it”. I said, “I have been in this Department now for six years, and you have not been able to point the finger of scorn at me, or show in any way that any money has been wrongly spent, and I am taking no chances in a case of this kind”. I pointed out that we had not released the bond company — we still have those bonds, I want to tell this committee right now . . .

**Mr. McCarthy:** — I did not hear that.

**Hon. Mr. Douglas:** — . . . If you will just sit down for a moment, I will answer your questions.

**Mr. McCarthy:** — I didn't just hear your last statement.

**Hon. Mr. J.T. Douglas:** — We still have those bonds, and we are still holding the bond company responsible for that contract, and we have not yet completely settled with the contractor.

Now to show you that this newspaper handled the truth very carelessly, I have here an editorial in which they state that the bond was held by the Saskatchewan Fidelity Company. Well, when the general manager of that company pointed out that they did not hold that bond, several days later I had this same reporter phone me, asking me just who held the bond. I said then, "You know all about it; you have already made the statement as to who holds the bond". He said, "but they did not know". Well I want to tell this Committee that it has never been the policy of the Department to inform the public as to whom the contractor uses to bond him. It has never been the policy of the Department and we are not departing from it. We would not depart from that any more than we would depart from the practice of not telling the public who the contractor uses as his banker; but I want to tell this Committee, today, that we still hold the bond company responsible for that piece of work, and I want that to be understood. Again I say it is unfortunate that we have a press in this province which would try to blacken the name of that man, because this report has gone from one side of Canada to the other. I have clippings from papers all across this country, and in every case they have used this man's name, and I know the gentleman feels very badly about it. But I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that he acted in a very honourable manner and has cleaned up all his accounts. We had no occasion to go in there and clean up any accounts which he had incurred. Being bonded, if he had wanted to, he could have said, "All right, I cannot finish this, I am through; you can take care of these accounts". But this man did not do this, and I want to tell you that the "Leader-Post" was aware of that fact before they published that statement.

The Assembly adjourned at 11 o'clock p.m. without question put.