

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Second Session — Twelfth Legislature

4th Day

Tuesday, February 16, 1954

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

On the Orders of the Day:

High School Curling Championship

Mr. A.T. Stone (Saskatoon City): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I would like to congratulate our Saskatoon Tech. curling team on earning the right to represent the province in the Dominion Curling High School championship by defeating the Regina team here in two straight games.

I think it is only fair that I should point out that not one of the members of this team is a native of Saskatoon. The skip, Bayne Secord, comes from Richlea; the third man, Don Snider, from Pleasantdale; the second man, Stan Austman, comes from Kenaston; and the lead, Don Brownwell, from Laurel.

I think all members of the House will wish them every success in the Dominion championship, and hope they will bring the cup back again to this province, and carry on where our Terry Thode left off.

University Student Visitors

Hon. J.H. Sturdy (Minister of Social Welfare): — Mr. Speaker, I know that I will be reflecting the wishes of all members of the Legislature in extending to our distinguished guests from Saskatoon University a hearty welcome, this afternoon. We do welcome you to the Legislature as co-owners of the roads of this province and the bus transportation. We trust that you have had a very pleasant and safe trip to Regina and that you will enjoy yourselves and participate in the banquet at 6:00 o'clock this evening. In this connection, Mr. Speaker, on your behalf I would like to extend an invitation to the wives of the members who happen to be in the city.

Mr. A. Loptson (Leader of the Opposition): — I would like to associate myself with the Minister of Social Welfare in extending a welcome to the University students on behalf of the Opposition. I happen to be in the happy position of having been present at the opening of their Parliamentary Forum in Saskatoon, last fall. It was a rather unique occasion. The Prime Minister didn't stay on the job very long; as a matter of fact I think he just listened to the Speech from the Throne and, when they got into action, he had some very erratic opposition in the galleries and was carried out bodily. Now what happened since I wouldn't mind knowing; I haven't followed the activities of the Forum since. However, I want to congratulate the young leaders of the University who spoke on that occasion. I think they certainly showed material for the future, and I am hoping to see some more of those young men and women develop themselves to the level of being able to serve in the Legislature or the Parliament proper in the future. Again I welcome you here on this occasion and I hope to meet with you at leisure, this evening.

Mr. Robert Kohaly (Souris-Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to welcome the University students who are here today. Some of us in this House and I, being the most young of all in experience, have only recently experienced the pleasures and the training that we have in our University and more especially in our Parliamentary Forum. I hope these young men and women who have come from Saskatoon today, will see that there is lots of room at the bottom, and that they may graduate from the University and continuing their efforts there in the Parliamentary Forum, they may find seats on one side of this House or the other and contribute in a most material way.

DEBATE ON ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

The House resumed, from Monday, February 15, 1954, the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Wooff for the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. A. Loftson (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, first of all I wish to extend my congratulations to the new members who were successful at the polls in the last two by-elections. I think they will soon show themselves. We are anxious to hear what material the people from Rosthern sent in place of our late leader, in the person of Mr. Carr, and we hope to hear from our friend, Mr. Kohaly, who is here replacing the late Mr. McCormack.

Now I am going to drift a little away from the ordinary procedure in the House to the extent that I would like to pass on to some matters that have occurred during the past year, before I go into the Debate proper. I want first to pay tribute to the man who occupied this chair during the last five Sessions. I do not hope, nor am I going to attempt, to equal his ability in carrying out his position in this House as a leader in as competent a manner as he was able to do. No man, in my opinion, was more honest and sincere in carrying out his duty as a public representative in the opposition of this House than was Mr. Tucker, who now has entered the larger field of politics and is sitting as a member in the House of Commons. In spite of that, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that any opposition leader had to take as much unprovoked abuse as Mr. Tucker did when he was in this position. We, on this side of the House, however, propose to carry out our duty as Her Loyal Opposition without fear or favour and to criticize the Government on such matters as we think they are entitled to be criticized on, and then we are going to co-operate with them on matters we think are of benefit to the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to say here that we have been criticized on several occasions for not having submitted any suggestions to the Government; that we have continuously been criticizing. Mr. Speaker, I think that probably is our right, and to support that argument may I quote probably the most efficient and competent authority on British parliamentary procedure. When the Prime Minister of England one time asked him, in the House of Commons, when he was being criticized by the Leader of the Opposition, what he would do in this particular matter if he was in the government, his reply was prompt and clear and he told the Prime Minister on that occasion that His Loyal Opposition was not elected to advise the Government; they were there to criticize them when they were doing the wrong thing, and he said, "If you want to know what we would do in your place, then put us there and we will show you."

That has not been the case as far as we are concerned. I think that we have the right to claim that we have contributed some valuable advice to

this Government. I recall on one particular occasion when we suggested that this Government should relieve the pressure on hospitalization by building homes for our elderly citizens. We suggested that not only should this Government build homes on a provincial basis, but that they should assist church and other charitable institutions in extending the building of homes for our elderly citizens. I am going to congratulate the Minister of Social Welfare. He has taken some action in this direction, and I think it should be extended as far as it is necessary to alleviate the difficulties that many of our older citizens are in at the present time.

I think, too, that we can claim some credit for having stirred up public opinion in support of our claim for the cancellation of the Public Revenue Tax. I think this Government was pretty well forced into that position by this Opposition. I think we can also claim some right for having pressed the matter of paying taxes on the revenue-bearing property owned by this Government in the various towns and cities, and I believe that they are paying rents in lieu of taxes or in some way making compensation to the towns and cities in that respect.

I also notice in the press (and I believe I heard it over the air) that this Government has finally consented to giving the Crown land tenants the right to purchase the land they occupy on long-term credits, in spite of the fact that they voted against resolutions supporting that from this side of the House on a number of occasions during the last five Sessions. I think that is something for which the Opposition on this side of the House can claim some credit.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to look over some of the main events that have happened during the last year. I may say that the duty of the Opposition is not always a pleasant one. Sometimes it threatens on the border of personality. This, however, is not exactly the fact. The Opposition is sometimes in the position of a father who spans his boy: it isn't because he hates him, but he thinks he is entitled to it. That is why it sometimes sounds as if it might be personal.

Before considering the motion, I would like to refer to some of the political events that have occurred during the last year and some of the most important events. I think the most important occasion was that of the Coronation of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, which was the memorable event of the past year. It served as a reminder of the unity of the Commonwealth, which, after all, is one of the great institutions which helped to provide the foundation of our world order. It directs the attention of the world to the institution we have developed for the administration of government, of law and order. It also directed attention to the freedom we enjoy and to the comparative stability of our society in a world now suffering from many social and economic disturbances. Yet it is surprising that we in Canada have men and women opposed to the political ideology which is foreign to the principles upon which these institutions are formed, namely free enterprise, commonly called this capitalistic system.

Another event I think may be mentioned and that is the 'cease-fire' in Korea, which has been greeted with joy throughout the free world. While I am no authority on world policy, I think that this event can be credited to the unity of the United Nations. It is to be hoped that this will lead to better understanding between the world factions and ultimately lead to world peace. Although we have heard in this House the desire from our C.C.F. friends that the unity of those nations should be split in two, I believe if that were

brought about, that any hope for world peace would soon fade away.

Having said this, I would like to go into some of the other events that have happened this year. One of them was that we had a general election, which I think is a notable event, especially in view of the results of it. We had a general election on August 10, last year. The result of that election was that the Liberals returned to power with a large majority; the Progressive-Conservatives continued to be the official opposition. May it be noted that the C.C.F. Party increased its personnel in that election, in spite of the fact that they lost quite a large percentage of their popular vote. Let me give you their steady decrease in popular vote. The C.C.F. Party in 1945 had 822,000, or about 16 per cent of the popular vote; in 1949, they dropped down to 790,000, or 14 per cent of the popular vote; in 1953, the vote was away down to 636,000, or 11 per cent of the popular vote.

It might seem significant that in spite of this certain drop in popular vote, they should increase their members in the House. Scanning over the territory from where it came, it would appear that the Province of Saskatchewan increased their membership more than any other province. A man asked me if I could account for the fact that the C.C.F. should increase their membership from Saskatchewan, of all provinces in Canada. Well, I said I didn't know just what the reason might be, but I have a fair idea. One of the reasons could be that the leaders in the other provinces might be presenting the C.C.F. platform more truthfully than they are in this province. I think that is probably true. I cannot imagine anyone voting for the C.C.F. if they actually knew the facts about the C.C.F. Party, and to prove that, Mr. Speaker, I looked up the Yorkton 'Enterprise', and I will read the report of a meeting which was held there on August 1st (which was about nine days prior to the election) at which the main speaker was the Premier of Saskatchewan. Reading it over I found some very significant statements, and I would say that they were not altogether true, Mr. Speaker. I just want the Premier to deny them as I read them, if they are not truly reported.

It is significant to note that one of the things he stated was that the reason for the high cost of machinery was not the cost of labour, but it was the enormous profit that these corporations were taking out of the farmers. Well, I went to the trouble of checking up just how much profit these people were making. One of the reasons that I had a good opportunity of checking up on the profits they were making is because I happen to have \$1,600 invested in the Cockshutt Plow, and I have been getting a dividend of about \$1 a share which meant about 6 per cent on my investment, and they were not making very much surplus over and above the dividend, and that did not seem to be very high. Just the other day I received a notice that I might not get as much as 40 cents a share in future and that is \$40 on my \$1,600, which would be down to 2 ½ per cent, providing they are able to pay it. Then I received the latest financial report from these people showing their profit on \$49 million sales to be \$1,000,000, representing less than 2½ per cent. I do not think that we can justly say that that is an exorbitant profit. Breaking that down to the actual profit on a unit machine, if we apply it to a tractor for which we have to pay \$2,000, that tractor would represent approximately \$1,200 upon the manufacturer's floor, and 2½ per cent on that would be \$30. I do not think that any farmer would say that is an exorbitant profit. Yet the Premier said, "It is not labour that is responsible for this terrible increase in market cost of implements"; but I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, that agricultural implements have gone out of sight in price. They have gone so high that the ordinary farmer now is not able to buy new machines, and the parts are even worse. Yet, these people come out and say that the increase in labour has nothing at all to do with it.

We have some further proof for the statement that the Premier is not right. A commission of inquiry into agricultural implements was set up in 1940. They had a conference and statisticians estimated how much of the retail price of a binder was due to wages, that is, the actual cost of wages in producing the binder and setting it up for the farmer. After they had gone through all stages of labour necessary to produce the material that went into a binder, and then the labour that was necessary, for instance, to take it from the factory to Regina and then there was the assembly cost, which also was labour, the Commission concluded that the labour cost of the binder represented 85 per cent, or 83 per cent to be correct. I want to say to my hon. friend from Swift current, who is one of those 'labour plutocrats', that he is the man who belongs to the big monopoly unions. He is the man who really causes the high cost of all the things that we have to buy — not the man in the towns and villages. Only about 20 per cent of labour represent that class of unions that are responsible for the increased price of such commodities as agricultural implements and such other things that we have to buy.

I am no advocate of low wages. I think that low wages are generally the forerunner of a depression. But I would sooner have moderate wages than mass unemployment. When wages are too high and your production of these high wages are unsaleable because of the high prices, then you are creating unemployment for the under-man of labour. If you have 80 per cent of the working men who cannot take advantage of these high prices that industrial labour is able to exact, then they become slaves of their own class.

I know a man in my town of Yorkton with a family of five or six children. Even the minimum wage that my hon. friend talks about would not give him a living. He is, of course, getting more than the minimum wage. But a man getting \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year, with a family, is pretty hard up these days, if he is going to buy these frigidaires and all this equipment that have to be used; their shoes and their clothes and such things as that, which are more or less controlled by monopoly unions. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that when my hon. friend says that labour has nothing to do with the increased price of farm machinery, he is just talking pure nonsense, and it doesn't behove my hon. friend in his position as the Premier of this province, to make such nonsensical statements.

Another statement he made was that the Liberal government has not contributed one 5-cent piece to the hospitalization plan. Well, I didn't know very much about this hospitalization plan in Saskatchewan, but I looked up the records and here is what I find. During the last five years, the Federal Government made available to this Government no less than \$4½ million for the purpose of building hospitals in this province. I don't believe this Government has availed itself of all that money. Then again, I find that some \$5½ million has been made available to this Government for various other health purposes. Again, we find that, in the subsidy, a large portion of \$25 million is extra, over and above the revenue that the Federal Government gets from the Succession Duties, Corporation Taxes and such, and that money is available for any purpose that this Government pleases to use it for. They can use that for the hospitalization plans. So I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that that statement was according to the facts.

I find another one — and this is really a good one. The Premier is reported to have said that the Liberal Government is more protectionist than the Tory Government ever was. Well, now if there ever was a completely false statement, that is one, because I know something about the tariffs that existed some years ago. I remember when I was in the automobile business

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I was paying 42 per cent tariff on a Studebaker car coming from the United States — I happened to be an agent for it. Today, the cars coming in from the United States carry 17½ per cent. You could not say that is much higher than it was when the Tories were in power.

The agricultural implements' tariff has been reduced from 27 per cent to nothing. There is no tariff on agricultural implements now, nor on the parts. I might say, before I leave the automobiles, that there are no tariffs on British cars coming into this country, in spite of the fact that my hon. friends say that they are taxed out of this market. I believe the Provincial Treasurer has echoed, too on occasion, that there were high tariffs on British cars.

I notice, also, when we take the overall duties as they exist today compared to some years ago, that never in the history of Canada has the tariff been as low as it is at the present time. Canada had led the pace for a general reduction in trade restrictions. They have signed agreements with more than 34 nations on preferential tariff rates. Why, then, should my hon. friend go to Yorkton and tell the people there that the Liberal Government has higher tariff than the Tories ever did?

Another statement he has made is that Mr. Woodsworth was responsible for the family allowance. Well, now, I checked the accuracy of that statement and I see that the family allowance was brought into being during the 1944 Session at Ottawa and, if my memory serves me right, I think Mr. Woodsworth was sleeping six feet under the ground for two years before that. I am not sure, but I understood that he died about 1942, and this family allowance was brought before the House in 1944. Well now, surely Mr. Speaker, if that is the type of campaign that is carried out and is presented to our people here to vote for, there is only one reason why the people believe it. They would never believe these statements if I made them to the people. The only reason why I believe that they believe such statements is that my hon. friend does go into the pulpit, prays and preaches the Gospel, and naturally the people will expect that what he says is true. I think that is one of the reasons why the people of Saskatchewan have been supporting the C.C.F. more generously than they have people in other province, and I do not know whether that is just the best condition. I have always had faith in the opinion of the people, particularly the farmers. I have dealt with the farmers for a good many years. I have lived with them all my life and I know of no fairer class of people than the farmers, or one more stable in judgment, if they are told the truth about conditions that they are to pass judgment on. If the C.C.F. Party ever told the truth in my constituency, if my hon. friend came to Saltcoats and told the people that there was only four points difference between the Communist party and the C.C.F. party, as he did on the floor of this House in 1947, I venture to say that he could not get enough men in that constituency to man his polls in the next election. That, I say without fear of contradiction.

There was another thing that happened during the last Federal election. There was quite a change in election tactics of the C.C.F. Party. You will remember the election in 1948. During the election of 1948 the C.C.F. Party was pretty fidgety. They did not expect to win that election. As a matter of fact, somebody told me that the Premier had already arranged for a better job down in California than he would have as official Opposition leader in this House. But fortune smiled their way; and they tell me that the Provincial Treasurer, who is a genius in many things and also a genius in election tactics, won the election in 1948 through an arrangement the C.C.F. made with Dr. Haldeman who, as you will remember, was the leader of the Social Credit Party.

When the election came about and things did not look any too good for the C.C.F. Party, they are alleged to have gone to Dr. Haldeman with a proposition that he put a candidate into every constituency in Saskatchewan. Of course, he knew he could not win the election; but being a political promoter he saw the chance of making a dollar or two, as all promoters do — they are not particular about how they do it; and the story goes that he arranged to put a man into every constituency as a Social Credit candidate. The object was to split the anti-C.C.F. vote. For that service he was to get \$1,500 a constituency. Well, that is quite a pile of money: \$78,000 is not to be sneezed at.

There seemed to be some truth to that rumour for the reason that some of his candidates, who had been officially nominated in an ordinary way before the official nominations, withdrew suddenly. Haldeman was not going to be beat out of his \$1,500, so he just ran to the constituencies and put a man in without asking anybody; and I think that occurred on two occasions. Well, some of the boys heard about this thing and they got rather inquisitive about the deal, and Haldeman saw that maybe he would have to make an accounting to his supporters. So he packed his bag, flew out of the country in a hurry, and has not been heard of since. Well, even if he had spent \$500 on the candidate, he still had \$1,000 left and that was not so bad — well worth trying for. He elected the C.C.F. Party anyway, whatever the arrangement may have been. There is no doubt about that; the Social Credit candidates did elect the C.C.F. Party in 1948. In 1952 they used them a little more sparingly; I guess they were a little too expensive. Apparently they only had them run where they thought they would do them some good. The Social Credit were losing out because some of their tricks had got in the limelight after the 1948 election. However, they nominated in a good many constituencies, but they did not run every place where they were nominated. They had a Social Credit nominated in my seat, Saltcoats constituency, and the fellow was rather a popular fellow; he lived in Saltcoats. I was anxious to know whether he was going to be put in as an official nomination or not. I went up to see him a day or two before the official nomination and asked him what was the matter: he didn't seem to be getting out looking for votes. "Oh," he says, "if they are not going to put up any money for it, I am not going to put up any money." The reason why they would not put up any money for his deposit or the election campaign was that the fellow was a little too popular among the C.C.F.ers, and had he been put in as official nomination he would have probably taken a lot more C.C.F. votes than he would have taken Liberal votes. That is why he was not nominated. But where the condition was reversed, there was no question about putting up the deposit. How much expense money they put up, I do not know. They also were responsible for electing this Government again in 1952.

The tactics were a little different in 1953, and I think it was probably because the campaign was run from headquarters in Montreal. I was talking to a Communist in Kamsack and I asked what was the use of him nominating a Communist against a C.C.F. candidate and said "you'll never get anywhere." But he said it was orders from headquarters. He said the Communists are supposed to put in a candidate where they have an organization. I said that seemed funny. He said "It isn't funny at all; it is good business. The C.C.F. have come to the conclusion that they have been losing a lot of votes because we have been giving them official support. For that reason we are supposed to put up a Communist candidate everywhere we have an organization in order that the C.C.F. would get back the votes they lost as a result of our support in the past and they were afraid of our connection." Well, it was quite profitable in Yorkton. In Yorkton constituency the Communists only took about 600 votes, but they pulled back about 2,000 votes that had drifted away from the C.C.F.

Party as a result of their connection with the Communist support in the Yorkton constituency — and those are facts. That is all I am going to say about my friends as far as that election is concerned.

I would like now to refer to the matters before the House. I want to say at this moment, Mr. Speaker, that I came in here clad in white, pure in spirit and wearing the olive branch, and do you know what I got from the second speaker who came on the floor of this House? — Clenched hands and a declaration of war from the hon. member from Swift Current (Mr. Gibbs). What do you think of that? But, in spite of that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to congratulate the mover and seconder on their performance; I think they did a pretty good job. As a matter of fact, they did not say anything about the Speech from the Throne, and there is a good reason why they did not, because there was not much they could say about it. That is really a unique document. I do not suppose there was ever a document presented in this House that was as lengthy and said so little as that document. I would suggest that it should be filed among the documents for history as one of the longest speeches that said the least that has ever been presented in any House of any Legislature.

You know it is quite a record. We were looking over the Speech, and we find that it is four pages of foolscap; it is, of course, most barren of all real material. There are 100-feet of type in that speech which would be about 33 yards. There are six inches of type to each line and over 200 lines. It spent about three feet on the Queen, about two feet on agriculture out of 11 which were assigned to it. There was about 80-feet out of the 100 feet all propaganda. Legislation took up about 11, and one foot was devoted to the blessings for His Honour to give to this House.

Now that is quite a record and here it is. I don't know what you can really say about the matter in the Speech, but before I go into it I would like to answer my hon. friend who gave me a fair opportunity when he challenged my remarks with regard to getting rid of the C.C.F. Party. You know it is quite understandable from a man who possessed a totalitarian mind to see only one way of eradicating a political party and that is by legislation, which I understand he was inferring. We have eradicated a number of political parties in Canada within my time, and we always eradicate them by voting. We dispose of them by voting against them and we get rid of them in that way, and that is the way we dissolve them and that is the way the C.C.F. party is going to be dissolved after the next election. They are well on the way, and when you go and ridicule or suggest that any Liberal is going to eradicate a Party by legislation, of course that is quite understandable from a man who cannot think of anything but totalitarianism; so I am going to dispose of it in that way.

To deal with the first item in the Speech, which refers to depression. My hon. friend, the Premier of this province, during the election campaign was quite concerned about the condition of Saskatchewan farmers. As a matter of fact, he said a depression was on the way all over Canada but as far as an agricultural depression was concerned it was here. Yet we find him, in the Speech from the Throne, stating that the farmers of Saskatchewan have never been as prosperous as they were, last year. I do not see how he can reconcile the two statements: during the Federal election the farmers were all 'broke', now on the 11th of February they suddenly become the most prosperous in Canada. Well, I would say those kinds of statements may be all right from the hon. Minister but they would not be worth much from me.

Here is some of the record that we might mention. He says 1953 is a record year. Farm income was \$712 million. In 1933, it was only \$17 million; in 1935 to 1939 (used for comparison purposes) the average was \$111 million; the past five years, 1949 to 1953, it was \$610 million. Now that statement, Mr. Speaker, I would say is not a very creditable one for the C.C.F. to produce in the Throne Speech since it does not correspond with a statement which was made only a few months ago; but I believe that the statement in the Speech from the Throne is correct.

Another one is that of the grain crop. The Speech refers to the “bountiful” crop but “delivery and marketing difficulties” are, of course, quite significant — abnormal crops in the past three years account for this. A lot of wealth is on the farm but will soon disappear if we have a normal crop. Now I think, Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of useless talk and some harmful talk about our surplus of grain on the farms. I have a surplus of grain on the farm, and I think I am fortunate that I have it. I do know districts in Saskatchewan, however, that have no surplus grain on the farm after they have sold their present quota. Why should we worry about those who are so much more fortunate than those who have a scant crop? As a matter of fact, you take an average crop of 15 bushels per seeded acre which is often an average crop in an average year, with the present quota of 5 bushels to the acre of wheat on the cultivated acreage which would often mean 10 bushels to the seeded acreage, it wouldn’t leave very much of a carryover, and when people talk about these men who have these extra bushels on their farms as being in a critical financial position, well, I do not know whether the man understands what he is talking about. I sometimes think these ‘wheel-chair’ farmers, who have never produced a bushel, seem to know more about what conditions are on the farm than the farmer himself knows. I want to say that the less we say about our surplus of wheat here the better it is for the farmers themselves. I am not concerned about the surplus of wheat that is in the granary. I would sooner have it in the granary than not have it at all, and I think we are very fortunate, and should thank Providence for having been blessed with these extra bushels of wheat that we can carry over.

Another thing we have in the Speech from the Throne is a forecast for a Livestock Board. We have heard a great deal about livestock boards in this province, and I don’t know whether there are many other provinces that are promoting the idea besides the farmers in Saskatchewan, and I do not know whether all the livestock producers here are in favour of a livestock board. I have no reason to object to it providing the farmers are all unanimously in favour of it — that is their business I would say; but when the Livestock Men’s Association passes a resolution opposing it and we have a Saskatchewan Farmers’ Union passing a resolution in favour of it, then whom are you going to listen to? Which one of the two factions are raising the most cattle?

When you come to the practicability of setting up a livestock board on the basis of our Wheat Board I question if it is possible. I think that a livestock board should start in the province where there is a demand for it. If this Government is anxious to do anything for the farmer and they do think it is of some value to them, then I would say that this Government should go ahead and provide a livestock board for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

We have often heard, too, the C.C.F.ers condemning the Federal Government for having supported the price of livestock to the packers and not to the farmers. Well now surely, Mr. Speaker, with the experience of the C.C.F. Government in this province with Crown Corporations, they should have done something in favour of the farmers, if there is a lot of money in the packing

business, by taking over the packing plant at Moose Jaw which has been closed up for two years. I understand it is a Swift Canadian Packing Plant and if it is true that these packers are making as much money as the C.C.F. leaders make out they do, I would say it would be a good business for this Government to get into and at the same time they would be doing something for agriculture. And I would say, instead of bothering with the Federal Government (and I do not see how the Federal Government can be in the picture at all until there is a Federal demand for this board) that this Government should set up a board under the Marketing Act which they already have on the statute books.

We also find in the Speech from the Throne that they have provided for a Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life. Now that is rather peculiar. You will remember the Premier of this province telling us during the Federal campaign that they had the only agriculture platform that was feasible for the farmers in Saskatchewan. Well, surely, Mr. Speaker, if they already had an agriculture platform that was the only one that was feasible — and it was as late as the tenth of August they had it — why, then, do they have a Royal Commission here at the expense of the province to find out what the farmers need?

So much for the Speech from the Throne except that I want to say that there are matters that I would like to have seen in the Speech from the Throne. In view of the buoyant revenue of this Government I would suggest it is about time they gave consideration to carrying out some of their election promises. I well remember that one of the greatest promises they had, in 1944, was to eliminate the Education Tax, and I would suggest now that with this extra buoyant revenue they have, now is the time for them to make provision to take off that Education Tax, and that is one of the things that should have been indicated in the Speech from the Throne.

Another one I would suggest — and this is pretty late too: they should have at least forecast some consideration being given to increasing the supplementary allowance to the old age pensioners. A province with as much buoyant revenue as this province could surely increase that measly \$2.50 to \$10.00, and bring the pension up to the \$50.00 the governments of Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario are paying.

Another thing I think this Government should have given some consideration to is more generous remuneration to the student nurses of our hospitals. I had occasion to check up on that condition here some time ago. I met one or two girls who had been in their second or third year in a hospital but had left the hospital and taken a commercial course instead of completing their nursing course. One of the girls told me the reason was that her father could not supplement the allowance that she was getting from the hospital. I am not conversant with the amount they are getting, but I am going to say that it would be practical for this Government to give consideration to some increase in that allowance if it is so low now that it is chasing our student nurses out of the hospitals into the commercial field.

Those three items I think should have been in this Speech from the Throne instead of some of this propaganda to which we have been subjected.

Before I close I think I should refer to a matter that was rather unfinished from the last Session. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, the last thing that we had to consider was the Rawluk charges. You will remember also that we, on this side of the House, differed in opinion as to the value of those charges. The Rawluk charges were serious. They had to do with charging a

member of the Government, an employee of the Government, of corrupt practices and we feel, on this side of the House (and we are not the only ones who feel that way) that a more independent judgment should have been passed on the evidence that was produced. I think that the people throughout the country believe that the Premier would do well to clear the matter up in a better way than he has done. As a matter of fact, it is his responsibility to see that the conduct of his Government is such that it is beyond the shadow of suspicion. For that reason I am going to say that we in the Opposition are still as anxious as we were to see that that matter will be cleaned up more conclusively than it has been.

We moved a resolution at the end of last Session, asking that the evidence compiled by the Crown Corporations Committee should be placed before a Judicial Commission in order that they, as experienced men, would be able to pass judgment on what the evidence was. The Premier evidently thought differently. Well, I am not going to get into any controversy as to whether he was right or wrong, but I want to say that if he is confident of being right, then it is all the more reason why he should get somebody else to corroborate his opinion. He should not be afraid to have a Judicial Commission go over the evidence and say, "Premier Douglas is quite correct." It would satisfy us, too. The accuser has already convicted himself of corruption when he admitted that he had paid 'kick-back' money. His colleagues, if he is guilty, are of course equally guilty. On the other hand, if his allegations are untrue he is guilty of slander and perjury, and he should not be allowed, in the interests of the public, to go unpunished. On the other hand, the Premier and the Provincial Treasurer, even if they are prepared to carry the stigma, owe it to their supporters to clear their name of the blemish that they are now under. We are not alone, the Opposition is not alone, in that opinion. I am going to quote you some expression of opinion from outside of this province. Let me quote from the 'Winnipeg Free Press'. This is what they said just shortly after the decision was made, under the heading "Kick-Back":

"It may well come as a painful surprise to the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan that the verdict on the so-called 'kick-back' charges outside Saskatchewan have been uniformly unfavourable to Mr. Fines, the C.C.F. Provincial Treasurer, and the Douglas government. Mr. Fines, it will be recalled, was accused of accepting 'kick-backs' or payments from the Government Insurance business. After a full inquiry by a committee of the Saskatchewan Legislature the C.C.F. majority voted to exonerate Mr. Fines while the Liberal minority voted to have a proper judicial inquiry."

The sum-up of the 'Montreal Star' — and that is a long way from here — is to the point:

"The result is that the C.C.F.ers in Saskatchewan are all convinced that Mr. Fines is innocent as a baby and all the Liberals in the province are convinced he is guilty as all-get-out. What of the undecided elector? That is the important part — the people who are interested only in good government and don't give a hoot whether it is provided by the C.C.F. or the Liberals. We

imagine few such folk are well satisfied by the procedure followed. Doubt would remain in the minds. On balance they may believe that Mr. Fines is making a good thing out of it, even though they may, like Premier Douglas, believe that if he were so inclined he would go out for more money than the paltry sum mentioned in the accusation by the accuser. The fact that the C.C.F. majority voted to prevent a judicial inquiry is very damaging. Suspicion always deepens when a government uses its majority to shield an accused Minister or supporter from a fair trial before a judge. Nobody — not even the most rabid C.C.F.er — could possibly regard a Party majority verdict as equal to a judicial decision.”

Then we have another article here, from another press, and the man who wrote it cannot possibly be considered a Liberal. I don't know whether he dislikes the Liberals as much as the C.C.F.ers, but I know he isn't very favourable to the Liberals. Before he wrote this he referred to the popularity of the weekly press and the desire of governments, like my friends over there, wanting to use the weekly press for their propaganda purposes, and he goes on further and says:

Premier Douglas: — What is my hon. friend quoting from?

Mr. Lopton: — From the ‘Yorkton Enterprise’. After referring to the usefulness of a daily press, the Editor of the ‘Yorkton Enterprise’ had this to say:

“Many agencies, realizing this factor . . . (that is, the benefit of the daily press) . . . and being desirous of influencing public opinion in favour of their particular political economic and social views, constantly bombard weekly newspapers with propaganda material prepared by highly-paid writers who are specialists in attempting to put across their particular line in the guise of news, and one of these is the Bureau of Publications of Regina.” (listen to this, Mr. Speaker), “much of the copy emanating therefrom is factual, but it usually seeks to present some government agency in a favourable light; none of it is deliberately misleading but some of its reports cannot be considered to present the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. A case in point was the report of the Committee which investigated the Rawluk charges. Except for the daily newspaper readers the average voter knows little or nothing of what all this fuss was actually about. According to the handout from the Bureau of Publications those charged with receiving ‘kick-backs’ were innocent victims of the machinations of an irresponsible character. Having followed the proceedings throughout the five-weeks investigation and carefully reading the evidence of various witnesses, we cannot see the public

accepting the whitewashing report. The only part of it that we can subscribe to is that which recommends further study and appropriate action by the Attorney General's department.

"Because Mr. Tucker, as Leader of the Opposition, brought this matter to the attention of the Crown Corporations Committee, as it was his duty to do, there is a deliberate attempt to leave the general public with the impression that this whole matter was some sort of Liberal political skulduggery designed to discredit a member of the Government and two prominent C.C.F. servants."

He goes on further, and I quote:

"The fact of the matter is that the whole thing arose from a falling out among a group of C.C.F.ers handling Government Insurance business. Rawluk apparently became dissatisfied with the deal he was getting and swore out the affidavit which was the subject of the inquiry. If nothing more is being done towards cleaning up the whole shabby mess the particular individuals named therein, all of whom deny the allegations, will still be under a cloud because of the Committee minority report which asserts that secret commissions were received as alleged. If politicians who are interested in preventing the substantiation of such charges and who having assumed the role of judge and jury and brought in a 'not guilty' verdict think they are pulling the wool over the eyes of the public, they had better think again. The public are not that gullible, and if such grave allegations as those contained in the Rawluk affidavit can be made with impunity against public men, what public man is safe from having his name similarly besmirched? The end result will be a further lowering of the respect in which our public men and political institutions are held and an increasing disinclination on the part of worthy and able men to enter public life. If the doubts these allegations created in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan are to be dispelled, and if the reputation of the men involved are to be cleared, the Rawluk inquiry should be reopened before the proper constitutional judicial tribunal and let the chips fall where they may."

Premier Douglas: — What is the date of that?

Mr. Loptson: — I can give you the paper — April 23rd. Now, Mr. Speaker, I venture to say that these men are not the only ones that hold that opinion. I am sorry that the Premier has not taken action, as we were hoping when we left here, last year in April, that the Attorney General would probably take some action in cleaning the matter up. But now that it is not

cleaned up it becomes our duty as an Opposition to keep the thing alive until some disposition is made of it either by this Government or by a higher tribunal, and that is public opinion. I may say that the Premier did mention something about referring it to the highest court, which is public opinion. He has already had public opinion on two occasions, and I think it is quite evident, although I do not think the matter was ever brought up in the by-elections, either at Rosthern or at Souris-Estevan, that the people did know about these things and expressed their disapproval of the action of the Premier in the way he disposed of it.

For that reason I am going to appeal to the Premier to get the thing cleaned up in the interests of his own colleagues, in the interests of the people who support him in the country. If he is so sure that his version of this evidence is right, then there is certainly no reason why he should not have the assistance of the court's judges to show that he is right and show the rest of the people that he is right. I would be happy to see the thing cleaned up. I am not wanting to rehash this thing over for one session after another. But it is my duty, it is the duty of everyone on this side of the House, to keep this thing open until the public opinion can be had upon it, if it isn't otherwise disposed of. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I cannot possibly support the motion for the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne since it has nothing constructive to offer, and since my hon. friends over there have not seen fit to clean up the matter that was unfinished at the last Session.

Hon. Mr. Corman (Attorney General): — Why don't you take action?

Mr. Loptson: — My hon. friend says "why don't we take action." I just want to say we don't care how long, you can wade in corruption up to your knees for all we care, it isn't our business.

Hon. Mr. Corman: — Mr. Speaker, might I be permitted a question? If the Leader of the Opposition believes the Rawluk charges of bribery against the Provincial Treasurer, why does he not bring a civil action under The Legislative Assembly Act to unseat Mr. Fines? I ask him that question.

Mr. Loptson: — Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is not the duty of the Opposition to clean up the mess of the Government; it is up to the Premier himself to do that.

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to move the adjournment of the debate.

(Debate adjourned)

The Assembly then adjourned at 4:35 o'clock p.m.