

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session - Twelfth Legislature
28th Day

Monday, March 21, 1955

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend the Provincial Lands Act

Hon. I.C. Nollet (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that some of the principal amendments contained in the Bill are provisions that were formerly in the regulations, that we feel should now be put in the Act, in regard to the sale of land to veteran lessees.

One of the amendments provides that land may be sold to veterans without reference to an Order in Council. There are so many options-to-purchase to deal with that it would be impractical to bring them all before the Cabinet, and you will also note that lands that are sold must still go to the Cabinet, with the exception of the lands that are sold to veteran lessees who have an option to purchase.

There are fundamental factors contained in these amendments that I think I should explain to the House. Under the regulations existing at the present time (and these regulations will also be repealed by this Act) provision is made for a Board of Arbitration. We have determined that the best way to deal with the matter of valuing veterans' land would be by means of a scientific method; that is, a uniform method of arriving at a value for this land. We have adopted the assessment-commission scheme as a basis, and we have added to that scheme certain other conversion factors in arriving at a uniform value to be placed on the land which the veteran intends to purchase, if he exercises his option.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if the House would be interested in detail at this time; as to what the formula will be. It probably could better be discussed in committee, at which time we could go into the details of the formula to be adopted as to the method of valuing veterans' land, and we could also give concrete examples of actual values arrived at as compared to assessed values, and also take different soil zones and compare the values we have arrived at in those different soil zones. The entire method is based on the long-term productivity of the land and on certain other conversion factors related to a representative farm budget in the different soil zones. It is a rather complicated formula, and our field staff have already valued the veteran holdings that were issued in 1946. We would like to have the land valued in advance in order that the veteran

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would at least have a year or two in which to make up his mind, and at least know the value of the land or rather the purchase price of the land. We have also provided that any appeals from the valuation would not be to a board of arbitration, but would be to a board of appeal made up of agriculturists who would deal with any errors that may have taken place in the actual valuation of the land itself. I think hon. members will readily understand the necessity of having a formula that is fair, and provides as close as possible a uniform method of arriving at the purchase price of land based on the land's actual productivity and, in turn, by the use of certain conversion factors thus arrive at a fair price. We are committed to arrive at a price based on the productivity of similar land in the district. It was a pretty difficult commitment to discharge in an administrative sense, and for that reason we have adopted the formula which I will be glad to present to the Committee, when the Bill is in Committee, or I would even suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. members feel that they wish to go into the method under which we arrive at values of land they might even wish to refer this to the Agricultural Committee of the House, at which time people far more competent than I could thoroughly explain the method of arriving at values for the benefit of members of the Assembly.

Those are the principal amendments. There are other amendments of a more minor nature, however. One is to provide authority to prevent waste and to prevent weed infestation on land that has been abandoned, or where the lessee fails to do the work as required. This amendment would give us power, which we haven't got at the present time, to work land, particularly land that is badly infested with weeds.

Another one is an amendment respecting the exchanges of school land as to surface rights only; that is, although the surface rights may be exchanged, the mineral rights would remain in the School Land Trust Fund and the income therefrom would accrue to the Department of Education. This is understandable, too, because a parcel of school land may be situated in a producing oil field, and we certainly would not want to exchange that land including minerals for any other land.

The hon. members probably understand we often exchange lands, and when we exchange school lands contained in a community pasture, we are required to find other substitute lands of equal value to take the place of the school land in order to keep intact the asset value of the land trust for education. This amendment provides that the mineral rights will also remain in the school land originally designated.

Another amendment is to provide for the sale of land to veterans who did not qualify under the V.L.A., but who have a purchase option under their lease. There were a few veterans (not many) who were unable to qualify for V.L.A., who already had received their lease from us with the option to purchase; and this amendment gives us the authority to sell land to veterans in that situation.

Another amendment has to do with requiring information necessary regarding the assignment of leases, and to enable cancellation of an assignment if any pertinent information was wilfully withheld. We have that power in the case of posting, but we do not have the authority in the case of

an assignment. So we are proposing, in this amendment, to give us this same authority in the case of assignments of leases that come before us for approval.

Another amendment is to provide for withdrawing consent to a sub-lease. We are often asked by a lessee for permission to sub-lease, and we did not at present have the power, under the Act, to refuse to approve a sub-lease. This would give us the power if, within our judgment, we felt that a lease should not be sub-let, we could thus withhold it from being sub-leased.

The final amendment is an amendment repealing Order-in-Council No. 656, passed in 1948, which sets out, under the regulations, the terms under which we are authorized to sell land to veterans. I should say to the House that, under this regulation, the interest rate, for example, was 3½ per cent, and the period of time was 15 years. In the Act we have extended the period of time for payment to 20 years. We thought that the prospective purchaser should have a longer period of time in which to pay for the land and fulfil his obligations under his purchase agreement.

With these explanations, Mr. Speaker, I would move Second Reading of An Act to amend The Provincial Lands Act.

The question being put, it was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

SECOND READING

Bill No. 53 — An Act to amend The Vehicles Act

Hon. C.M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, the Act to amend The Vehicles Act is one which seems to come down every year. This particular Act has to do with four principal points. First of all, last fall, in Winnipeg, we had a conference of all the motor vehicle administrators of Canada, at which time we considered plans for administering the Motor Vehicle Transport Act of Canada.

At this conference representatives were present from all of the provinces, with the exception of Newfoundland. Arrangements were made whereby we would take over the functions that the courts had decided belonged to the Federal Government. I may say that we were not able to come to any conclusions on uniformity because of the great difference of opinion which exists in different parts of Canada on this problem.

One of the main problems, of course, is the licensing of these vehicles that go from one province to the other. Some of these vehicles go from, say, Ontario through to Edmonton, passing through several of the provinces en route. The provinces where the trucks originate would, of course, naturally like to have a system of reciprocity. They would like complete reciprocity; that is, any trucking firm that had a licence from their province (meaning the province of origin) would be able to go through all the other provinces without payment of any additional fee, or if any fee, a very nominal amount. We in Saskatchewan, of course,

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could not agree with that, because here there are very few of these inter-provincial transports; but, on the other hand, take one which goes from Calgary to Toronto. It passes through Saskatchewan, uses about 400 miles of our road, whereas they use about 150 miles of Alberta road, and yet, if the Alberta government would have their way, the company would pay the full fee in Alberta and we, in Saskatchewan, would get nothing, except provide the road for them; and, of course, we do not have an opportunity, as I have said, to get revenue because of the very, very few of these trucks that originate here in Saskatchewan.

That is the type of problem that we were up against in Winnipeg, and it is going to take a great deal of study and a great deal of give-and-take before we can work out any system of complete reciprocity.

Now other matters were discussed at this conference, and I think members would be interested in them. We were trying to bring about uniformity of legislation with regard to speed limits, with regard to weight of loads and so on. Naturally, people travelling from one part of Canada to another, and particularly these transport trucks going from one part of Canada to another, would greatly appreciate having some uniformity so that they would know when they set out just what the laws would be in the different provinces. However, we ran right up against this question of what is a fair weight to allow on these roads. We have adopted the stand, in Saskatchewan, that our highways will not stand these 54,000, 56,000 and 60,000-pound loads, such as they would like to put into effect in the other provinces. We have stuck to the 40,000-pound load, and so again, there is going to have to be a great deal of study — I mean real scientific technical study — to determine just what weights can go on the roads without destroying them. So we were unable to make any agreement on that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this amendment to the Act which you have before you, today, simply gives the authority for our Highway Traffic Board to be the agent of the Federal Government in matters affecting inter-provincial transport.

It was necessary, also, to make provision for two plates. At the present time we have legislation which provides for only one plate. I would like to assure the hon. members of the House and the people of the province, however, not to worry about putting the two plates on. We are making this legislation retroactive, so that even though there are the two plates, people driving today will be fully protected. We are doing this at the suggestion, last year, of the Committee on Highway Safety. This was one of the recommendations which was made and one of the things which we acted on immediately. Incidentally, when you come to consider the estimates of the Treasury Department, Mr. Speaker, you are going to find that we are over-spent a little bit because we had to spend an extra \$40,000 to get three extra plates; but that is another matter.

The third point that I want to mention is the changing of the sections for which a blue licence will be given. You will remember, that, a year ago, when we introduced the legislation in this House, it was done with the unanimous support of all parties in the House. He would have been a very brave man . . .

Mr. Loptson (Saltcoats): — We protested against that, when that was up.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — That is not true, It was unanimous, Mr. Speaker. We had a Committee, on which there were representatives; my hon. friend doesn't know what he is talking about, because he wasn't even a member of the Committee. It was agreed to unanimously, that we should tighten it up. It is true that the hon. member for Souris-Estevan (Mr. Kohaly) did bring out a very good point. We limited, at his suggestion, two things — the question of speeding and the question of stop signs — the offences in the cities for which the blue licence could be given, instead of making it wide open. I think he will agree with that — that we did, at his suggestion, amend it; but as far as the principle is concerned . . .

Mr. Danielson: — May I ask the hon. gentleman a question? You said it was unanimous. Did you refer to the Committee?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I referred, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that each party designated certain members to a Committee, and that Committee dealt with these recommendations that we had, and unanimously adopted them. I assumed that they were clearing them through their respective caucuses.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at that time may I say that he would have been a very brave man . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The hon. member is referring to the Committee report which was accepted by the House.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, they can get up and say their piece afterwards. I have no objection. But may I say that he would have been a very brave man indeed, one year ago, who would have got up and suggested doing anything that would have given to the motorists who were breaking the law, any additional privileges, because, at that time, you will recall that there had been 124 people killed in the previous year; there had been 3,393 people injured; there had been over 11,000 accidents in this province, with a total damage of over \$4 million. We had just had to raise our automobile insurance rates. We had had to increase the deductible, because of the number of accidents. I was getting letters and telegrams, petitions, delegations in here, wanting us to tighten up on the regulations, tighten up on the penalties for these people who were responsible — get the law-breaker, whoever he is. Why, they suggested almost everything, except hanging. That is about the only thing that wasn't suggested to me. I think every other penalty that you could think about was suggested.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we were determined that we were going to cut down this needless waste of human life; and we brought in these amendments. May I say, too, to my hon. friends opposite, particularly the two who have been getting excited the last few minutes — they are the ones who always pretend to be the great friends of the farmers, in this House; and yet, for over twenty-five years, when their government was in office, this system of issuing blue licences was introduced. Their government of the day, supported by themselves all through the years — and I see they are going to have a little birthday party up at Saskatoon, this week, to celebrate 34 years of Liberal government; all through these years . . .

Mr. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Is that in the Bill?

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Hon. Mr. Fines: — All through these years . . .

Mr. Danielson: — Special Privilege.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I am giving you a little free publicity here. What are you kicking about?

Mr. McDonald: — Tooting your own horn!

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, all through the years, it has been an offence against the Vehicles Act if you do not stop when coming onto a highway in the country — the farmer, all through these years, has been penalized if he did not stop when he came onto the highway. What was the penalty? The penalty was a fine . . .

Mr. Loptson: — He didn't have to take out a blue licence, though.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, he had to take out a blue licence, ever since the Act went into effect, and there have been hundreds of them. My hon. friend from Saltcoats doesn't know the legislation; he didn't know the legislation his government introduced.

Mr. Speaker, for years long before our time, a person would receive a blue licence. I got complaints about it. Farmers complained to me. They said "Why is it that if we come onto a highway and don't stop, we not only get fined, but we have to get a blue licence, while the people living in the cities are fined \$1.00 and costs and that is the end of it; and they don't get a blue licence at all?"

Mr. Loptson: — That is not true.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, that was just another example of the discrimination of the Liberal party against the farmers of Saskatchewan. Last year, I said the discrimination against the farmers would have to come to an end. The people of the cities are going to have to be treated in the same way as the people on the farms. No longer are we going to stand for the farmers having this discrimination against them.

Mr. Loptson: — He's on the air. Now he has to pay \$25 fine and \$11 for a blue licence . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — My hon. friends didn't dare, a year ago, to speak against that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Loptson: — . . . for going through a stop sign.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — That is probably why they supported it.

Mr. Danielson: — They raise more money for the insurance.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — At the time I realized that it was a very stiff penalty. I said so to the Committee. I said to the Committee that I was prepared, if the Committee considered it advisable, not to proceed with it, but that, if we did not have the penalty of blue licences for people who broke the law in the city that, as far as I was concerned, we would not have it in the country; that we would not discriminate against the farmers. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am, today, correcting a wrong against the farming communities that had been put here by the Liberal administration over 20 years ago. We are taking away from them that discrimination. Today we are taking away . . .

Mr. Danielson: — . . . 11 years of C.C.F. rule.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — . . . the authority which has been given to the Highway Traffic Board to issue a blue licence to people who do not stop when coming onto the highways of Saskatchewan. We are also taking it away when they fail to stop at a sign in the cities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, may I say that I do this with some hesitation. I believe that probably experience of the past year has shown that, with the co-operation of the motorists, with the co-operation of the newspapers, the co-operation of radio stations, the television stations, with the wonderful co-operation of the police, we have been able to cut down the number of accidents in this province. When you stop to think that Saskatchewan went down from 124 people killed to — I believe 74 is the final figure — I think you will realize what a tremendously good job has been done. May I point out here some people may wonder why I say 71 one time, 72 another 73 another and 74 another. In the first speech I made this year, on January 10th, I said 71, but then a couple of days later somebody died who had been injured back in November, and then, a few days later, somebody also died who had been injured in December. There had been three people passed away as the result of automobile accidents before the first of the year, and that is what accounts for the difference in the figures.

We have a very good record in Saskatchewan. I have here the records of all the provinces of Canada, and our record is something we do not need to be ashamed of. I don't care where you go; you can just name any province you like; you can go to Ontario, where they have a large population and fairly heavy traffic, where the death rate is 7.7 persons per 10,000 vehicles, and where the number of people injure and killed amounted to 180.9; or you can go to Alberta, where they have wide open spaces, where it is very similar to Saskatchewan. There they had 11 deaths per 10,000, and 233 people killed and injured out of every 10,000 vehicles. Or you can go to Manitoba, where they had 5 persons killed and 157 killed and injured out of 10,000. In Saskatchewan, in 1953, we had 4.6 killed and 131.4 injured, much the lowest of any province of Canada except Prince Edward Island. But, for 1954, Saskatchewan's rate dropped to 2.7 persons killed for every 10,000 motor vehicles, and 100.8 persons killed and injured per 10,000 vehicles. Of course, we have not got the other provinces yet, but I know, from the statistics which I saw which covered the period up to the end of September, that the figures will be nothing like this. We will still be away below. We were lowest in 1953, even

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with a bad year, and this year, with the reduction down by almost 50 per cent, we are going to be away below the rest of the provinces of Canada.

So I hesitate to do anything that would give the people the impression that we are loosening up at all. We are not loosening up, Mr. Speaker. We intend to enforce the law just as rigidly as ever; in fact, I would hope that it would be even more rigidly enforced as the result of this action we are taking in the House, today; I would hope that as the result of us not making it mandatory for a person to receive a blue licence, but to simply receive a fine, the police will enforce the rules even more rigidly than before.

Some people say to me, "Why don't you leave it to the magistrate to decide whether or not the licence is going to be taken away?" Well, Mr. Speaker, if people are going to have respect for the law they must know that that law is being administered fairly and uniformly throughout the province. People would object in one town to seeing a person come to a stop sign and not stopping, getting a blue licence, because the magistrate is very accident conscious and determined he is going to put an end to it, and 'throw the book' at anybody who breaks any of the laws. On the other hand, here is another magistrate who is much more lenient; he would have the discretionary power to give a person a blue licence, but he says, "Well, in my opinion that is not a serious offence." You see, it is just like us in this room! I do not suppose that we all agree on the seriousness of this offence of failure to stop on a highway or failure to stop at one of our streets in the cities. Up at Yorkton, in 1953, it was a very serious thing where a couple of fellows coming back from a funeral driving the hearse, failed to stop, resulting in a couple of people being killed. That was a very serious thing in that case. We could go through our files and we could find a great many cases of deaths . . .

Mr. Loptson: — There was no stop sign there.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — No, but the highway was there and they knew the highways was there, and they should have known they should have stopped. It is true, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the things that makes it difficult. That is one of the things that makes it even more discriminatory against the farmer — the fact that out on the highway there are a great many places where there are not signs put up . . .

Mr. Loptson: — Neither one of them were farmers.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — . . . but in the cities — well, you go out and get your 1940 statutes instead of mumbling in your beard over there, and you will see for yourself. You just turn to section 82 of your own 1940 statutes and you will find that the farmer always was discriminated against in this way.

What I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted by the hon. member for Saltcoats, was that, even in this House, we would not agree on just what degree of seriousness should be attached to this question of not stopping at stop signs.

Mr. Loptson: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I don't think my hon. friend wants to give the impression that the farmer is the only one who makes a mistake . . .

Mr. Speaker: — That is not a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — You get up and say this in your speech. You can take forty minutes if you like. I am just moving a motion and you can get up and speak after me.

What I was saying was that some people consider a failure to stop when coming to a stop sign in the city is a trivial offence and the part that I do not like, and that I resent very much, is when the editors of our daily papers (and they are both guilty of this) consider that it is perfectly all right for a person not to stop when coming into a stop street, if it happens to be three or four o'clock in the morning when there is no traffic around. Mr. Speaker, I want to submit to you that the law is put on the statute books to be obeyed at all times, not just when somebody is looking; and it can be just as dangerous at three o'clock in the morning or five o'clock in the morning, as it can be at any other time. So I look upon this as being a very serious offence, and, as I said before, it still is going to be an offence and there will be a penalty. Anybody who does not stop will receive a fine of not less than \$10 and costs, and in the cities, if it is a by-law, whatever the amount the by-law penalty calls for. All we are doing is removing this as one of the things for which it is mandatory that a person will receive a blue licence.

There is only one other point in The Vehicles Act amendments that I think really is important, or that we need to discuss today, and it is this. We are now making provision for one-way streets in the city of Regina, and it is intended, I am informed, on the 1st of May to have the one-way streets go into effect in certain areas of the city. I believe the entire city between Albert street and Broad Street and between South Railway and College, with the exception of two or three of the streets, will be one-way streets. Under our present Vehicles Act it would be impossible for this to be done. There are several things — first of all, it is impossible to drive on the left-hand side of the road, but obviously when you have a one-way street you drive on the whole thing. Secondly, at the present time it is illegal to pass on the right-hand side. May I emphasize that in this House, Mr. Speaker. It is contrary to the Act, today, to pass on the right-hand side of the street. Even though that street may be divided off into lanes, it is still illegal. There is no provision anywhere in the Act that allows anyone to pass on the right-hand side of the street. I say that because that particular law is being flagrantly broken, and because it can lead to some very serious accidents. What we are doing is to make it legal to pass on the right-hand side on these one-way streets. Now, obviously that is necessary because if a person is slowing down to part on the left-hand side, then naturally you would have to go by him on the right-hand side.

Mr. Lopton: — That was passed last year.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! Might I point out to the hon. member that when the motion is proposed he will have all the opportunity to say all that he wishes.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the purpose of it — to allow him to pass on a one-way street on the right-hand side, and to allow the driver to drive on the left-hand side of the street, where there is a one-way street.

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Those are the principal amendments the four things which I have mentioned. There are other things, of course, clarifying the laws. For instance, last year, we passed what we thought was a law to say that, if a person drove a car while his licence had been suspended, his car would be impounded, but we found, when we went to take the matter to the courts, they considered it had a little loophole in it; so we are plugging that, to ensure that anybody, anywhere in the province (I don't care where they are), if their licence has been suspended and they are driving on the highways of this province, we are determined we are going to do everything we can to see to it that they are not able to drive. We will take away their car from them to make sure . . .

Mr. Danielson: — Including the farmers?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — . . . that they won't do it again.

Mr. Danielson: — Including the farmers?

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I don't think there are very many farmers who would break that law. Farmers are, for the most part, a good law-abiding group, even my hon. friends opposite. I think they are very law-abiding and I do not think we need to worry too much about the farmers. But there are a few people, a few of my hon. friend's friends, who would have their licences cancelled and then would go out and drive their cars and probably get involved in an accident — that is when we catch them. And the next time we catch them they will not only be fined, but they will also have their cars taken away from them for a while.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have said enough to give you a general indication of what the Bill is. There are a lot of points and questions which will come out that we can probably discuss better in committee. I should be very glad to bring the books in and show my hon. friend from Saltcoats that this law that he speaks of (the stop sign in the rural areas) has been there from long before my time while a Liberal government was in power, and that, for breaking that offence, a blue licence had to be given. Remember, there was nothing optional about it; it was mandatory that the blue licence must be given, and now what we are doing is taking away the mandatory feature, the compulsory feature, and making it apply to cities and towns and villages and rural areas alike, so once again all people of Saskatchewan will be able to breathe the same air and will be able to have the law administered in the same manner.

Mr. Danielson: — We'll all be farmers.

Mr. Speaker: — Is the hon. member moving Second Reading?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I am moving Second Reading, yes, but it is debatable.

Mr. A.H. McDonald (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to interrupt the Provincial Treasurer when he was explaining these amendments, but I do want to point out that I was a member of the Highway Safety Committee a year ago, although I am not a member, this year. But I want to say, now, that his statement that all

the amendments to the Act had the unanimous consent of the members of that Committee, one year ago, was not true. There were many things passed by the Highway Safety Committee that I was not in favour of. I want to say that it was a good Committee, and I think they did a lot of good work, and I hope they will do a lot of good work this year; but I do not want the statement to go out that all the changes had the unanimous approval of all members of the Committee.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — May I ask the hon. gentleman if he objected to any of them. Did he object to any of them in Committee?

Mr. McDonald: — Yes, I most certainly did.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Was that objection raised in the House when the Bill came back?

Mr. McDonald: — That objection was raised in the Committee, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R.A. Walker (Hanley): — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Committee, I do not know whether I am qualified to state what I thought or not, but my recollection was that every single resolution moved in that Committee was declared ‘carried unanimously’, and I think it was declared carried unanimously in a loud enough voice so that my hon. friend from Moosomin should have been able to hear me. I think that, if he will refer to the records of the Committee, he will find that every single motion that was put to that Committee was put unanimously. I distinctly remember that there were one or two that were opposed, which were not agreed to unanimously, and which were dropped or which were amended to the point where they were agreed to unanimously by all members of that Committee. I suggest that, if my hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition, now claims that he disagreed with any of those proposals, he had better go to the official record and find out which ones he disagreed with and have the official record corrected, because in every instance when I declared a motion carried, I declared it carried unanimously and there was not one word of dissent from any member of the Committee.

I want to say, also that, as Chairman of that Committee, I thought the Committee was very amicable, a very useful Committee, a Committee on which there was very little dissension, a Committee in which there was almost always complete unanimity; and if there was not complete unanimity, as I say, the resolution was altered to the point where it was completely agreed to.

I want to say, however, that this proposal to impose the same penalties in the cities as has always been imposed in the rural areas is one with which I am still in hearty agreement. I think there should always be a uniformity in these licence restrictions between the urban and the rural areas. I don't think that any case can be made for having it tougher in the rural areas than it is in the cities and towns, and I think that the Committee, in recommending that there should be uniformity, last year, was right; and I think that the Committee is right, this year, in recommending that the compulsory blue licence for failing to stop at stop signs and recommending that that provision be taken out of the Act, so long as it applies to rural and to urban areas uniformly.

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Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I think that, as chairman of the Committee, I may be permitted to say that the very excellent showing that the motorists of Saskatchewan achieved, last year, in the matter of highway safety, is a credit not only to the good sense of the motoring public, not only to the good judgment of the people of Saskatchewan, but is also a credit to the manner in which the Provincial Government carried out and enforced our highway regulations. I believe, as I drive about in this province, that there is a significant, a phenomenal, improvement in the driving habits of the people of Saskatchewan. I think that this improvement is due, largely, to the greater public awareness of the importance of highway safety, and that public awareness has come about because of greater attention having been given to this matter by people who are engaged in the transportation field, and also by a better enforcement that has been carried out by the Highway Traffic Board and their officers. I want to express the hope that the Highway Traffic Officers and the R.C.M.P. will continue to give vigorous enforcement to the highway rules of the road. I think there is still room for improvement. I hope they will continue to strive for improvement.

I think, Mr. Speaker, too, that some of the media of public information, such as the 'Leader-Post' and the 'Star-Phoenix' and other newspapers, can give greater support to the idea of obedience to the law. I recall there was a very unfortunate situation, last year, when we found our daily newspapers attacking and criticizing this principle of the blue licence for failure to obey the stop signs. It is too bad that a certain amount of credibility, a certain amount of respectability, was given to breaking the law. When the newspapers started sympathizing with people who had blue licences and sympathizing with their predicament, I think it did the cause of highway safety great damage. I know, from reading the newspapers, I came to the conclusion that every third person in Saskatchewan had a blue licence, and I was very pleased to learn, at the recent meeting of the Highway Safety Committee, that the total number of licence demotions in this province, last year, was less than 2 per cent of all the licensed drivers in this province. Blue licences for failing to stop at stop signs accounted for only a small part of that 2 per cent; probably one-half of one per cent of all the motoring public of this province were penalized, last year, for failing to stop at stop signs and given blue licences. It was not as prevalent or as general as it was suggested in the daily newspapers, and the impression, I think, ought to be corrected. The correction ought to be given widespread circulation. It ought to be realized that getting a blue licence is a misfortune that we should try to avoid; nobody ought to suggest that they are so common that everybody else has got them. Less than 2 per cent, as I have said, is the official figure.

I want to appeal to all members of the Legislature, in considering these matters, not to raise party issues in connection with highway safety and the enforcement of our traffic laws. I appeal to all members of the Legislature to enter into this debate in a spirit of constructive goodwill so that the matter of highway safety, of life and death upon our highways, will not be a matter of party advantage.

Mr. Cameron (Maple Creek); — Mr. Speaker, may I . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I recognize the member for Estevan (Mr. Kohaly).

Mr. Robert Kohaly (Souris-Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, I understand that in Second Readings we are dealing with the question of principle of the Bill, and the hon. Provincial Treasurer, the Minister in charge of this particular Act has started a discussion about blue licences, and the amending section for section 82 of the Act itself.

I was a member of the Highway Traffic Committee and I want to join with other speakers who commended its work; but one thing we must remember is that this Act, The Vehicles Act, was changed, last year, by a House amendment that was brought in. The original section dealing with this said “for a by-law of a city, town, village or rural municipality, the subject matter whereof is the same as that of any of the provisions of the said sections or sub-sections of this Act.” That was the original section brought in by the Government in the Bill of that day, Bill No. 39. Now it was through representations and criticism from this side of the House — and I remember clearly being involved in it for a considerable length of time and at great length — that we pointed out that it would cause tremendous trouble for a traveller coming from North Battleford straight down through to the United States, going through many towns, villages, cities and municipalities, with varying by-laws. At that point, commendably, the Minister said all right, we will reduce it to a question of speed and stop signs; and that is what was done. As my memory recalls, there was general support for it and we left it at that. But we did point out that there was still a danger involved there; that there were a lot of stop signs that could not be seen, that were knocked over in municipalities and so on, and there was a danger. As far as speed limits were concerned, some enforcement officers are more vigorous than others and allow 26 miles per hour, while others insist on 25 m.p.h. at times, but we did accept it, and I do as well.

I am glad to see them bringing it back in and taking that particular point out. I doubt seriously whether that is the most glaring problem in The Vehicles Act — this blue licence business, sections 82 and 90 of The Vehicles Act. I doubt if that is the most glaring. We still have numerous instances, throughout this Act, where they receive something less than white licences for offences which are much less in danger than this question of stop signs. You still, for instance, can lose your licence for driving over a bridge, at a speed in excess of 25 miles an hour — not a blue licence, not a red licence, but you can lose your licence for driving over a bridge. That, of course, is section 122, sub-section 6, of this very Vehicles Act; but that is not being amended.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Might I point out to the hon. member that when the Bill is in Committee you will have the opportunity . . .

Mr. Kohaly: — Oh yes, but I am talking on this blue-licence matter. This blue-licence business has been raised in its entirety by the Minister, and I will not take very long, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point out just one more matter. This blue licence that we speak of in this province is not a blue licence alone. There is the question of a red licence. Every time you talk about a blue licence you have to think about a red licence, which follows immediately after; but the serious problem is that, after a red licence comes no licence, and you can lose your licence altogether for a period of time, for some of these infractions, albeit dangerous; but the automobile is a dangerous thing and

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you can be put out of circulation altogether and that is the important part. I submit that if you are going to revise this one section (commendably so), then take a look at some of these others and get them out of there, too. For instance, leaving a spotlight on; maybe that, too, is just as dangerous as failing to stop at a stop sign. We can go on for hours, those who are interested and know anything about The Vehicles Act, and you can find all kinds of instances like that which should be taken out as well.

One final point. Section 82 specifically sets out, and this I have discussed with the Minister on other occasions, on what specific occasions you will have your licence demoted from white to blue, to red, to nothing. Now you have a section 90 which is far more dangerous, and that section says that for any infraction of the Act you may have your licence suspended, and the Highway Traffic Board are the only ones who are going to have anything to say about it. It goes on, of course, and puts any infraction of any provision of The Vehicles Act in the same category with the Criminal Code — impaired driving, imprudent driving and so on, in the same sub-section; and it goes on to say that an officer of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office can recommend it.

Now, if we are going to start to deal with red and blue and no licences, let us look at some of these other sections as well and bring those in, and make some amendments; and I am suggesting that that is a question of principle once it has been involved — the coloured licences — not blue alone, but red and nothing licences, and also section 90, which gives the Highway Traffic Board the right to take away, suspend or revoke any licence for any infraction of any of the provisions of the Act. We are dilly-dallying around with one piece — taking it out and putting it in and so on. Let us take a look at the whole thing. There has been a good deal of trouble and harm done in this province by indiscriminate use of this business of giving blue, red and no licences, and that is the principle involved in this particular amendment. I suggest that if we are going to do it, let us take it back into the Highways Committee and have a good look at all of the Act where it applies to coloured licences and no licences.

Mr. A.C. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Mr. Speaker, I am not clear in my mind as to whether or not these recommendations for coloured licences is left to the justice, or whether the particular case is handed over to the Traffic Board, and then they decide whether or not you are going to be demoted to a blue licence, and I would like to have one explanation with regard to that.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Yes, I will be glad to do that when I close the debate.

Mr. R.A. McCarthy (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words. I happened to be a member of the Highway Safety Committee, last year, and I remember quite a few discussions in it. It is true, I think, when it came into the House, that we did put forth a number of ideas which were not carried and naturally when you are a minority on a Committee, and after the Committee votes you down, you do not carry it too far; but I am not going to say anything about that.

What I wanted to mention was the fact that some of these school zones, as they are now — and I don't know whether there has been any change or not; but when you come into this city you see a school zone where it says, "School zone, drive slowly", and people have had their licences changed for

going through there. Now “driving slowly” is a wide term. If a man has been coming down No. 1 Highway at 50 miles an hour and suddenly come in on Victoria Avenue and sees a sign “Drive slowly”, when he gets down to 20 miles an hour it seems as though he is going pretty slow. As a matter of fact, there have been licences demoted for going through school zones at 20 miles an hour. I think if you are going to carry this thing on, the trouble is we are getting provincial and municipal by-laws mixed up. We provide a penalty for disregard of a municipal by-law. You can go down Victoria Avenue, today, and see a sign that says “Drive Slowly” but there is no mileage on it, and I happened to see a piece in the paper, the other day, where two gentlemen were fined \$10 and had to surrender their licences for going through a school zone at 25 miles an hour. I think we should be a little careful. I am all for safety and I am glad to know that there has been an improvement in our accident rate, and I think the Safety Committee is a wonderful thing. I enjoyed the meetings of it. I missed the first one there was, this year, but I think that when we are doing these things we should be careful not to confuse municipal and provincial laws, and make our legislation apply to municipal regulations, if we are quite sure what those regulations are, and see that the driver has a reasonable chance of obeying the law.

I am quite sure that anyone coming down Victoria Avenue could slip by that sign at 20 miles an hour without the faintest idea he is breaking the law. A lot of people do not know that 15 miles is the limit in this city for going past a school zone, and I have some doubt whether that should be enforced after six-o'clock, because there are no children going there then. When school is in I am all for it; but I think the signs should be marked in order to give the motorists a reasonable chance to stay within the law.

Mr. A. Loptson (Saltcoats): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks replying to some of the remarks of the Minister.

In the first place, he refers to blue licences having always been issued for minor infractions. I want to draw his attention to the fact that there was never a \$10 extra insurance premium for a blue licence, nor a \$25 extra premium for a red licence, until last year.

Another exception I want to take is to the fact that he gave the impression in this House that the rural people were more subject to breaking the law than the urban people. I think my hon. friend will find that there are more minor accidents in the cities than there are in the rural areas, and I do not see why he should be branding the farmers and the townspeople as being the careless drivers in this province.

Mr. Speaker: — If no one else wishes to speak I would like to remind the House that the mover of the motion is about to exercise his privilege of closing the debate.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, after that fairy tale we just had from the hon. member for Saltcoats. I do not know what I said, this afternoon, that could give anybody the idea that I believed the farmers were more likely to have accidents than those in the city. What I objected to — and again may I say that the hon. member for Cannington has again suggested that it is all right to pinch a person when he is going down a highway, in the country, going through a school zone, speeding, but that we

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should not make the law apply in the city . . .

Mr. McCarthy: — I never said that . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — . . . and may I say that it has the same effect.

Mr. McCarthy: — On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I did not suggest anything of the sort.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman said that our laws should not apply to municipal bylaws. Does he deny that?

Mr. McCarthy: — Certainly. I said that you should be careful . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Does the hon. gentleman deny that he said that the laws of the Vehicles Act should not apply to municipal by-laws.

Mr. McCarthy: — No, I did not say that. I said we should be careful, in passing our laws, because we had no control over them, and we should be careful to give the motorist a reasonable chance. I did not say they shouldn't apply.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Well, Mr. Speaker, may I say that he can squirm all he likes. He is twisting. The hon. member is objecting to people getting a blue licence for going through a school zone at 25 miles an hour when the limit is 15. I want to say that, as far as I am concerned, I don't think they should get a blue licence — I don't think they should have a licence. Anybody that has no more regard for the safety and welfare of little children has no right even to have a licence.

Mr. McCarthy: — I said in the middle of the night.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, he suggested something like six o'clock. Does the hon. gentleman not know that the schools are used as playgrounds and the children are there on the grounds in the summertime until probably nine o'clock. Why in the world should we not give some protection to these youngsters?

Mr. McCarthy: — I am all for it.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I get very annoyed with people who feel they are in such a hurry that they cannot slow down when going past a school zone.

Mr. McCarthy: — I do, too.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — It is something we should 'throw the book' at them for. The hon. member for Maple Creek wanted to know if it was going to be left to the discretion of the magistrate. No, Mr. Speaker, we will not be giving a blue licence at all to anybody who does not stop when coming onto a highway or doesn't stop when approaching a stop street. The penalty will be just the fine. Now, if, of course, there is a car coming along on a highway, going at the proper rate of speed, and another car comes across the highway and it results in an accident, I have no doubt that what the police would do in a case of that kind is not lay a charge for failure to stop, but would lay a charge

of imprudent driving. I hope they would

I want to take just a minute to reply to the statements made by my hon. friend from Souris-Estevan. He doesn't like the Highway Traffic Board having the authority to cancel the licence of anyone. I don't think there is an Act in this province, or in this Dominion, that doesn't give the Highway Traffic Board that power. They must have it. After all, how in the world are we going to make our highways safe for people to go on if somebody isn't given the responsibility for determining who is fit and who is not fit to be driving a vehicle? The hon. member says that this blue licence can result in a red licence and then result in a person having no licence at all. May I point out that he must have three convictions before he can reach that position.

Mr. Loptson: — In a court?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Yes, in a court. Going down on these minor things, yes, Mr. Speaker, on these minor things. Now it is true, if he has a conviction against him for drunken driving he doesn't get a red licence or a blue licence, he just doesn't have a licence.

Mr. Loptson: — He goes to gaol.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Not because the courts do it. May I say, Mr. Speaker, that the courts of this province — and I wish that every policeman, magistrate and judge in the province were listening to me, this afternoon; the courts of this province have the authority, today, to take a great many of these people off the highways. In connection with drunken driving, a conviction under section 285 of the Criminal Code, the Dominion Government has given them the authority to stop a person from driving for a period up to three years anywhere in the Dominion of Canada. How many of the magistrates use it? Not in more than two or three cases out of probably 30 or 40 convictions that we have had, this year, have they done anything about it. Yet people say to me, "Leave it to the discretion of the courts." When they already have the discretion and do not use it, why should we give them additional discretion? If it were left to them, I am afraid there would be too many of these dangerous drivers on the highways, and it seems to me that we should all be endorsing the plan we have of getting these dangerous drivers off the highways. People will lose their licences for drunken driving; they will lose their licences for impaired driving; they will lose their licences for dangerous driving, and, after all, aren't they the ones we want to get off the highways? Those are the ones who are causing deaths and destruction all around us, and anything that we can do to cut that down, to make our highways safer, is not only going to result in lower insurance rates, but it is going to save many people from dying long before their time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is much one could say, but I can only reply and there has been no serious objection taken to this; it seems to be meeting with the unanimous support of the members of the House.

The question being put, it was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly adjourned at 6.05 o'clock p.m.