

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Twelfth Legislature
18th Day

Monday, March 9, 1953

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

BUDGET DEBATE

The House resumed from Friday, March 6, 1953, the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): That Mr. Speaker, do now leave the chair. (The Assembly to go into Committee of Supply).

Mr. M.J. Willis (Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the motion, I do not know whether it is by accident or not, this afternoon, to give me the proper setting, but I welcome from our galleries several students here and, being a teacher by profession, I feel right at home, and I hope that the students who are visiting the Legislature, possibly for the first time, will enjoy their time spent here, this afternoon; not in what I have to say — possibly it might be better for me to say it than someone from the other side.

When I adjourned the debate, Mr. Speaker, I hastily made certain criticisms which I shall leave until a little later on, this afternoon.

I was glad to hear the hon. member for Nipawin (Mr. MacNutt) say he had a fairly good hockey team. We, in my part of the western part of the province, have a good hockey team. We, in my part of the province, have a midget hockey team now that is waiting on the winners of Swift Current and Yorkton to play off. We have won everything people to date, so I advise the hon. member for Nipawin that, in a few years we will have an intermediate team, too.

We in the Elrose constituency were very disheartened, about one year ago, when due to unseasonably spring weather, we lost several spans of the Saskatchewan Bridge; but I am glad to report, this afternoon, that as soon as that unfortunate incident happened this Government immediately got busy and under the guidance of the Minister of Highways (Hon. J.T. Douglas) due to his energy, steel was ordered to replace the bridge. Today, the steel is in its place and within two weeks all the riveting will be finished, and all that remains to be finished on the bridge are the guardrails and the cement flooring. We in the Elrose constituency — and I believe I am voicing the sentiments of all the people in that area — offer our sincere thanks to the Minister of Highways, who is held in the very highest esteem in that area, for doing a magnificent job.

The going out of the bridge dashed cherished hopes of many of the pioneers. We have suffered, like the rest of the province, with several crop failures, but we always said, 'well, next year would bring a good crop'. When the bridge was built it was a cherished dream of over 40 years, and then to see the bridge built and taken out less than a year after it was built, certainly dashed the hopes of those pioneers. So, today, the replacement of that bridge has once again meant that the dreams of those

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pioneers has come true, because we have, on this side of the House, a Government that does things.

For 35 to 40 years, in that area, the members on the opposite side have made promises that they were going to build a dam. What do we find in 1953? We have found a report brought down that there is no intention of building the dam – that is the long and the short of it. Why it is even said now that it hadn't had the consideration of the Federal Cabinet! Some of us said right along that it would only be built when the C.C.F. would build it, as they built the bridge.

We on this side, this year, have an ambitious road programme. We will spend, altogether, in the Department of Highways, over \$18 million. Now I want to clear up a misapprehension or a misunderstanding of Friday, because it was stated that the gasoline tax had gone up 10 per cent – or the price of the gasoline had gone up 10 per cent. I checked the records, and I find the reporter for the 'Star-Phoenix' understood it as I had – that there was a 10 per cent increase in gasoline. Now what I want to make clear to all is that the tax on gasoline has gone up from 10 to 11 cents, but that does not mean that the over-all cost has gone up 10 per cent, because if gasoline cost 40 cents, it will now cost 41 and the one cent on 40 cents certainly does not make 10 per cent; so that I wanted to clear that up, this afternoon, at the beginning of my address.

Now we will say that the \$18 million highway programme is a large figure. That is quite true; but the people of this province were presented with that programme on June 11 – a \$75 million programme – and their answer was in the affirmative, to go ahead with it, and we, on this side, believe in fulfilling our promises and this is the first step in the fulfilment of that promise. Moreover, in the past, the municipalities in my area have been pleased with the means by which the Minister of Highways worked out his formula of grants to the municipality on the base of the low assessed getting the larger grant. Now when he, in turn, will give his programme some time this afternoon, I am quite sure that he may have something to say about those grants. But in the past the formula, to my mind, and to the people in my area, was a fair formula – that the low assessed areas got the larger grants and I think that is a good principle.

Another reason that I think this Government was endorsed on June 11th was not on the programme, entirely, of promises, but on our efforts in the past, from 1944 to 1948. It was strange, during the campaign, the promises that were made by the Opposition. I have here a paid advertisement in my area where No. 42 Highway was to be finished in 1952 – June 11 to the end of 1952, a highway was to be finished. Now that is a strange promise made by the Opposition. They were going to become road builders in six months, where, on the other hand, in 30 years they did not do anything.

That, I say, is one of the reasons that many of us are back on this side of the House. The people have confidence in this Government and I am sure, this afternoon, before the Minister of Highways is finished, he, in turn, will give to the people of the Elrose constituency some knowledge of what highways will be built, and we know, from past experiences, that those highways will be built. And so I feel sure and have confidence in the Minister of Highways, that Highway No. 42 will be built in 1953-54, as we said we would as soon as funds were available. We believe in living up to our promises.

We are often criticized that the money we obtain from gasoline tax and from licences is not put back into highways, but I want to say, for the sake of the records, it is estimated, for 1953, the gasoline tax will amount to \$12 million, licence fees will be \$4,800,000, giving a total of \$16,800,000, and yet from the Department of Highways over \$18 million will be spent, so that an additional \$1,200,000 will have to be taken from the Consolidated Fund. I want to make that quite clear because it has been said, time and time again, that we are not putting back into our highway programme the moneys that the gasoline tax, licence and other fees total.

Now, like all constituencies, one of the most important things to the people of Elrose constituency is the development of power, the bringing of power to our towns and villages and hamlets and to the rural sections. This Government recognizes the need of electricity for all people in this province. During the election campaign, of course, there were the promises that they would bring it to the farmer at no cost to the farmer – just like they did in Manitoba. The people of this province knew that it could not be done, because in the province of Manitoba you have a concentration of the population in the centre; you know that half your population has electricity before the government has to step in. Take the city of Winnipeg and the city of Brandon; the cities of Dauphin and Portage la Prairie – half your population has electricity before you start any type of plan. Consequently, we put it up to the people: this is our plan; we will subsidize rural electrification up to 50 per cent, or approximately 50 per cent of it. In the past we have been able to bring electricity to a large number of farmers in this province. On the other hand, the farmers of this province do not want anything for nothing. They want electricity and they want to pay for it. They know that action counts more than words, and that is the reason that the rural electrification plan, as submitted on June 11, was endorsed on behalf of this Government by the people of this province.

Last year, 4,300 farms obtained electricity in this province. In the province of Manitoba, about whose rural electrification plan we have heard so much from the Opposition, 5,319 farms obtained electricity, but, due to concentration of population, the Power Commission in this province built more miles of lines to accommodate the 4,300 farms in this province than did the province of Manitoba in bringing electricity to 5,319 farms. So this year, in following out our programme to bring electricity to 5,500 farms and to another 1,600 urban customers, we will spend a total of \$10 million. It is an ambitious programme, but we in this province look forward to that programme to bring electricity to the farms just as quickly as we can.

Elrose constituency, I think, has had the signal honour of having the first village in the province of Saskatchewan with natural gas brought to the users in that village. I refer to the village of Brock. I agree with the policy of this Government that this Government should control the distribution of gas in this province and not let us get in the mess we were when we came into office in regard to the former Power Commission. What did we find in those days? – in the larger centres you had private companies operating; no idea of expansion whatsoever. The first thing we had to do was to purchase them and then we had to set up a grid system to bring electricity, and that has taken time. So I say the policy of this Government in the distribution of natural gas should be to have it under the control of the provincial government. Otherwise, what is going to happen? – small villages, even though they are nearer the gas fields, or small towns near the gas fields, under private enterprise would never get gas as long as that system

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under private enterprise is operated, and there is no hope in the future. I say to the Government this afternoon, that in 1953 I hope they give consideration to bringing gas to the town of Eston, and I can guarantee to the Government, that they will not be asked for a regulatory body at all when prices are sought. The people of Eston will accept this Government at face value.

So this year, when we spend an estimated \$7 million to take gas to the city of Saskatoon, I hope that in that \$7 million there will be sufficient to take it to the town of Eston. I know that if we cannot do it this year, we will do it very shortly. I know the people in that area, if the Government says, "Well, we cannot do it this year, we will do it next year", will accept that, but like everything else, every town likes to get the natural gas as soon as possible.

Now, of course, I noticed as soon as Saskatoon was asking for gas, there was a lot of trouble, and what did they do? They went to the town of Kindersley and a few said, 'Well, the costs are so high now; we got the gas but the costs are too high.' So, I took my pencil and I took some of the figures that were given in the press at that time, and I compared them with a six-room house; compared what the costs of electricity and oil together would be, and gas at the present rate, and they are getting a good deal at Kindersley right now from this Government, and you do not find very many complaints from the village of Brock – they are satisfied. And I say to the Government, in their policy of controlling the distribution of natural gas, they have the faith of the people that they will do the right thing, and that is why we are back here after June 11th with the numbers on this side of the House.

Government Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Willis: — Now, in regards to education, I think possibly there was a slight mistake made by the critic on the other side. None of us are happy that we have to have supervisors in our schools at the present time, but this province is not the only province that has supervisors. At the present time, across Canada, there are about 6,500 teachers short to man our schools; in all provinces in the west there is a teacher shortage. But I think the inference that was possibly left, that these supervisors in our schools are unqualified entirely, is not quite true. In the group of supervisors that we have at the present time, 556 supervisors have Grade 11, Grade 12 or university training; we have 47 with Grade 10 standing; one with Grade 9 and one with Grade 8, at the present time. The one with Grade 8 standing is a married woman and a mother of two children. Now I say we are not happy about that situation – no one can be happy; but what is being done in this province is being done in other provinces. We must remember, too that while we have supervisors in those classrooms, those supervisors have the Correspondence Courses for the students there. These courses are provided both for the teacher and for the pupils.

Under the guidance of the Minister of Education, we have 54 units set up in this province; 45 of them at the present time are on a permanent basis and 9 are on a 5½-year trial period. When we came into office there were no units. I do not say that the units are the answer to the educational problem and I do not think anyone else will; but I say it is a step in the right direction to equalize educational costs.

Under this plan of larger units, the low assessed areas are helped financially by the Government, with large grants, and I have taken the trouble to look up what some of the units under \$6 million of assessment received. I have taken the unit of Meadow Lake. In the 1952 budget, Meadow Lake had an assessment of \$5½ million, approximately; \$252,000 – grants to the amount of \$252,000 were given, while their own taxes amounted to \$167,000; or in other words, the Government put up more money than the local area for taxes. We come to Hudson Bay: in 1952, \$179,000 of grants from the provincial Government; taxes in the Hudson Bay area, which is low assessed (\$5½ million), \$126,000 — \$179,000 to \$126,000. Medstead, not quite \$5 million assessment; Government grants, in 1952, were \$189,000, the taxes, \$91,000 – almost 2½ times the grants of the Province were to what the taxes were in that area. Now I have taken the low assessed areas. I could take Turtleford, which is just over the \$5 million, and I find \$160,000 to \$118,000. In every case, the grants by the Government surpassed the total of the taxes that were raised in that area, and I say that is a fundamental, sound principle to help those low-assessed districts. Now I could take the years 1950 and 1951 and the same thing would be applicable, that our Government grants to the low-assessed areas were greater than the taxes that were raised in those areas.

The critic on the Opposition side said all school taxes are going up – but what is not going up? The Government has no control of what the local unit board levies for taxes. If they go on a building programme, that is up to the local school unit board, the same as the municipalities. Municipality taxes have been going up; if they have road programmes, naturally taxes are going to go up. This Government does not set the levies of what the larger units are to levy in this province. And in addition to what we have done in regard to the low-assessed units, in the northern part of this province – the part of this province that was forgotten under the previous regimes – in 1947, we spent \$92,000 on education in the north; \$83,000 in 1948; \$85,000 in 1949; in 1950-51, \$97,000; in 1952, \$112,000 and the estimated expenditure this year is \$173,000. The significant thing of it all is that in 1946, there were only 31 teachers in that area; today there are 47 – 44 paid by the provincial Government and 3 in private institutions.

But of greater significance is the fact that, in 1946, there were 1,052 students; in 1951-52, there are 16,088 students in the schools in the north. This was only made possible by this Government in paying for teachers and the building of teacherages, and encouragement to those pupils in the north, and when that opportunity was extended to them they took it. And so, last June, — now the fruits are beginning to become ripened, and we have 63 students now, in the northern part of the province, in our highway schools; before, there were none. I think it is a commendable record, and I believe that those persons in the northland are appreciative of what this Government has done to help to give them some of the educational facilities that other people in this province have had access to.

Then, the critic on the Opposition side said, the other day, “Why, they are only spending 15.8 per cent of their budget on grants,” so I looked at our expenditures. But if you take into account

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\$173,000 that we are going to spend in the northern areas next year, another \$125,000 for buildings and equipment under provincial Government agreement, and add those two figures, we are going to spend \$9,200,000 on education, and when we look at that in relation to the budget, we find that it is much more than 15.8 per cent. Our budget for education has kept pace, as our whole budget has increased. I am not arguing that we have enough there yet, but I am saying it has kept pace, because I have the figures – and I have taken the good years: in 1941 (I did not go back into 1935 and 1934), the percentage was 14.9 per cent; 1942 – 14.6 per cent; 1943 – 13.5 per cent; 1944 – 14.3 per cent; 1942 – 14.6 per cent; 1943 – 13.5 per cent; 1944 – 14.3 per cent. I have taken the good years. I consider those good years in this province: the crops were good, revenues were buoyant, and this was under the former Government. So, when they criticize and say we are not spending a fair proportion, I say why did they not spend more when they were in office? So I commend the Department for the initiative they have shown in the establishment of larger units. There are only six areas now that have not the larger unit set-up, and before another year, I hope the remaining six are included.

Now we have heard, for the last three years at least: “You will never find oil in the province of Saskatchewan as long as you have a C.C.F. Government.” I was quite amused when the member for Maple Creek was in the Elrose area during the election, — fortunately he was not there enough times, because if he had been a few more times, the Government would have had a deposit. “Why, we are giving away the natural resources of this province – we are not going to have any oil.” What do we find today? In 1952, our oil production was 1,600,000 barrels. Did we drive capital away? Why is Imperial Oil building a refinery of \$17 million coming into this province. Did we drive capital out? It is amusing, and I am sure the people of this province must smile when they hear that story of how capital was driven out of this province. No, my friends, the people in this province are not frightened. They have faith in this province; they have faith in this Government. Today we have over 307 producing wells in this province. That is the record of this Government, and that is how they have driven out capital. It takes capital to drill wells, and they have drilled them under a C.C.F. Government. This oil did not gush in here overnight; it has been here since the province was formed and prior to that. And so I say we, in this province, although we have a large budget, face with every confidence the future, because I think we are on the threshold of great expansion, and when money is spent for certain social services in the field of health and social welfare, and an extended road programme, I think the people will accept it as they did on June 11th.

Just in closing, of course, I heard that we are spending too much on our health programme, and that other plans were better. I ran into the Blue Cross in the province of Manitoba, last summer, where they had a little hospital in the town of Stonewall. In order to operate that small hospital – it was only 8 beds and many of the people, prior to the opening of the hospital, belonged to the Blue Cross plan; now this is the situation they have run into. In order to operate that hospital, it was costing the patients \$7 a day. All those that held Blue Cross cards were allowed to pay was \$4.85 and the hospital board,

of course, would not take that as full payment. I have seen several letters in the press, even in the "Winnipeg Free Press", regarding the Blue Cross programme. Because the Blue Cross programme is limited in its scope, there is no question about it, it does not measure up in any detail, and they are having difficulties in the province of Manitoba with the Blue Cross. I just brought that before you, Mr. Speaker, because that is what a little hospital has run into with the Blue Cross already; they will not pay the cost in a small hospital. And so I say, this afternoon, in closing, that with a Government that spends money for social services and for health, you do have a healthy people; you have a people with potential large earning capacity. That money is well spent, and I am sure I do not need to state, in closing, where I am standing in supporting the motion.

Hon. J.T. Douglas (Minister of Highways and Transportation): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate today, I should like at the outset to extend my congratulations to the Provincial Treasurer for the very excellent manner in which he brought down a very excellent budget. This has become rather commonplace, Mr. Speaker, because, as the years go on, we expect the Provincial Treasurer to keep increasing the budget and to bring down budgets that are more popular with the people of Saskatchewan.

There is something else that I want to say about that budget. People in this province will recall that, in June of last year, we made certain very definite commitments, and this budget is ample proof that we intend to fulfil the commitments which we made last June. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that prior to 1944, election promises were not taken too seriously in this province; but from that day on we have set a record of taking our election promises seriously, accepting them as a sacred obligations which we have always undertaken to immediately commence to fulfil. I know that when the election was over and we were returned with a very comfortable majority, a lot of people thought that we would possibly ease up a little on the work; take things a little more leisurely than we had done in the past. Well, I want to say that this budget should set at rest the minds of anyone who held those opinions, because this budget demonstrates that we intend in a forthright manner to fulfil the promises we made last June.

On March 4th, the Provincial Treasurer placed before you an overall plan of what we intend to do during the coming year, and this afternoon I hope to spend a little time and deal a little more fully with the matters which pertain to my own Department. But before doing so, I would like to say a word or two about the rather critical situation that faces the agricultural industry of this province, and I want to say that I do not share the views of the Opposition. I am not at all alarmed about the situation, but I want to say that the very excellent crop which we harvested, last year, under almost ideal conditions last Fall, has helped to obscure the very uncertain situation that lies before the agriculturists in Saskatchewan, and I certainly want to disagree with a statement which was made that the farmers of Saskatchewan can put a bushel of wheat in their granaries cheaper today than at any time in our history. That, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, is not the case. In fact I know it is not the case. If it had been said that we could put a bushel of wheat in our granaries with fewer manpower at work I would

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agree; but that is not what the Liberal speaker said.

I want to point out that, with the cost of farm equipment as it is today, with the cost of labour, with the cost of all the things which the farmer must use in the production of wheat, it is impossible to produce wheat as cheaply today as you could a short time ago. I think it would be closer to the mark if we said that many of the smaller farmers are today finding it impossible to purchase modern up-to-date equipment at its present price and stay on the farm. The result is that many of the smaller farmers are today selling out to the larger operators who are in a position to purchase this modern up-to-date equipment to completely mechanize their farms. By so doing throughout the last two years, when conditions have been a little better than usual in the province, these people have kept fairly well abreast with prices but for the small operator it is becoming almost a hopeless task to attempt to produce wheat under present farming conditions, with present prices as they are.

Another alarming thing to me is the amount of farm equipment that is being bought today on credit. I remember, two years ago, staying in a hotel in one of the small towns in the northern part of this province, in a very good crop area, and I noticed in the little group which met me that evening there was a banker and, I believe, two equipment dealers – it was just before harvest time and equipment was going out – and the topic drifted on to the amount of farm equipment which was being sold. I remember this banker telling me: “You may be surprised to know that the greater part of this equipment is being bought on credit.” Farmers were borrowing under the Farm Improvement Loans Act to pay for this equipment. Now I find that since 1945, there was \$834,498 borrowed under that Act by the farmers; and by 1951 (the last year on which I have figures) there was \$27,876,000 borrowed, and I find that 94 per cent of that money has gone in the purchase of farm equipment. I say it is rather a critical situation when we find farmers who are supposed to be as prosperous as they are today purchasing so much equipment on credit. It certainly gives the lie to the people who are trying to tell us that the price we are now getting for our wheat is paying the farmer well for his labours. It may be true that in some of the more favoured areas of this province farmers are prospering; but if you will take the province as a whole you will find that the capitalization which the average farmer must have in order to farm today is greater than it should be, greater because of the excessive prices which he is paying for machinery and for repairs.

Another thing I want to point out to this Assembly is that the dollar which the farmer is borrowing today is an inflationary 50-cent dollar, a dollar which represents about a quarter of a bushel of wheat. The thing that I am afraid of is that when the farmer comes to repay these dollars, he may be forced to pay back the dollar that will represent anything from a half-bushel to a bushel of wheat, and that is what really counts. If the situation on the international front should brighten a bit and the demand for tanks and guns and jets, yes, and for even keeping horses on the payroll, should cease, why we might find the value of the dollar rising again, which would mean the value of farm products would be going down. That is a thing that the

farmer must watch and watch very carefully.

Another thing that is giving us some worry is the fact that there is a very determined effort being made on the part of some financial interests to scrap the International Wheat Agreement. I want to say that if our Federal Government should succumb to this campaign they will be selling out the farmers of western Canada to a much greater extent than was done when we were sold out to the railway companies in the freight rates and by the failure of the Federal Government to proceed with the construction of the south Saskatchewan dam.

Now, on Friday, the member for Maple Creek (Mr. Cameron) termed as “sheer nonsense” the statement that there was a possibility of the depression of agricultural prices in the midst of an industrial boom. I just wondered what the ranchers in the Maple Creek district thought when they picked up Saturday morning’s paper and read that, and also found that American cattle were not being shipped into the Montreal market. I am wondering if he agreed with the other statement made across the floor of this House that the farmers could today produce beef at 22 cents a pound and make good money from it. However, that is his baby and I will leave him with it, and he can make his own peace with the people in Maple Creek constituency.

I want now to say a word about my own Department. Before I do so, I should also state that the budget which we are now discussing will do more for this province than any other budget that has ever been brought down in this Assembly. We have made provision in this budget for an extended power and telephone programme; for an extended highways and road programme; for increased development of our educational, social service and health programmes, and we have also made provision for the extension and development of the natural resources in this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there is not a single segment of the economy of this province that has been forgotten in this budget.

I was rather amused the other afternoon when the member for Maple Creek undertook to defend Mr. Abbott’s budget. In fact I think he spent as much or possibly more time in trying to defend that budget than in discussing this one – and I don’t blame him because, after the remarks of the member for Elrose (Mr. M.J. Willis) when his arithmetic showed that a one-cent raise in gasoline tax amounted to a 10 per cent raise, I expect the rest of his figures were on about the same plane, and I do not blame him for turning his attention to the Federal budget. But I want to say that Liberal speakers are going to have a difficult time to convince the farmers of this province that that budget which was brought down in Ottawa a short time ago, is going to be of any benefit to this province. That budget failed to give the farmers of this province any guarantee – not only this province, but the entire Dominion of Canada any guarantee for the products which we have to sell, and it also failed, as I said a moment ago, to make provisions for the construction of the South Saskatchewan Dam. So our Liberal friends across the way are going to have a difficult time to sell that budget to the farmers of western Canada, and they are going to have just as difficult a time to sell it to the workers of this province or any other part of Canada, because that budget made a very small reduction

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in the income tax of the low bracket earner in this country. But it did make provision for those who hold ample stocks of the companies of this country, whereby they can deduct 20 per cent of the earnings from Canadian corporations and deduct that from their taxable income. Mr. Speaker, the present Federal budget will go down in history as the 'rich man's budget', and it places the Liberal Party exactly where they belong, right in the midst of 'big business'.

Now, I want to say a word or two about my own Department, as I said a moment ago, and point out that during the year which is just closing there have been a number of very significant changes that have taken place. First, I would like to mention the fact that Mr. McKenzie, who had been Deputy Minister in this province for some 13 years, had retired on superannuation, and retiring as he did after being in the service of the province since May, 1912, he left behind him a very excellent record. During those years he gave to the people of Saskatchewan a long and valued service. I want to say that his experience and his intimate knowledge of the Department was of inestimable value to me, and I want to pay tribute to him for his loyal and devoted service.

Fortunately for the Department and the province, we had in the Department a very worthy successor in Mr. Stewart who is now the Deputy Minister. In the short time that Mr. Stewart has been in that office he has proven himself to be a very capable administrator and is doing an excellent job, and proving that he is capable of filling that very exacting office. During the same year, we had Mr. Patton who was the chief bridge engineer, retire after a very long period of service, some 36 years. Mr. Patton, too, has left behind him a very fine record as an engineer.

The various positions that have been created and have become vacant because of these changes has proven the value of the policy adopted by this Government when we assumed office in 1944. At that time, Mr. Speaker, we undertook to replace the road inspectors and the political organizers in the Department with trained engineers. As I said, that policy has paid off now because we have been able to fill these various positions with men with engineering training. I should point out that Mr. L.T. Holmes, who now becomes Chief Engineer, and Mr. Larmour who has been raised to the position of Section Engineer, were both 1945 graduates of the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Winnitoy who now heads the branch of Materials and Research is also a graduate of our University, and Mr. Pearce who followed Mr. Patton as Chief Bridge Engineer, is another student of the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Swanson who takes over the new duties as supervisor of Government construction crews comes with an exceptionally fine record from the R.C.A.F. and also as the District Engineer of the Department since 1945. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that the change in our policy has proven to be wise, and we now find ourselves in the fortunate position of being able to fill from within our own ranks the various positions such as those mentioned as they arise from time to time.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is rather a far cry from the days that I can remember when an engineering student from the University of Saskatchewan almost invariably had to leave the province if he were to follow the profession of his choice. Today that picture is completely changed, and we have not been able to bring to the Department

enough engineers as the years go on. However, we will continue to use as many of the engineers as possible and by so doing give encouragement to our own boys to proceed with work of this type.

A moment ago the member for Elrose spoke of the disaster of the bridge at Saskatchewan Landing, and I want to say that it was rather a bad start for the fiscal year 1952-53 and while that was a serious loss to the province that loss was not nearly as great as the aggregate losses which we sustained in the south-west and west central part of this province because of flood damage. The aggregate there of losses to smaller bridges and to roads and highways was much greater than the loss sustained at Saskatchewan landing. However, I am glad to confirm what the member for Elrose stated, that the bridge is now well under way and within a few weeks only the laying of the floor remains to be done and that, of course, will have to wait until warmer weather. But I can assure this House that the work on this structure will proceed to completion just as rapidly as weather conditions allow.

I should point out also, Mr. Speaker, that the conditions which prevailed last spring in the south-west and the west central part of this province, had they been experienced in 1944, a very serious situation would have developed because at one time, last spring, the town of Kindersley was completely cut off both by rail and highways. I want to say that anyone who was familiar with that country four or five years ago just could not believe the situation that existed there last Spring. Some of those old dry lake beds, or possibly river beds at one time – most of them were under cultivation a few years ago. When I visited that area with the member for Kerrobert-Kindersley (Mr. Wellbelove) last Spring, and we drove over those roads it was unbelievable, because from No. 44 Highway just east of the town of Glidden in the old Cutbank Lakes I am told there was 35 feet of water in that lake. In 1947, that was all farm land and that lake extended from just east of Glidden almost to Kindersley and then turned west to within half a mile of Fairmont. There was a half-mile break there, and then continued from there to Pinkham – bodies of water ranging from a mile to half a mile in width. From Fairmont north you could follow another of these old coulees; water running to Teo Lake and from Teo Lake west to Dewar Lake. Both of those I have mentioned were bodies of water over 20 miles in length. And a few years ago, as I have said, most of that area was farm land. When that condition existed, last Spring, we took the Government outfit which was stationed at Rosetown to commence work on No. 4 Highway and shift into that area and give those people immediate relief. And I want to assure you that had that happened in 1944, those people would have been in a mighty serious predicament.

While we had a bad start last Spring, the season as a whole has been a favourable one and we were able to complete one of the most extensive highway programmes ever undertaken in this province. We completed the grading of 676 miles of road. This mileage represents 17,000,859 cubic yards of material, and I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that while that may not seem very much it represents over 50 per cent of the amount of material that would be required to build the dam on the South Saskatchewan River; and if you take into consideration the amount of earth which we removed in repair work, such as I mentioned a moment ago, and the gravel used for gravelling highways, and for blacktop and for base course, that

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would add fully another 3 million yards, bringing the total amount of yardage moved in this province to approximately five-sevenths of the amount of earth required to build the South Saskatchewan Dam.

Hon. Mr. Sturdy: — Guess you will have to build the dam, Jack.

Hon. Mr. Douglas: — I'm afraid we will. Now, if you take that mileage in length, it represents the distance from Winnipeg all the way across Saskatchewan on No. 1 Highway to 50 miles in the province of Alberta. During the same period, we gravelled 1,707 miles and that represents the distance from Vancouver to approximately 100 miles east of Winnipeg via the Crow's Nest Pass route. That gives you some idea of the amount of work that has been accomplished last year.

I am not going to weary this House with too much detail of last year's work, but I want to mention a few of the projects we completed. No. 11 Highway, which connects the cities of Saskatoon and Regina was, as we are all aware completed last year and is an excellent illustration of the savings that have been made in this province first by shortening our highway by taking it along the shortest route and also the savings made to the travelling public by blacktopping these roads. I find that the savings to the public on the basis of 500 cars a day, and that is low – I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, that even on the central part of the road that is a low estimate of the daily average of cars; but on the basis of 500 cars per day the saving to the travelling public per year is \$865,000. The maintenance savings per year on that same road is \$11,200, and the saving in construction costs is \$560,000. We figure that the savings to the public will pay for the road in some three to four years.

The next project of great importance in this province was the work on the trans-Canada highway and, on the whole, work proceeded very well on this project. We were disappointed in the blacktopping work carried on between Moose Jaw and Swift Current, but the blacktopping project from MacLean to Oakshella was completed, last year, and all of the grading from the Manitoba border to Regina was completed. The overpass at Broadview was not quite finished, and that was because the railway company insisted on a change in our specifications after we were ready to proceed with the work. This delayed the work somewhat. On the western part of the province, however, the grading from Swift current west proceeded fairly well. One of the contractors completed his work; the other not quite. But on the whole we have made good progress on the trans-Canada. At the end of this year's work I find that we have 207 miles completed to standard, almost 67 miles of base course laid, and 76.1 miles of bituminous surface completed. On the basis of this work to date we will be able to complete the trans-Canada highway within the terms of the agreement. I know fear has been expressed in some quarters that should we complete our agreement in time – and it is quite evident that some of the other provinces will not – there is the danger that the Federal Government might give these other provinces better conditions than we have in Saskatchewan. Well, I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the agreement which we have signed with the Federal Government is such that should they give better terms to any other province then the rest of the provinces that signed that agreement are entitled to the same terms, so there is nothing to fear from that angle.

I only want to mention two other projects. One, from Qu'Appelle to Balcarres, already is completed thus giving us a high-class

road from Hudson Bay right to the city of Regina and of that area from Canora to Fort Qu'Appelle all is blacktop but 35 miles; No. 4 Highway, Kyle to Elrose, Rosetown to Biggar and the construction of the 10-mile gap at Battleford gives us a very high-class road the greater part of the way from the international border right through to Meadow Lake.

Before I proceed with the other work, I think I should spend a little time and give you the programme which we have arranged for the present year. I shall deal with the trans-Canada Highway – No. 1 Highway. As I said a moment ago, much of the work, last year, was completed between here and the Manitoba border. During the present year we intend to complete the blacktopping of No. 1 Highway from the city of Regina to the Manitoba border. We will also complete the overpass at Broadview. We will also do the location and the preliminary survey for the by-pass for the city of Regina. We will blacktop and base course from Ernfold west, that is the section from Ernfold to – I have forgotten the little town just close to Swift Current; but that section will be completed this year. It was under contract last year. And we will complete the grading from east of Gull Lake to the junction of 21 Highway. As I said a moment ago, that will give you complete blacktop from the city of Regina right through to the city of Swift Current. Some of that, of course, is the old standard, not up to trans-Canada Highway standard, but the section from the Manitoba border to Regina will be up to trans-Canada standard.

On No. 2 Highway we will complete the grading and the gravelling from Buffalo Pound Lake to the junction of No. 11. We will blacktop from Watrous to Young. We will grade and gravel from the junction of No. 14 to the end of last year's construction, north of the junction of No. 5. We will blacktop from Hoey to Wakaw. With the completion of this year's work on Highway No. 2, there will only be small sections left in need of rebuilding. that section from Lac la Ronge to the north side of Montreal Lake has been rebuilt since this Government has been in office. The section from there to Waskesiu will still need rebuilding. From Waskesiu No. 2 will be entirely blacktopped to Wakaw; it will be constructed from Wakaw to Young, standard grade, and from young to Watrous will be blacktopped; from Watrous to No. 15 Highway, standard grade, leaving only that small section from the junction of No. 15 to Penzance in need of reconstruction. Then again, of course, there will be blacktop from north of Moose Jaw a distance of 14 miles down to some 30 miles south, leaving only a small section north of Assiniboia to be reconstructed.

No. 3 Highway – grade and gravel from Mistatim to Prairie River; grade and gravel from Tisdale to Melfort and grade and gravel from Meadow Lake east, at the present time, is not on the provincial highway system as part of No. 3, but in the new map which will be issued this year, we will extend No. 3 Highway as far west as Meadow Lake.

On No. 4 Highway, we will grade and gravel from Swift Current north. Again that puts No. 4 Highway, as I said a moment ago, in very good condition from the international border right through to Meadow Lake.

On No. 5 Highway, we will grade and gravel from Buchanan east and west. We will grade and gravel 10 miles east of Sutherland

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to 4 miles south of Bruno. We will grade and gravel from Denholm east. We will grade and gravel from Maidstone east and we will blacktop from Lloydminster to Maidstone. With this year's work it will mean that from Canora to the city of Saskatoon, there will only remain a short stretch of a few miles between Muenster and Humboldt that has not been rebuilt since this Government has been in office. There will still remain a short section – at least I am afraid there will remain a short section – between Saskatoon and North Battleford that will not be completed this year, and then only a short distance from North Battleford west to this year's construction that will remain to be constructed on No. 5 Highway. So you will realize that we have made a lot of progress on that artery which is one of the main east-west arteries of the province.

On No. 6 Highway we will grade and gravel from the U.S. border north, to connect with the 1952 construction. We will grade and blacktop from Regina to junction of No. 11. We will grade and gravel from Dafoe south, and will grade and gravel from Silver Park to Lac Vert. Again, this year's work will bring No. 6 Highway close to the point where we can complete the reconstruction of that road in a very short time. I should like to point out that this year's work will give complete reconstruction from the international border to north of Southey.

No. 7 Highway – we will grade and gravel from Fisk to Netherhills.

No. 11 Highway will be resurfaced from the junction of No. 6 west.

No. 13 Highway – we will grade and gravel from Arcola west and from Eastend west.

On No. 14 Highway, we will grade and gravel from Foam Lake east.

On No. 18 Highway, we will grade and gravel from Hirsch to Bienfait.

On No. 20 Highway, we will do the location and the preliminary survey work from St. Benedict north to the Forty-four trail.

No. 21 Highway we will grade and gravel from Leader south.

No. 30 Highway – we will grade and gravel from Kindersley north.

No. 35 Highway – we will grade and gravel from Flin Flon to Denare Beach. I might say that negotiations are at present under way with the Federal Government on this project. You will recall that, a year ago, Mr. Winters sent a telegram to the Board of Trade in Flin Flon advising them that they were interested in this work, and at the moment I have been corresponding with Mr. Winters on this matter.

No. 39 Highway – we will resurface from Milestone to Lang.

No. 40 Highway we will grade and gravel, continuing the 1952 construction.

No. 42 Highway – we will grade and gravel from Lucky Lake west and north.

No. 43 Highway – location and investigation work from the junction of No. 19 west.

No. 47 Highway – grade and gravel from Estevan to the Airport.

No. 51 Highway – we will gravel from Major to the Alberta border. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that would have been gravelled, this year, but we were unable to locate a gravel deposit to do the necessary work.

No. 56 Highway – we will grade and gravel the hill of the Qu'Appelle Valley.

Major projects not on the provincial highway system will be gravelling from the U.S. border to Coronach. This road was grade, last year, by one of the Government crews. We will grade and gravel from Paradise Hill to Frenchman Butte, and we will grade and gravel from Pierceland east to No. 26 Highway.

Now that, Mr. Speaker, is the programme which we have mapped out for the coming year. It is one of the largest programmes that the Department has ever undertaken. While the mileage is slightly less than last year's mileage, the yardage to be moved is almost identical and, of course, the blacktop work is slightly greater than last year, so that all told the programme which we have outlined for this coming year is the greatest we have yet undertaken.

Mr. Willis (Elrose): — And there is no election!

Hon. Mr. Douglas: — And there is no election. I should also point out that in the Estimates will be a considerable sum for the re-gravelling of other parts of the highway system not under constituency. During these last several years of heavy precipitation and heavy spring run-off, the gravel on most of our highway system has taken a very severe beating and, in this year's Estimates, we are providing for a very extensive campaign of re-gravelling to keep those highways that we are not immediately able to rebuild in condition to carry the load until we can rebuild them.

When I started to deal with the programme I believe I had not quite finished dealing with the possibilities and the requirements of the Department with regard to financing. I should like to point out to this Assembly that while we have, throughout the years, been spending (as the member for Elrose said) a very fair amount of money equal to the money that has been raised by the gasoline tax and by car licences, it is questionable if this amount of money is enough to do the work that is required to be done.

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I find that, from 1945 to 1951, the gas tax and the licence increased by 110 per cent, but during that same period highway expenditures increased by 235 per cent, and the estimated expenditures for 1952-53 were 500 per cent higher than the expenditures on highways for 1952-53 were 500 per cent higher than the expenditures on highways in 1944. In the present fiscal year, that is 1952-53, we expect expenditures on highways will be \$3,300,000 higher than was raised by what we call the 'highway-users' tax' – that is the tax for gasoline and the car licences – for the year 1951, so it is quite true that we are spending more money on our highways than we are receiving from this tax.

Another thing that may be of interest to this Assembly is that the amount of money spent in United States for road purposes is \$22 per capita, in Canada, it is \$20, and in Saskatchewan, for 1952-53, it will be \$29, and that does not include urban streets.

Now the programme which I have just outlined to you is the first phase of the five-year plan of highway progress which we outlined to the people of this province, this year, and that includes a programme calling for 625 miles of grading and 211 miles of blacktopping. As I said a moment ago, it is one of the heaviest programmes that we have yet undertaken.

Now in addition to this programme of highway work we have provided in this budget for very generous assistance to the rural municipalities. You will find in the budget an amount equal to \$1½ million that will be expended on road projects other than the provincial highway system. I want to point out, in addition to this, that at the commencement of this year, we turned back to the rural municipalities the 2 mills Public Revenue Tax. In other words, we have left the rural municipalities the whole rights of land taxation and that means, Mr. Speaker, that the rural municipalities can benefit to the extent of approximately \$1,300,000 without in any way raising their levies from last year. In studying the effects of that upon the municipalities, I find that, unfortunately, those municipalities that require assistance the most are receiving the least because of the return of the Public Revenue Tax, and because of this feature we are finding it necessary to make a very close survey of how grants should be made this year. I want to say that this matter is now under advisement both by the Department of Highways and the Department of Municipal Affairs. But I do want to assure this House that the assistance we are giving is certainly going to be a very great assistance to the rural municipalities.

I should also point out that, despite the feeling abroad in many municipalities, this Government is not throwing back upon the municipalities costs which were formerly borne by the Provincial Government. I have been told on a number of occasions that we are not assuming the full share of bridge construction in this province; I have been told that the former Government paid all of the cost of bridge construction. Well, Mr. Speaker, that statement is absolutely ridiculous. If that has been the case we would not have found the condition, in 1944 when we took office, where there were over 1,200 timber bridges in this province declared worn out and dangerous. So it is very evident that the bridge policy followed by the Provincial Government in former years was not meeting the requirements of this province.

From 1944 to 1949, we did undertake to build as many bridges as we possibly could for the rural municipalities, with the limited amount of material available. In 1949, when material did become available in quantity, I asked the Department to prepare a plan whereby we could hope to rebuild these bridges in a reasonable length of time. I placed that plan before the Municipal convention in March, 1951, and later on in the year I discussed the plan with the Executive of the Rural Municipalities' Association. At that time I asked them if they would be prepared to have us make our contribution to this plan on an equalization basis, and they asked for the opportunity to discuss it with their municipalities during the summer months, when the various district conventions were held. This was a reasonable request and we agreed to it. Now the plan that I submitted at that time, as I have mentioned to this House before, was that we were prepared to pay 50 per cent of all the bridge cost in the province of bridges from 20 to 100 feet in length, and to assume full responsibility for those bridges over 100 feet. We carried on under that plan for one year. In 1952, I again met with the Executive of the Rural Municipalities' Association and discussed with them the bridge formula which we had worked out, paying for these bridges on an equalization basis. That plan was one whereby we would pay not less than 20 per cent and not more than 80 per cent of any bridges and we would work out a formula on the basis of the assessment of the municipality and the number of 20 ft. spans within the municipality. I want to say that it worked out very successfully. We have had a few complaints but not many, and I do find that in this first year of operation we are paying considerably more than 50 per cent of the entire cost. Now I think that may be caused because more of the municipalities who are paying a smaller share of the cost are asking for reconstruction of bridges, but I think on the over-all picture it will work out fairly well and we will pay a full 50 per cent of the cost of bridges.

Now I think it might not hurt if I took a moment to explain to this Assembly the history of assistance to municipalities from the time this province was formed in 1905. At that time the municipalities were responsible for all the roads and all the bridges in the province. By 1906, it was realized that the burden was possibly a little heavy for many of these municipalities to carry and by 1909, the Government paid grants to various municipalities. In 1912, the Board of Highway Commissioners was established and they undertook to pay to municipalities 50 per cent of the cost of some of the main roads in the province, with a limit of \$5,000 per municipality, with the understanding that when the road was built the municipality would assume full responsibility for that road. This did not work any too well and, as the demand for roads and bridges increased, I find the Department of Highways was established in 1917, with very definite responsibilities designated to that Department. By 1920, the Department of Highways had worked out a system of roads which would be designated as the 'Provincial Highway System' and for which they would assume full responsibility.

That took a terrific load off the shoulders of the municipalities and when this was done, I find that, in 1923, grants to rural municipalities were discontinued altogether, and that policy was followed until the relief years when they again began to pay periodic grants to rural municipalities. There was no system to it; there were usually more grants just before an election and where I think they would count for the most votes. Certainly there was no system to it; but in 1944, when this

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Government took office, we established a policy of making grants to all municipalities every year, with a minimum of \$500. I did try to work out plans whereby we could get several municipalities to work together in the building of some main roads. That might work for about two years and then the councils changed and we had to start all over again; so by 1948 we had developed the system which we have been following ever since, of paying these grants on an equalization basis. It is not necessary for me to go over that formula, particularly when this Assembly is familiar with it, but that is the system we followed throughout those years and I say it worked out very well indeed.

I find that, since 1944, including the money that we have in the estimates for R.M.'s this year, we will have paid over a total of \$10½ million for assistance to municipalities on roads other than the provincial highway system and, of course, we have turned back the Public Revenue Tax by which they will benefit, as I said a moment ago, by the amount of \$1,300,000. I find, that over the last number of years, we have been paying out from 20 to 24 per cent of the entire revenue budget in the Department of Highways and in my opinion I think this is a very fair amount.

Now I realize that the municipalities and the Provincial Government have a very heavy job to do in this province in the building and the maintaining of our extensive highway and road systems. We have, Mr. Speaker, the most extensive highway system of any province in Canada – 8,300 miles. The provincial road system of improved roads is in the neighbourhood of 100,000 miles. If we take in unimproved roads of course it would be a great deal higher than that; but I understand there is about 100,000 miles of improved roads.

I have noticed from the speeches made in this chamber by the rural members and from the discussions that have been held in the country where the Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life has been holding hearings, that a lot of the discussions have been around the need of better transportation facilities in this province. As I said a moment ago, about the only tax which we have in this province for this purpose is the highway users' tax, and while we have been able to do a lot of work and while we have been able to spend all the money which the Department of Highways could spend to advantage with the personnel and equipment available, as the years go on we have been able to demonstrate that we can continue to increase that expenditure, and I am hoping the Provincial Treasurer will be able to keep up the fine work he has done in the past years in providing us with more money. That is required because, in Saskatchewan, as I said at the outset, our farm economy is becoming almost entirely mechanized, which calls for the building of roads which will give all-year travel. I find that in the province of Saskatchewan we have more motor vehicles per person than any other province in Canada – as a matter of fact, we have a motor vehicle for every 3.3 people in Saskatchewan; and one of the disturbing things in it is that we have a greater percentage of trucks among those motor vehicles than any other province in Canada, and that means that the cost of maintenance is much higher than for just cars.

I have maintained for some time, of course, that we should be receiving a considerable amount of aid from the Federal Government for road purposes. I have maintained that the amount of money which they are paying for the trans-Canada Highway is not sufficient; I have always maintained that the trans-Canada Highway should be wholly the responsibility of the Federal Government. However, we are thankful for the 40 per cent we are receiving, but I still maintain that we will never be able to do the job on roads in this province until such time as our Federal Government assumes some responsibility.

Now there is one source of taxation which should be used for this purpose, and, unfortunately, the province does not have the power of levying those taxes. We have the power to tax the highway users, but we do not have the power to tax those who benefit because of the highways – that is the manufacturers of cars, trucks and so forth. I find that, in 1951, the manufacturers of motor vehicles – that class alone – paid to the Dominion of Canada in sales tax and excise tax a total of \$144,251,080. Yet, in the same period, Mr. Speaker, in 1951, the Dominion of Canada paid, on account of the trans-Canada Highway, \$12,800,000 – less than one-tenth of the amount that was collected from this one group alone.

Mr. Speaker, we are never going to get the type of roads in this province until we have, in Canada, the type of Federal assistance similar to what they have in the United States. I notice that, in 1952, the Public Roads Administration was voted \$548 million for assistance to States in building up their highways. It was broken down into three groups: one for those roads which are called ‘State primary highways’; the second group was for those arteries which are part of the highway system leading to the urban centres, and the third portion was for what they call their ‘farm-to-market’ roads, similar to our main market roads in this country.

On the basis of population, the Dominion of Canada should not have been paying \$12,800,000; they should have been paying \$58 million to the provinces to help them in the construction of their highway problems.

I said, a moment ago, that we were having difficulty because of the increased number of trucks, compared to the number of cars in use in this province. I have always maintained that the trucks do a lot of damage to our roads, but it was difficult to make a definite assertion on this until after the conclusion of what is known as the ‘Maryland test’. The Maryland test was a test made by the Public roads Administration in the United States on a section of paved road in Maryland, and on that paved road they made checks to see the damage that would result from the use of vehicles with an 18,000 lb. axle load against other vehicles using 22,400 lb. axle load. And then they had another test where they checked with a 32,000 lb. tandem axle load as against a 44,800 tandem axle load. Now I do not mean to go into that test at any length, today, but I want to point out that, on the basis of the Maryland test, the 22,400 lb. axle load over the 18,000 lb. axle load showed about four times the amount of cracking, with two-thirds times the number of passes, and if you took into consideration then the 32,000

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lb. tandem axle load and the 44,800 tandem axle load, the difference was still greater.

I had the opportunity of studying this test with Mr. Johnson, who was with the Highway Research Bureau at Washington – and by the way they did the actual test. He told me very definitely that the matter than counted most was the total weight limit, to determine the damage to highways. Just the other day, we had three very excellent films in the Department here, prepared by the Public Roads Administration of the United States, showing not only the test in action, but showing the results that were obtained after the test was completed. I want to say that, after seeing those pictures, there can be absolutely no question but that we, in this province, cannot hope to increase the load limit of our trucks without doing more damage to our highways than we can hope to pay for. As a matter of fact, I am a little afraid that we may be over the load limit, rather than below it. We shall have to be very careful that we do not increase this load limit because, with our sparse population and our extensive mileage, we just cannot afford to build the type of road that will carry loads over our present limit, which is 18,000 lbs. single axle load and 32,000 tandem, with a 40,000 lb. maximum where a trailer is used.

I should like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that while we have been developing our highways to take care of as heavy loads as possible to give to the people of this province the type of road that will give them all-year travel, and to incorporate in our roads as many safety factors as we possibly can, we have still been faced with a lot of road accidents, many of which I think could be avoided. I am glad to note that this Legislature has seen fit to set up a Committee to deal with this very important phase of highway work. I want to advise that Committee that any member of my staff who can be of assistance to them is available any time they require them to give evidence at their meetings. We have already arranged for a brief to be prepared which will be presented at one of the sittings.

Some of the factors that I think I should bring to the attention of this House, some of the factors which we are using in the building of our highways that leads to safer measures, are as follows: first, on the more heavily travelled roads we are providing for shoulders sufficient in width to allow a car to drive completely off the pavement, and on all of our provincial highways we are providing sight lines so that it will be possible for oncoming cars to have a perfect view, in time to allow them to stop if there should be an obstruction on the highway. We are also eliminating all sharp curves and improving sight lines generally, and as you may have noticed we are providing flat sides and back slopes to our ditches. The ditches themselves are wide, enabling a car to drive off the highway at 50 and even at 60 miles an hour without upsetting.

The standard width of our bridges has been increased and the centre-striping of the pavement is now standard practice. At crossings of railways no curves are used in the approach, and where traffic and costs permit we are providing underpasses or overpasses, or failing that, we are providing for some sort of railway signal.

Those are some of the precautionary measures which we are taking. As I said a moment ago, while we can build a lot of those measures into our highway system, we cannot provide the drivers with the necessary sense to take care of safe driving. The other thing that we are doing, this year (we have commenced it now) is to provide signs at the various curves, showing the speed which can be safely used to negotiate those curves. That is becoming necessary I have found, and I expect other people have found the same trouble, that after you have been driving over 700 miles of our new roads where the curves have been flattened out and then you suddenly come upon one of the older roads where the curves run around 8 degrees and less, there is a very great tendency to overdrive those curves. For that reason we are, this year, undertaking to place a notice on the curve signs at the sharp curves, giving the safe speed of travel.

Those are some of the things we have done this year, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to weary the House any longer, but I do believe that the programme which I have placed before you today will meet with the approval of this Assembly. I believe that it will meet with the approval of this province, and in conclusion, of course, Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary for me to say that I am going to support the motion.

Mr. Niles L. Buchanan (Notukeu-Willow Bunch): — Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to say very much today; in fact I do not know whether I will be able to. For the past month or so, whenever I decided to talk I did not know whether any words were going to come out or not. I have been struggling with a cold, and it has been very difficult for me to know beforehand whether I should prepare a speech or not for fear I would not be able to give it; but I do want to make a few preliminary remarks before asking your indulgence to adjourn this debate.

I would like, first of all, this being the first occasion I have spoken in this House in the new Legislature on a major debate, to extend to various members of this House my congratulations for their being here, and it might seem peculiar to you, Mr. Speaker, and to hon. members on this side of the House, but I want to extend my heartiest congratulations to my commanding Officer while in the army, Ltd. —Col. T.R. MacNutt, who represents the Nipawin constituency. It is more or less a great grievance of mine that he did not follow out the traditions of his ancestor who occupied your exalted position in this House in years gone by, in carrying out the traditions of the Liberal Party, because if he had he would have been sitting on this side of the House. However, he has been a man who has always followed his own conscience and possibly his conscience has erred during the past few years, and therefore he happens to sit on the other side. However, after being mixed up in politics as we all are for a few years to come, I hope that he will eventually see the error of his ways and come over here and join his former adjutant and his former platoon officer, and we will make one big happy family again.

I have not quite as happy a thought in connection with the election campaign, last summer, as I have in my associations with the present member from Nipawin. I do not know why the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan particularly placed Notukeu-Willow Bunch in the Liberal columns, but

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they did; in fact the member for Souris-Estevan advised me, in the last Session, that I should enjoy myself just as much as I could while I was here, because I would not be sitting in the Notukeu-Willow Bunch seat in the next Legislature. Well, I happened to compare the majority of the member for Souris-Estevan with my own, and I find that my majority was twice the size of his, and I want to assure him that, as long as the C.C.F. is interested in Notukeu-Willow Bunch, it will remain in the C.C.F. column, and there is a little more doubt concerning the Souris-Estevan Constituency as far as the Liberals are concerned.

Government Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Buchanan: — However, I have contested some four election campaigns now, Mr. Speaker, as a candidate, and in the past I have had nothing to say but good about the people and the organization that ran against me. This, however, is not true of the last election campaign. I want to say that the young man who ran on the Liberal ticket in Notukeu-Willow Bunch was an excellent young man, and, as far as I am concerned, he conducted, personally, a fine campaign, but I cannot say that about his supporters. I cannot even say that about the Leader of the Opposition, who found occasion to hold a couple of meetings in my constituency, particularly in Rockglen and in Willow Bunch. There is one thing my executive decided after the election, when we found out that I had the biggest majority that I had ever received in Rockglen, and we cut down the Liberal majority the greatest we had ever cut it down in Willow Bunch and it is this: any time the Leader of the Opposition wants to hold a meeting in the Notukeu-Willow Bunch constituency, we are quite prepared to pay his expenses to come there.

However, I want to say one thing about those meetings. We were in the midst of organizing a rural electrification project right around Rockglen; in fact construction did not take place until some time after the election. The Leader of the Opposition begged those people not to put their faith in the C.C.F. because, if the Liberals were elected in Saskatchewan, we would get free power in the province – or something to that effect. I am not quoting from a newspaper and I am not presuming to quote the Leader of the Opposition. I am merely giving the consensus of public opinion that resulted from his speech there. As a result of that, there are people in the Rockglen project, people who jeopardized the success of that project, because we have a very sparse population, and in order to get a project through we must have an almost 100 per cent sign-up, and yet there are people there who listened to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

As I said, I am merely interpreting what happened as a result of the meeting he held in Rockglen. I am not presuming to put words in his mouth. I am interpreting the ideas of the people who came out of that meeting, and the results of that meeting, and I am saying that, as a result of his meeting, there are people there who did not receive power. I am saying that, as a result of his meeting, there are people there who decided not to become a part of the power project around the Rockglen area, thereby jeopardizing the success of the project for everybody else. In fact there is one person there who has a power line pole right in the centre of his yard, and he is not able to receive electricity because he believed that, if the Liberals got in, he would get free power. So he has got a power line pole in his yard, and he has not got electricity; and he was a person who would have been an asset to establishing that project. But because of the result of that meeting of the Leader of the Opposition, he withdrew from it, refused to co-operation, and there is the situation. However, we were able

to establish confidence in a sufficient number of people that we got the project and, eventually, this poor benighted person will get electricity also.

There is something else about the tactics of the last election campaign in the Notukeu-Willow Bunch Constituency, regarding the Leader of the Opposition's meetings there, and that was the misrepresentation established by the 'Leader-Post' reporter who travelled with him. I do not mind if they exaggerate by 100 per cent; that is not too bad, but in Rockglen, the Leader of the Opposition had some 500 of an audience and the 'Leader-Post' came out with only 800, which was not too bad; but I did delegate three people to attend the Leader of the Opposition's meeting in Willow Bunch on Sunday afternoon, with the express purpose of counting the audience in that meeting. So, after the meeting was over, they reported to me and they told me they were prepared to take their individual, separate affidavits as to the number of people that were in that hall. The exact number, according to them, was 330 people; yet the 'Leader-Post' comes out the next day with headlines: "OVER ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE LISTEN TO THE HON. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF WILLOW BUNCH." Well, of course, the people of Willow Bunch took that with their tongues in their cheeks.

Mr. Danielson: — That is propaganda.

Mr. Buchanan: — Yes, that could be called "propaganda", but you can imagine the effect it was intended to have upon people in other parts of the province.

Then too, there were quite a few other things thrown in from outside ors and outside sources. I remember going to a little village and discussing the political problems with one of my supporters who happened to be an oil agent, and he said, "Say, this man who delivers oil to me says he does not think very much of your chance down in your own district." "Well," I said, "what do you mean?" And he said, "He was in here, the other day, and we started talking politics. He was delivering from the B.A. in Moose Jaw," and he says, "By the way, who is your candidate?" I told him "Niles Buchanan from Rockglen." "Oh" he said, "that fellow! Why I lived in Rockglen for years and, do you know, he is not going to get a single vote in the village of Rockglen." "Well" I said, "what is the man's name?" So, we went in and we got the bill of lading for the load of oil and we got the man's name — I have it on file. That man had never in his life lived in Rockglen. He had no idea how the people of Rockglen were going to vote. But that is the kind of stuff that was peddled. Once again, I want to say that I am not holding this against the Liberal candidate in that district at all. He is a fine young chap; he just did not know what he was getting into, that is all, and I do not think they will ever get him into it again.

During previous Sessions, and even in this debate on the budget, the member for Maple Creek had a little bit to say about out oil leases: no direct charges of maladministration or anything like that, just suggestions. I want to give him this thought in passing that, regardless of what we have done towards oil (I think the Minister of Natural Resources is quite capable of defending himself) regardless of whom we have issued oil leases to, I do not think he will find one horse that has an oil lease in the province of Saskatchewan — or even a jackass.

March 9, 1953

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I was craving your permission to make a few remarks, not knowing for sure whether they would be heard or not, or whether I would be able to say them; but I would like, at this time, to move the adjournment of the debate.

The Assembly adjourned at 6:00 o'clock p.m.